

## NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

### LESSON FORTY-NINE: RUTH 3:7-9

**"And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down. And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet. And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman."**

It had been a busy night for Boaz. He had spent hours on the threshing floor winnowing the grain. Then, he had joined in the celebration of a successful harvest end. He ate and drank and visited with his friends and neighbors. The people rejoiced and praised God for His bounty. Finally, the people turned to thoughts of sleep. For the men, like Boaz, it meant settling down on the threshing floor to sleep near the grain, guarding it with their bodies.

When all was quiet and the men slept, Ruth crept on to the threshing floor and approached a sleeping Boaz. She laid down at his feet, with her feet by his, and moved his cloak off of his feet. She, then, covered her own feet with the corner of his cloak. This action informed Boaz that she wanted to be under his protection.

The night wind blew through the threshing floor, which was located on top of a hill. Boaz's exposed feet grew chilly. At midnight, the chill woke him up. He was startled to find a woman lying by his feet.

It was dark and his neighbors slept nearby, exhausted from the work of bringing in the harvest and from the celebratory feasting. Boaz probably whispered so he wouldn't wake the others. "Who are you?" he asked.

Ruth whispered back, "I'm Ruth. I want you to cover me with your skirt because you are a kinsman-Redeemer. Boaz understood the imagery. The spreading of the man's cloak ("skirt") over the woman was a symbolic gesture. She was asking him to marry her.

The same imagery appears in Ezekiel, where the prophet wrote of God's love for Jerusalem: "Now when I (God) passed by thee (Jerusalem), and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love, and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine" (Ezek. 16:8). It's interesting that in the verses following, God did for Jerusalem exactly what Naomi told Ruth to do in preparation for her meeting with Boaz: "Then I washed thee with water. . . and I anointed thee with oil" (v. 10). Verses 11 -13 describe clothing the bride-to-be with fine linen, silk, and jewelry.

Ruth had taken off her widow's weeds. By faith in her mother-in-law's advice, Ruth took her first steps toward a new life. I'm sure it wasn't easy but it was healthy for her to let go of the past and move forward.

We all have to do that at some point. It doesn't mean we have forgotten our loved one. Sweet memories are still there. But it does mean we are not stuck in the past, unable to let go of a life that is gone and cannot be resurrected. God has plans for our lives. He will gently lead us on if we will just let Him do so. Be open to new people, experiences, and/or activities. Use the knowledge gained through your somber experience to help others. Turn your darkness into light for someone else.

*"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance." Ecclesiastes 3:1-4*