

Ruth 2 Providence

Have you ever found yourself in a situation or a place – the only explanation how you got there – God

A) Ever said: I didn't choose this _____ / _____ choose me!

B) I could say that about this place: When I was in College living up in OC – I wasn't thinking - I want to work and live in Vista CA.

1) I had never heard of Vista – didn't know where it was

C) A lot of people still don't – “Where is your church?” – Vista – where is that – Carlsbad or Oceanside ? Oh yea – Inland about 10 minutes –

So I wasn't dreaming about Vista – But God choose me to be here – Twice.

A) So many of the greatest most wonderful things in my life have been attached to this place

B) Through being here: I met my Denise who would be become my wife.

1) After serving here for 7 yrs – left – planted a church in Oregon

C) Earlier connection brought us back – lead Pastor – I get to hang out with all of you awesome people.

1) So many of our closest friends and our kids closest friends have been connected to this place.

D) When you can look back on the events in your life – and you see them as being more than just random, happen stance events

1) But You see there is a Divine hand that has been orchestrating – the various twist and turns – that is what we refer to as the Providence of God;

Webster Divines Providence in this way: Providence = God's guidance and care.

A) **Dr. J. Veron Magee** “Providence is the unseen rudder on the ship. Providence is the means by which God directs all things — both animate and inanimate, seen and unseen, good and evil — toward a worthy purpose, which means His will must finally prevail.”

Theme of Chapter 2 is Providence – God's hands orchestrating events that will impact individual lives- eventually the World

A) The events that happen here in this chapter will eventually lead to the Birth of Christ Jesus the savior of the world.

B) Recap: As we began the book of Ruth last week, we were introduced to a family from the tribe of Judah living in Bethlehem.

1) When famine hit, they sold their land/ hit the road to Moab

C) That's not where God's people are supposed to go. There's no believers there. No worship of God there. 1) There's no church there. / fellowship there

D) The people of Moab worship Chemosh and other false gods. They don't love the God of the Bible, No regard for what God's values.

1) But this man whose name is Elimelech = God is King – takes his family there wife and two boys /– they don't want to die of starvation

They are there for 10yrs – His boys grow up they marry two Moabite women –one is named Orpah, the other is named Ruth

A) But – Elimelech dies – and his two boys also die/ Why did they go to Moab- so they wouldn't die

B) And when we run to the world – Death in some fashion is always the result

1) So the men die

C) And now we have 3 widows – Naomi – the Mom – her two daughters in law Ruth and Orpah

Well Naomi hears there was bread again in Bethlehem = house of bread

A) She comes to her senses – I am going home – but you girls should stay here – Moab is your Home – Orpah – agrees

B) But Ruth says no way: I am staying with you – Where you go I will go – your people my people – your God my God.

C) So Naomi and Ruth traveled back to Bethlehem – when they arrived – the women of Bethlehem say: Is that Naomi = Pleasant

1) Naomi = says yes it is me – but don't call me Naomi anymore – don't call me pleasant – Call me Mara = bitterness – God has dealt bitterly with me.

That is where we left Naomi and Ruth last week.

A) Noted Ruth could easily be a four act play - Chapter 2 would be Act 2

B) New Setting – Back in Bethlehem: Before the scene starts – the Narrator introduces us to a new Character – Boaz

There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz.

C) Boaz = Standing in strength

Remember this was the time of the Judges – when everyone was doing what was right in their own eyes – Boaz stood in Strength

A) Boaz remained faithful to the Lord

B) Relative – Kinsman or Goel – (see this is important – next week)

➤ A man of great wealth

C) Ten years before, Naomi and her family made a choice, go to Moab/ and it was a choice made in a hard time – a time of famine.

D) But they didn't have to make the wrong choice they did.

1) The people of Bethlehem had not perished from hunger.

D) During the time of famine, when Elimelech, Naomi, and their whole family had left the Promised Land and went to Moab,

1) Boaz had stayed behind – and God provided for him. In fact, God made Boaz a man of great wealth.

Boaz was such an impressive man that when his great, great grandson Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem –

A) He named one of the two Pillars in the temple: Boaz – Pillars are symbols of strength –

B) Solomon no doubt heard the stories of his great, great GF – being this man who stood in strength – did the right thing

1) Named one of the Pillars after him.

