

Oh, Woman. Great is your Faith

Book of Ruth

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I invite you to turn with me in your Bibles to the third chapter of Ruth. Ruth 3. The title of the message is "Oh, Woman. Great is your Faith," and I borrow that title from Matthew 15:28 where Jesus says that to the Syro-Phoenician woman, "O woman, great is your faith," because I think in this passage the spotlight what we're going to look at today in verses 6 to 15, the spotlight changes from Naomi to Ruth. We now watch Ruth go and fulfill the counsel of Naomi and in so doing what she does is she offers to us an example of faith that receives the promises; a faith that overcomes; a faith that is saving faith; a faith that is persevering faith. We have in this passage a type of the kind of faith with which we ought to approach the one who provides salvation.

Now, we have in this book, it is truly a story of loss and restoration. We see that and we talked about that. Naomi went out full, comes back empty, and we see her, the story is of her moving from emptiness to fullness at the end of the book. It is a story of love: Ruth's love for her mother-in-law; Boaz and Ruth's love for one another; and God's love all throughout, particularly for Naomi. It's a story though not just of loss and restoration in a temporal sense, it is that, it is about Naomi and Ruth's hopeless condition physically and the transformation of that through God's kindness and the giving of a son and the redeemer, Boaz, who restores their fortunes, but in the economy of God, in the plan of God, it is a picture of the story of salvation. It is a type. Typology is an important concept that helps us to understand the teachings of Scripture. Typology, that is the idea that there are stories in the Old Testament which are told as 1 Corinthians 10:6 and 11 uses the word "example," the English word "example," that translates the Greek word "tupos" which we get our English word transliterated "type." These things happened as examples for us. These things happened as types for us to teach us about what faith is, about what it means to be a follower of God.

Jesus makes the point in Luke 24 when he on the road to Emmaus explains to his disciples how the whole Old Testament proclaims him. "The law and the prophets and the writings all were talking about Me," and one of the ways that they were talking about Jesus is through this idea of typology; that he is typified in so many of the Old Testament stories as certain characters, particularly culminating in the whole idea of Messiah, the King who is not only a King, the Messiah is a prophet and a priest and a King, so all three offices, prophet, typified Christ, the one who would come. The prophet was the one who

was given God's word and who spoke God's word. Jesus is the ultimate prophet, the one who not only speaks God's word but is God's word. The priest typified Jesus, the priest who stood between man and God offering sacrifices so that sinners could be made right with God, particularly the high priest who offered the blood of atonement. That is typified and fulfilled in Jesus who is our great high priest, who made an offering once for all. So you see the pictures in the Old Testament are pointing to the fulfillment in Jesus. And of course, the King. The King not like Saul but a King like David, a man after God's heart. That's what we need to rule over us, a King like David but a King greater than David, truly the King Jesus.

So these are examples of how typology works and what I would suggest to you is that in the book of Ruth there is a powerful typology going on in that in the very real historical circumstances of a woman Naomi, and a woman Ruth, who find themselves destitute, impoverished, in need of God's provision of redemption, God's word, they need a redeemer to redeem them from their hopelessness and their poverty and to bring them into God's blessing in the fullness of his inheritance. And what kind of a redeemer do they need? They need a kinsman redeemer which is what the whole book is about, the search for the kinsman redeemer, and what I would suggest to you is that God in his infinite wisdom set up the whole kinsman redeemer scheme in the Old Testament because it was a picture of the one to come. God doesn't do things after the fact and say, "Hey, I've got a good idea. That whole kinsman thing, I'm going to use that." No, he put the kinsman redeemer idea in the beginning to picture his Son who would come. The Redeemer that we need to redeem us from our own spiritual poverty, our spiritual hopelessness, our spiritual helplessness would be one who had to be of our own flesh and blood. He had to be a near kinsman. Only a near kinsman could pay the redemption price. So that's the overarching beautiful portrait that's being painted in this book.

