**Book of Ruth**

**Chapter Two**

**Faithful Service**

**Introduction**

Last week we began this series on the Book of Ruth. The Book of Ruth is the story of David’s great grandfather, Boaz and the young lady who would become his wife, Ruth. The setting for the story is the barley harvest.

The three main feast days of Israel are each associated with a different harvest. The barley ripens first around the time of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; the wheat ripens next around the time of Pentecost; and the grapes ripen last in the fall around the time of Tabernacles.

The correct time to cut wheat is fifty days after the barley is ripe. Therefore they would count seven weeks of seven days, or 49 days between the barley harvest and the wheat harvest. The Jews call this tradition the Counting of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

One of the significant lessons of the Book of Ruth is how Boaz, in the setting of these harvest celebrations, becomes a Kinsman-Redeemer and figures as a type of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the Old Testament.

Israel was chosen to be God's servant as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to all the nations of the world.

The story of Ruth occurred during the time of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Ruth stands out as an extraordinary member of the community of God because of her example of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The book of Ruth foreshadows what the Day of Pentecost would begin to make possible \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ becoming part of God’s family.

The village of Bethlehem is observing God’s law concerning harvesting according to Leviticus 19:9-10: "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest.... Leave them for the poor and the alien"

Ruth is committed to providing for Naomi and herself by working hard \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the grain left by the harvesters (Ruth 2:2).

The first lesson we learn from Ruth in Chapter 2 is that Faithful Servants don’t \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. **Faithful Servants don’t Complain**

At that time in Israel, there was no government welfare agency to take care of the poor. Moses had established a different system. Farmers were not to harvest all of the crops. They were to leave a portion of it in the field for the poor people.

After the harvest was in and the reapers were finished, the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ people were allowed to go into the fields and pick up whatever was left.

Ordinarily what the reapers would leave for the gleaners was hardly enough to provide for a starvation diet. But Ruth didn’t complain, she just \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ harder.

Even though she was a Gentile, she did her best to adapt to the ways of Israel and look to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as her source and refuge. God proved to be faithful to Ruth!

Because of her special love and devotion Naomi, Ruth never \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ about the things she was required to do. The trademark of faithful servants is they don’t complain!

1. **Faithful Servants Work Hard**

Ruth’s diligence and faithfulness impressed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. He recognizes she is a hard worker and never complains and so he takes the time to encourage her not only with words but with substance.

Boaz even ordered his harvesters to make Ruth especially welcome and allow her to gather \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ barley.

A good \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is of great value! (Proverbs 22:1; Ecclesiastes 7:1).

Ruth’s diligence and hard work pays off and she’s rewarded with a wonderful \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Faithful servants receive blessings!

1. **Faithful Servants Receive Blessings**

At the end of the day, Ruth returns home to Naomi with an exceptionally generous amount of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Naomi immediately realized someone had taken a special interest in Ruth.

Naomi’s bitterness toward God has begun to lessen and she now gladly encourages Ruth to continue to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in Boaz’s field.

Naomi and Ruth were willing to make the most of the situation without losing their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_in God or his promises. They had learned to be content in their circumstances.

But when Naomi recognizes the hand of God at work, it gives her new \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and faith.

Ruth’s story is that she worked diligently day after day in the fields without complaining and in God’s time the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ came.

The key was that Ruth was first willing to be a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. She was willing to take whatever she could get and trust God to make up the difference.

Ruth’s life was filled with appreciation and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for others. She reached down into her heart and found \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Conclusion**

Ruth determined to live for God in spite of her \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Because of her faithfulness, God blessed her with an opportunity to marry the Lord of the harvest.

The story of Boaz and Ruth is a wonderful illustration of the relationship between Christ and the believer.

It’s by our own choice we go down to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The good news is that even if we’ve made some poor choices and wound up in spiritual famine, if we decide to return to the land of promise, it isn’t long until the blessing of God starts coming our way again!

Even if you have to glean in the fields for awhile, remember we have a kinsman-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who’s watching out for us.

Realize the source of abundant living consists not in the abundance of the things you possess, but in the personal relationship you have with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.