**Message Outline:**

1. (v1-16) A Display of Extravagant Grace
2. (v17-23) A Re-Birth of Tenacious Hope

For Further Study:

Try to describe the emotional journey of the main characters so far:

1. Naomi
2. Ruth
3. Boaz

*(as you read the Old Testament, try to put yourself in their shoes, view life from behind their eyes; what emotions might they be experiencing? How similar are we to them, even centuries apart?)*

Discover the OT Law provisions for the poor, especially “gleaning”

Leviticus 19; Deuteronomy 24; other references?

From v12, how does the LORD repay/reward you for your faith in Him? Do an Old Testament word study on “reward” or “repay”

What is a “redeemer?” What role could he play in the clan/family? See Lev. 25, Deut 25, Jeremiah 32. Why might this revelation cause hope in Naomi?

How does the character of God produce hope in those who follow Him? How have you experienced this hope? Who do you know who needs to know this hope today?

Other observations, insights, and applications from Ruth 2??

Some further thoughts on Ruth 2 . . .

The drama of Ruth continues on with a sense of hope -- harvest season is here, and Ruth is full of faith to glean the fields, how God provides for His poor; yet also on a note of sorrow -- Naomi stays home, muted and stewing in her despairing bitterness. In one sense this is a simple story of a young woman going out to collect some grain in a nearby field, providing enough food for a few days. On the other hand, this is another huge display of God’s care and love for His own, and His undefeatable plan to exalt His Name and bring Himself the greatest glory.

 Right off the bat we encounter an honorable man, probably closer to Naomi’s age than Ruth’s -- the man Boaz. He’s a successful agri-businessman, but he knows business and profit aren’t the only things that matter in life. So he’ll show kindness, extend mercy and care to mirror the heart of God, not merely the bare minimums of His Law. *Somehow* ☺, Ruth ends up in Boaz’ field. She’s not there by accident, right?? Gleaning proves to be a tough job that Ruth’s up to. “How many times will I have to come out here? Should I go elsewhere?” Boaz assures her this is the best place to be, and she’ll have protection, provision, and even access to his workers’ water supply! We’ve come a long way from simply allowing a poor foreigner to glean grain, to now being accepted at the boss’ drinking well! I seem to remember another man having a conversation with a despised foreign woman at a well (see John 4). Could there be any parallels?

 *“Why such kindness? Who am I? What have I done to deserve such good treatment??”* Not only Ruth asks those questions in our story, but we should ask it as well – regarding God’s gracious election, adoption, and justification into His family. I did nothing to deserve His favor -- not my skills/abilities, not my family or experiences, etc. In fact, all those things, if I were to bank on them as collateral for getting on God’s “good side” and getting into heaven would actually be the very things that disqualify me. His saving grace isn’t optional, and our works supplemental to our salvation. We bring only our nothing, and He grants us His everything.

 So what should our response be to His extravagant kindness towards us? Same as Ruth’s – humility, gratitude, and a continuing sense of repentance – leaving behind the old life of sins and idols and turning toward God, more and more. ***Romans 2:4 says, “God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance.”*** What a beautiful response, simply to say, “Lord I will follow You, wherever You lead. This is my heartfelt repentance; my expression of love to You.” After all, didn’t Jesus say (John 14:15), “***If you love Me, you will obey My commands?”***

 Lastly, we see in this lavish expression of compassion, (Boaz’ grain to Ruth), a powerful collision of kindness and hope. As previously said, this is a simple story of a young woman collecting grain in a field. She hoists that 100lbs bag of grain over her shoulder (way to go Ruth!! ☺), and brings it back to Naomi, waiting without great expectations for her return. One look at that bag and Ruth’s face is all it took --- (v 20) ***“blessed by the LORD, whose loving-kindness has not forsaken the living and the dead!”*** Grace collides with faith, producing hope, producing life. Out of the dark, bitter cavern sorrow and pity had built, Naomi experiences a dramatic re-birth, a resurrection of tenacious hope. “God still cares for me, still has a plan, a future and a hope, not just in food, but in a redeemer.” Though she can’t see the end product, this is enough for her to hold onto, and change her outlook from pain and darkness to a steadfast hope, **because (God) YHWH is glorious, we have Hope.**

 I can’t wait until next week, as this ancient love story continues, twists and turns, all by His glorious plan, that He would get the greatest glory. Stay tuned, bring a friend, see you next week.

In His Grace,

Pastor Randall

**The Collision of Kindness and Hope**

**Ruth Chap. 2 Bay Point Church 5/17/15**

Sermon notes