Boaz is a type of Jesus and we can see in Naomi and in Ruth, particularly today in Ruth, types of faith and saving faith that lays hold of God's provider, God's provision, God's Savior, and we have in Ruth today as we look at this passage, an example of the faith that receives the promises: saving faith and continuing persevering faith, the kind of faith that each one of us needs to possess for it is by faith that you are saved; by grace you are saved through faith. Only faith lays hold of the promises of God. We heard that passage earlier, Hebrews 11, by faith, by faith, by faith, by faith. Salvation is by faith and here we have an example of what that looks like.

Now, Ruth is in the spotlight, we're going to see, and so we are looking at her faith and we're seeing in it a picture of what faith needs to be like and an opportunity to examine our own hearts and our own faith. Let's read the entire chapter again, chapter 3, verse 1 through verse 18 and we're going to be focusing a lot in on verses 9 to 15.

1 Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? 2 Now is not Boaz our kinsman, with whose maids you were? Behold, he winnows barley at the threshing floor tonight. 3 Wash yourself therefore, and anoint yourself and put on your best clothes, and go down to the threshing floor; but do not

make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 It shall be when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies, and you shall go and uncover his feet and lie down; then he will tell you what you shall do." 5 She said to her, "All that you say I will do." 6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law had commanded her. 7 When Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came secretly, and uncovered his feet and lay down. 8 It happened in the middle of the night that the man was startled and bent forward; and behold, a woman was lying at his feet. 9 He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth your maid. So spread your covering over your maid, for you are a close relative." 10 Then he said, "May you be blessed of the LORD, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness to be better than the first by not going after young men, whether poor or rich. 11 Now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you ask, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence. 12 Now it is true I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. 13 Remain this night, and when morning comes, if he will redeem you, good; let him redeem you. But if he does not wish to redeem you, then I will redeem you, as the LORD lives. Lie down until morning." 14 So she lay at his feet until morning and rose before one could recognize another; and he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." 15 Again he said, "Give me the cloak that is on you and hold it." So she held it, and he measured six measures of barley and laid it on her. Then she went into the city. 16 When she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did it go, my daughter?" And she told her all that the man had done for her. 17 She said, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said, 'Do not go to your mother-in-law empty-handed.'" 18 Then she said, "Wait, my daughter, until you know how the matter turns out; for the man will not rest until he has settled it today."

Let's pray together.

Father, we ask that you by your grace because of the payment of Jesus Christ for us, might open our eyes to see and behold wonderful things from your law and in your law to behold more clearly the beauty of your Son. We pray in his name. Amen.

Oh, Woman. Great is your Faith. We can consider this the nature of Ruth's faith under three points and the first point that we need to see about faith that lays hold of the promises is that faith understands its position. Faith understands its position, something that we have seen before but that we need to be reminded of here. Ruth is going to Boaz because she understands that she has nowhere else to go. She knows that she is in great need. As a woman who has no husband, with a mother-in-law who has no husband, she is without a father-in-law and without a husband, two women without men, to have no man is to have no hope. That's the refrain we've used that was common in ancient Israel, in

ancient society. To have no man is to have no hope. She had no hope. She is empty like Naomi. There is a sense of emptiness. Though they had gotten some provision from Boaz, generous provision earlier, basically that's going to run out soon and they will be empty again. So not only are they empty but they are, as I said, hopeless. They have no hope for the future and they are helpless. There is nothing they can do about it.

