

NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

LESSON FIFTY-FOUR: RUTH 3:14-15

"And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor. Also he said, Bring the veil that thou hast upon thee and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her: and she went into the city."

Ruth stayed at the threshing floor until it was light enough for her to travel to town safely. Still, it was dark enough that it would be difficult for someone to recognize her. Boaz warned her not to let anyone know she had spent the night at the threshing floor. Her motive was pure and her actions moral, but gossip can be a vicious thing. Boaz did not want her good reputation to be tarnished.

Boaz did not want Ruth to go back to Naomi empty handed so he gave her six measures of barley. The six measures of barley was about twice what Ruth normally gleaned in a day. It weighed about 60 pounds. She carried the grain in her "vail." The Hebrew word indicates that this is a woman's wide cloak. It was probably about 6 feet long by 4 feet wide.

Ruth must have been a strong young woman to carry the 60 pound burden into town. It may be that if anyone saw her they would assume she had been gleaning early in the morning. It has also been suggested that Boaz wanted to send Naomi a "message" that he would follow up on Ruth's request and take care of business.

When someone comes to Jesus, he/she never goes away empty handed. He gives each one of us exactly what we need at that moment of contact with Him. Ruth received food stuff for herself and Naomi. This gift would save her two days work. What do you need right now?

Jesus also gives His Bride, the Church, special spiritual gifts (Eph. 4:7-8) through the agency of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:4, 8, 9). The purpose of these gifts is threefold: 1) for the maturing of the believer; 2) for carrying on the work of Christ; and, 3) to build up other believers, that is, the Body of Christ, the Church (Eph. 4:12).

The gifts include teaching, evangelism, pastoring, wisdom, faith, administration, and more (Eph. 4:11; I Cor. 12:4-11). Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift. Some have more than one. But, Jesus wants us all to use those gifts to further the gospel and build up the Church and its' ministry (I Peter 4:10). The tragedies and trials we encounter in this life may give us an opportunity to exercise our gift(s). For example, an extended illness that we ourselves or a loved one suffers from gives us the opportunity to exercise faith if that is our gift. Surviving a devastating fire or a major car accident may provide the opportunity for a preacher to speak about the goodness of God and how He worked in his life.

Whatever difficult situation you have endured, exercising your spiritual gift may encourage others and help you to heal. God in His wisdom gave you a specific gift (or gifts) knowing what circumstances you would face in life. It makes sense, then, that your gift will help you overcome your circumstances.

If you aren't sure what your gift is, pray about it. Speak to your pastor or Christian friends. Sometimes others see things in us we don't see ourselves. Then begin to use your gift to benefit the ministry, other believers, and yourself.

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." 1 Peter 4:10