C) So here in Chapter 2 – we are introduced to this important character Boaz – Older man – single man (not sure if ever been married or not)

1) But he is going to play a special role in this story of God's redemption

Act 2 Scene 1 opens with Naomi and Ruth sitting in a house – two poor widows –

A) trying to figure out how they are going to Survive

B) No money, no Husbands, no Job's -

So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor."

B) Israel's Welfare plan – God had provided a pretty awesome plan for how the poor would be taken care of in Israel

1) During each Season of Harvest the Lord gave these instructions

⁹ "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰ And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God. Leviticus 19:9-10

C) So first of all the Lord instructed when you Harvest your crops don't harvest them bare. –

1) Leave some for the poor and the stranger

D) Principle: Been blessed to be a blessing –

1) let others, let those who are needy – be blessed out of your abundance /

God's plan: As long as the Poor and needy were willing to work – they could be taken care of.

A) The Lord put it this way in Deuteronomy 24:19-21 ¹⁹ "When you reap your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. ²⁰ When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

²¹ When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

B)The Harvesters were not allowed to circle back around and pick up what they had missed –
1)One time through – the left overs were for the poor/ fatherless/ widow

C)Jesus said – You will always have the poor- God is ingenious in his care for the poor

1)He set up a system where the poor are not **demeaned** by being forced to take a handout.

B)No God set up a system that gave them the opportunity to be resourceful –

1)Maintain their dignity – rather than be demeaned.

C)That the poor could be provided for to the degree they were willing to be resourceful and work for the provision that was available

1)Ruth has somehow heard of this system –

Ruth takes initiative – she is not looking to Naomi – to give her something – she is taking initiative

A)Not looking for Naomi to provide – for her – she is not expecting Naomi to get out in the field with her.

B)She realizes that at Naomi’s age that would be really hard –

1)No she is committed to taking care of Naomi – she is ready to get to work

C)Ruth is willing to be ostracized – as a foreigner

1)she is willing to risk sexual abuse at the hands of laborers – in order to fulfill her obligation to Naomi

D)When Ruth said: Where you go I will go ...your people Your God – that meant something to her.

E)She is taking initiative here to make something happen.

Pastor Chuck used to describe the Spirit filled life “as being under the spout where the blessings can come out.”

A)When Naomi and her family left to go to Moab – they left the spout – they ended up in a place – not refreshed at all – death and despair

B)But now she is back – and the blessings are about to start flowing.

C)So Act 2 Scene 1 Ruth says – let me go find a field to glean in –

V.2b And she said to her, “Go, my daughter.” Act 2 scene 1 ends – Ruth is getting up to go

Act 2 Scene 2 Opens – V.3 Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.

A)Providence V.3 She happened to come.... / We say: it just so happened – or She got lucky –

B)But When someone is following the Lord – things don’t just happen. – God is moving the ships rudder

C)Proverbs 16:9 The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.

1)Proverbs 20:24 Man's steps are ordained by the LORD, how then can man understand his way?

D)Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.

Ruth thinks she is going out to find a random field – any field of someone who will let her glean – She ends up in the field of Boaz

A)He is this great guy – Great Boss – He is wealthy – Compassionate
And He is a Relative – Kinsman – Goel

B)This is why this is important – Another law that the Lord had set up –

1)In the event that a property was lost – bankruptcy – poor decision / death

C)The closest kinsman in your family had the right at any time to buy back that Property...to keep it in the family

D)Such a person was called the Goel – The kinsman redeemer!

There were 3 Criteria for being the Kinsman redeemer.

#1 He had to be the nearest Kinsman

#2 He had to be Able- financially afford it

#3 He had to be Willing.

A)But The Law also said that if a man died and left his wife a widow / no son/ and didn't have a brother who could marry her.

B)The Kinsman redeemer could marry her – if again he was the nearest Kinsman – He was financially able to take care of her

1)And he was willing to do it

C)Boaz fits the criteria to be this Kinsman redeemer – but we are soon going to find out – he is not the nearest Kinsman –

1)There is another who is going to have first dibs

D)So Ruth just so happens to end up working in Boaz field –

1)She doesn't know him – never heard of him – just so happened to end up there

How the Providence of God works:

A)How did Ruth end up in the field of Boaz ? – She woke up that morning and said I will go glean

B)Who's choice was that ? Ruth's

1)Why go there out ? Naomi's encouragement

How was it that she should glean in the field of a guy named Boaz?

