

How did that happen?

Ruth 2 – Lesson for Sunday, November 27, 2022

INTRO:

- Have you ever been in a situation that left you asking: How did that just happen? *You may want to ask the class for some examples to share...*
- Different worldviews have different explanations for why things happen like they do.
 - Eastern Religions believe in karma. “What goes around comes around!” You experience bad things because you have done bad things in your past, etc.
 - Naturalists (atheists, etc.) believe there is no purpose to anything in this world. There is no ultimate explanation for anything.
- For Christians, we believe in a sovereign God who is actively at work in and around our lives – even when we fail to recognize it. This is clearly seen in the book of Ruth.

OUTLINE:

1. The Mission of Ruth (vs. 1-2)
 - a. Ruth volunteers to glean the leftover grain from the fields of some kind farmer so she and Naomi have food to eat.
 - b. The practice of gleaning allowed the poor to go through the fields after the harvesters, picking up the grain that was left behind, along with the grain that the landowners were required to leave at the edges of their fields (Leviticus 19:9-10).
 - c. Humanly speaking, Ruth “just happened” to end up gleaning in his field, but there are no coincidences in God’s program. This was a divine appointment that proved that God was not against Naomi as she thought He as (1:20-21).
 - i. How does this point apply to us and our lives?
 - ii. Do we always recognize when God is working around us?
2. The Meeting with Boaz (vs. 3-17)
 - a. His encounter with Ruth (vs. 3-13)
 - i. The circumstances (vs. 3-7): As Ruth sets out to gather grain, she selects a field belonging to a wealthy man named Boaz. When he arrives, he inquires about Ruth.
 1. Even in his greeting, we see he has a relationship with the Lord (vs. 4).
 2. We also see that even though Ruth was known as a foreigner (Moab) from a hostile, pagan land, Boaz showed her kindness and saw her value as a human being.
 - ii. The conversation (vs. 8-13): Boaz tells her to stay in his field and praises Ruth for her kindness to Naomi.
 1. This shows us that Boaz was not just a wealthy man, he was a man of character.
 2. Vs. 11 teaches a valuable lesson: Her character was more important than her nationality. Her willingness to stay with her mother-in-law and to work hard in the field showed more about who Ruth was than simply where she was from.
 3. How well do we look for people’s character? Are we too quick to make judgments from their outer appearance?
 - b. His encouragement to Ruth (vs. 14-17)
 - i. The invitation (vs. 14): Boaz invites Ruth to eat from the food he has provided for his harvesters.
 - ii. The instructions (vs. 15-17): Boaz instructs his workers to leave ample heads of barley in the field for Ruth.
 1. Note that there is no hint of a romantic interest from Boaz. He was simply demonstrating his compassion and generosity.

2. His generosity was shown in the amount of grain that Ruth harvested – 26 quarts. In those days, that was enough grain to feed a working man for several weeks, probably 22-30 pounds.
3. The Marveling of Naomi (vs. 18-23)
 - a. Upon returning home, Ruth tells Naomi about Boaz’s kindness.
 - b. Naomi blesses Boaz and tells Ruth that he is a close relative (who can marry her).
 - c. Vs. 20 – This is a shift in Naomi’s thinking and attitude from 1:21. She was beginning to understand that God was working even when she could not see it.
 - d. Vs. 20 is key! Naomi identifies Boaz as a kinsman redeemer.
 - i. These were relatives who were obliged to buy back family members from debt-slavery or to redeem their field if they had to sell it.
 - ii. Sometimes they would also be willing to raise up a child for the dead relative in order to maintain the family name and their inherited property.

APPLICATION:

- The entire narrative of Ruth changes in verse 3 when Ruth “happened” upon Boaz’s field. God was directing her to the right place at the right time with the right person to help meet her needs. Even in the “accidents” of the faithful, God is involved. Ruth simply had to be faithful. How does this apply to us in our lives?
- When it comes to relating to other people, what lesson from this story do you need to apply the most?
 - Vs. 4 – to cheerfully bless others
 - Vs. 9 – to make sure others aren’t harassed
 - Vs. 15 – not to embarrass others or make them look bad
 - Vs. 10, 19 – to show gratitude for the help I receive
 - Vs. 12, 16 – to respect and be generous with those who work for me
 - Vs. 13, 17 – to respect those I work for and be faithful in my duties
- When we look at the life of Ruth, are there qualities in her life that you need to show more of? Examples: Courage and willingness to take risks; loyalty to those I love; discipline to work long and hard at a task; respect and appreciation for others.