

NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

LESSON FORTY AND FORTY-ONE COMMENTS

Dear Loved Ones,

God has been doing wonderful supernatural things in people's lives recently, but have you also noticed how much darker the world seems to be getting? Satan is darkening the world with increased immorality, crime, and anything that would cause us to become complacent or discouraged. We are daily seeing signs that the Bible describes as the end of time. In lesson 40, Ruth gleaned while it was still light. She did all she could to care for herself as well as her mother-in-law before it got too dark. She knew her time was limited. We are called to do all that we can to prepare for ourselves and those who God puts in our path while we still have time. She was not asked to compete with others who had more options, but she did her best with what she was given. As she did her part, God provided the increase. *"For God says, 'I will break the strength of the wicked, but I will give increase the power of the godly.'" Psalms 75:10.*

We are each given certain talents, gifts, and responsibilities that God wants to use for ourselves and others while it is still light. We aren't asked to do someone else's job, just what God called us to do. Our first response is often to get discouraged and feel like giving up when something doesn't go well. Discouragement seems to be Satan's most used tactic.

What is the reaction God is looking for? In Lesson 41, Naomi asked Ruth where she gleaned to get such a harvest yet before she answered, she blessed the one who helped her glean so much. Naomi's gratitude was her immediate reaction. God wants us to appreciate our blessing, but He also wants us to learn to get beyond our natural reaction of discouragement to unwanted circumstances and become programmed with gratitude automatically. When we can look beyond any circumstances that appear to be negative at the time and develop a heart of praise knowing that God cares. He wants to provide for our every need. He answers our prayers according to His will. We can relax in knowing that He understands and has a bigger plan. It may not be what we would like it to be. God doesn't promise to give our loved ones back, but He does promise to give us everything we need according to His riches in glory. Ruth was given an abundant amount of grain that she normally didn't deserve. As she faithfully dedicated herself to doing what she could, she was given far more than her expectations. As we daily allow God to do His work in and through us, He will also show us how to draw on His resources to grow closer to Him. He will restore our lives for our good and His glory.

God often uses seeds and grain to speak to us about life so when I recently saw the following statement it seemed to apply to some of our struggles. *"Be like seeds: do not see dirt thrown at you as your enemy, but as ground to grow."* I recently experienced a circumstance that discouraged me until I recognized that it was another effort by Satan to steal my joy and my hope for someone. I had to put them in God's hands and give them to God to do what I couldn't see possible. God gave me peace knowing that He was still at work. It is an on-going effort to praise God in the midst of our struggles, but when I successfully manage to rest in His promises, my joy is restored. *"May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord."* - 2 Peter 1:2.

I hope and pray that each of us will be able to see beyond any tough circumstances to become what God desires for our lives as we grow closer to Him. May we make the best use of our time while there is still

light. May we learn to praise Him for His all that He is doing and will continue to do even when we don't see the results that we are looking for at this time.

God bless you on your journey this week. While I was looking for another verse, I noticed that this statement was made 7 (God's perfect number) times in the New Testament. "May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace." That is what I pray for you.

Please review the following verses: Philippians 1:2, I Corinthians. 1:3, Ephesians 1:2, Philemon 1:3, 2 Corinthians 1:2, 2 Thessalonians 1:2, Galations 1:3. They are worth looking up.

Love and Prayers,
Sandy Yates