A)Because Boaz had determined that this was to be the week that they would harvest his field – who decided that ? Boaz did

B)Ruth said I am going to go find a field –

1)Naomi said – You go girl

C)Boaz says it is time to harvest my crop

D)These become the tools and instruments of God's providential care to orchestrate His plan of redemption.

4 Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, "The Lord be with you!" And they answered him, "The Lord bless you!"

A)How would you like to work for that Guy?

5 Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?"

6 So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, "It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of

Moab. 7 And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house."

Providence doesn't mean everything just falls into our laps

A)Ruth was a hard worker- V.7 She was here early – she was been working hard until now.

B)Ruth was under inspection. The supervisor was looking at what kind of job she did and he was impressed that she did a good job.

C)Her new Job was menial, tiring, and somewhat degrading – yet it was done faithfully and diligently

1)What is your attitude when it comes to menial tasks?

Proverbs 12:24 "The hand of the diligent will rule, But the lazy man will be put to forced labor."

Proverbs 13:4 "The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich."

The Famous pianist Jan Paderewski was asked by a fellow pianist if he could be ready to play a recital on short notice. The famous musician replied, "I am always ready. I have practiced 8 hours daily for 40 years."

The other pianist said, "I wish I had been born with such determination." Paderewski replied, "We are all born with it. I just used mine."

D)And Ruth used hers as well. – Supervisor took notice

8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women. 9 Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn."

A)God was blessing Ruth already and all because He guided her to Boaz's field.

B)Boaz knew that if Ruth stayed in his fields, she would be blessed and find:

- Find *companionship* (among the young women).
- Ruth would find *protection* (Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you?).
- In Boaz's field, Ruth would find *refreshment* (when you are thirsty).

10 So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?" (Why is this great guy taking notice of me a foreigner)

11 And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before.

C) Ruth has a great Reputation: Boaz says – has been reported to me

1) He's done his homework on this gal. And praises her for her kindness to Naomi.

How is a good reputation formed?

A) "It is formed by the people who watch us at work/school, in our neighborhoods, in our church.

B) It comes by consistently living out the qualities you believe in."

C) Q: What reputation do you have with the people you work with? Live by?

People in your family? Your church family?

D) Ruth's Reputation preceded her.

E) Boaz is impressed with Ruth's reputation:

12 The Lord repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge." 13 Then she said, "Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants."

Act 2 Scene 2 ends on that note:- Stage goes dark

A) We are left to wonder – what is going on with these two – Ruth and Boaz

B) Is Boaz just being kind or is he interested in this poor widow Ruth

Act 2 Scene 3 opens –

A) We sort of get an answer – Lunch time – everyone is coming in from the field for a break
14 Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, "Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar." / So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched grain to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back. (Box to go for Naomi – always thinking about her mother-in-law)
15 And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. 16 Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."

B) So at this point – We get the idea – Boaz definitely seems interested in Ruth – Come eat with me.

C) When Lunch is over and it is time to go back into the fields –

1) Let her glean even among the sheaves – other words – not just the left overs

D) Let her glean with the pickers – even though she is picking for herself – let some grain fall purposely –

1) LISTEN – I want to take care of this woman.

E) Now at this point I want to pause in the story and have you consider a couple of things

First of note: We are told nothing about Ruth's appearance in this story.

A) We don't know if she is a pretty woman or not.

B) That is interesting because when someone is pretty – the Bible often makes it known to us

C) Sarah, Bathsheba, Rachel, others – their beauty is mentioned for us – Sometimes we are told someone was really beautiful

1) But with Ruth – we are told nothing about her outward appearance –

D) ONLY HER CHARACTER – She is grimy – working in the fields – not sweaty – dirty

So Why is that important?

A)I think it is the Lord's way of reminding us that inward beauty is more important than outward beauty. B)We live in a culture that places way more emphasis on the outward.

1)But the Bible places a greater emphasis on the inward.

“Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel—⁴ rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.” 1 Peter 3:3-4

C)Reminder to women – Don't just focus on the outward – Inward is even more important – Godly Character is really Beautiful

But I think this is also a reminder for Single Christian men: When you are looking for a mate – don't just pay attention to the outward

A)The inward is more important – Outward beauty fades over time
Inward beauty grows

B)I remember years ago talking with an older single brother in our church- who wanted to get married

1)There was a older single gal – really godly gal who was interested in him

C)SO I asked him – bro what do you think – she is a great lady – loves Jesus -strong walk – godly character

1)He replied – Yea that is true – but I am just not really attracted to her

D)Without even thinking – this is what came out of my mouth – I said bro have you looked in the mirror lately?

1)You are not the Stud muffin you were in your 20's either

I think sometimes single people put way too much emphasis on outward appearance or even some ideal that they have in their minds

A)I know Some Christian men – mid 30's, ten years talking about wanting to get married – lots of interest – still single

B)What are you waiting for dude: Sometimes it is just this ideal person that probably doesn't exist

C)Ruth was not the ideal wife – especially in that culture: A little different today.

Think about this: She was not a Virgin – Big deal in that culture – Discovered a girl was not a virgin – Stoned to death

A)Now in Ruth's case – it is because she is a Widow – but She comes from a pagan background – Promiscuous culture

B)So who knows what skeletons are in her closet because of her past

C)She is older for that culture – Probably married around 16-20 – and years have gone by –

1)Mid 20's to even 30 year old

I think this is worth noting – because I think we live in a culture where most people you encounter – going to have baggage.

A)Found the importance of talking about that in Pre-marital counseling

B)Baggage – Skeletons in the Closet

C)I think if you are open – the Lord will lead some of you single people to marry someone – NOT YOUR IDEAL –

1)Maybe divorced – maybe kids – maybe crazy past – done things regret or had things done to them – left them scarred

D)Like Ruth they don't come from a Christian Background

1)But you get to be a blessing from God in that person's life if you are open –

E)And they get to be a blessing in your life – beyond what you could have ever imagined –

1)Open to God's Providential leading

So Act 2 Scene 3 ends with Ruth – packing up having gleaned more than she can carry - 17 So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

A)Now an Ephah of Barley is about **6gallons** – so picture this Ruth comes home with a 5 gallon - container and a gallon jug of cereal

B)That will last these two ladies for a while

C) Act 2 Scene 4 opens with Naomi's response:

18 Then she took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied. (She gives Naomi her to-go box)

19 And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz."

20 Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed be he of the Lord, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!" And Naomi said to her, "This man is a relation of ours, one of our close relatives." **(Naomi realize the Lord might be orchestrating a plan to carry on the family name of Elimelech).**

Notice the Change: This is Mara, the bitter woman who is now Naomi, the worshipper of God, who is blessing again.

A) Romans says that it's the kindness of God that leads to repentance.

B) God is lovingly, graciously, kindly, mercifully, provided for Ruth and Naomi, and now Naomi's heart opens up.

C) She says, "Praise God! We asked God for help and God has answered our prayers. Praise be to God."

D) And He is a close relative of ours –

E) Naomi – realizes this might be better than she could have ever imagined –

1) Something special is happening here

21 Ruth the Moabitess said, "He also said to me, 'You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'" 22 And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet you in any other field." 23 So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

Chapter 3 or Act 3 starts – she is going to devise this plan for Ruth – see if Boaz is interested romantically

A) At first reading – the plan seems inappropriate

B) She instructs Ruth sneak into where Boaz is sleeping at night and to lie at the foot of his bed
1) Wakes up in the morning and finds you there

C) We will explain that next time... unfolds

So this story gives us a vivid depiction of the Providence of God.

A) He is the rudder steering the ship -working behind the scenes to bring about His Plan.

B) We discover His will/ His plan – we encounter His blessings – by doing what Ruth did.

1) by taking initiative – doing what is in front of us

C) Allowing the Lord to lead us on the way.

Seeking to be led by the Holy Spirit – that is what keeps us under the spout where the blessings...out

A) As we do God will surprise us and do MORE with us and thru us – than we could ever imagine.

B) That will definitely be the case with Ruth the Moabitess –

1) She is going to end up in the family line of Jesus the Messiah – the Savior of the World.

C) As we close today: Are you still in Moab (the world) or are you walking with the Lord?

D) If walking with the Lord- be mindful of those Divine appointments

1) People and situations God puts right in front of you on a daily basis

E) Your opportunity to Bless someone

1) Be blessed – as you do