So Ruth sees herself rightly, that to make her way in the world, she is first of all, aware of her great need. She's empty, helpless and hopeless, and the starting point for saving faith is always that point, an awareness of one's helplessness, one's emptiness, one's hopelessness. This is why Jesus, the first sermon we have him preaching that we are given in full detail in the New Testament is Matthew 5, the Sermon on the Mount, and when he sits down, the people sit down and he begins to preach, what's the first thing he says? "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." He's basically saying, "Blessed are you, oh, how happy are you, when you are completely impoverished in spirit." Now, that's an oxymoronic kind of statement. Happiness comes from fullness, not emptiness, but Jesus is saying, "No, how happy are you when you realize that you are completely empty spiritually before God; that you have nothing to commend yourself before God." Why? Because that's the beginning of receiving from God his provision and until you get to that point, you cannot receive his provision so we must get to that point of seeing that we have nothing before God, that even our righteousness is as filthy rags. Can a leopard change his spots? Can an Ethiopian change the color of his skin? Neither can you who are sinners do righteousness.

We have no ability and so that is the beginning and so the beginning of coming to Christ is coming to understand that it's not works, that you can do nothing to merit God's favor. No matter how hard you try to reform your life, if you make drastic changes, you still fall so infinitely far short of the glory of God and that he is just in punishing us in hell forever because one sin is cosmic rebellion, it is anarchy. Any time, we don't see it this way, we pretty it up but sin is so ugly in the sight of God because he sees it rightly. You know, we think that we are better than the next person and maybe we're not as good as that person and if God grades on the curve, then maybe we're okay. But God doesn't grade on the curve because that would be an appalling act of injustice. He's too pure to look upon evil. He cannot have wickedness come into his presence. For him to pardon sinners or to grade on the curve would be like letting...the most helpful analogy that we can get because we miss this so far would be to pardon serial killers, people who have maliciously killed children and abused and destroyed human lives over and over and over again. "Okay, no problem, we forgive you. No punishment. Keep on going." That's the closest that we can get and that is an infinite...yours and my feeling of being appalled at when you see something so wicked not punished, that is a tiny drop at what God feels over our sin. It must be punished and so we are without hope apart from his provision and, praise God, his provision is infinitely efficacious and able.

But you have to see, first of all, your emptiness. So faith understands its position. Secondly, the second point: faith expresses itself in action. True saving faith, faith is the empty outstretched hand of a beggar, Luther said. That's a great illustration of what faith is. Faith doesn't offer anything to God. As the song says, we come empty-handed.

"Nothing in my hand I bring, only to the cross I cling." There is nothing I can bring to God. So Luther says saving faith is the empty outstretched hand of a beggar but it's not a hand that is over here, it's reaching out. It's reaching out to God. It's reaching out to Christ. And we see this exemplified in Ruth. She's not at home, I mean, she's done praying and I'm saying she should be praying even as she's going through this but she's not home cloistered away just praying. "God, provide for our needs." She puts her faith in action and she goes to Boaz. So what this means, now for us action is prayer because we're going to Christ but it means there is not a resignation. There is a kind of resignation, unbelief, that almost faith has that, "Well, God has to do it. I can't do it. I can't seek him." Yeah, he does have to save you but what are you supposed to do? Seek him with all your heart. Know that you have nothing to commend in but go after him. Look to Christ. Abide in his word. So we see that exemplified in Ruth.

I want to share four sub points. Faith expresses itself in action and there are four actions that I see here that we can learn from as it relates to saving faith or the faith of a believer. You know, we're not just talking about getting saved, we're talking about faith on an everyday basis too. How do you live the Christian life? As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so also walk ye in him, Colossians tells us. So on a daily basis, what's the way to live the Christian life? It's to continually see my poverty and spiritual need and that Jesus is everything that I need.

So now, what does that look like in action? Faith expresses itself in action. We see, first of all, that true faith, there are four subpoints here: faith humbly submits. There is a teachability and a humility about faith. When someone is really looking to God, when they have really come to the end of themselves, they are willing to listen. They are willing to be taught and you see that with Ruth. Look at her statement in verse 5. After her mother-in-law gives her this plan, "All that you say I will do." Now, also implicit in it is she has accepted what her mother-in-law said at the end of verse 4, "then he will tell you what you shall do." So she's going to Boaz because her mother-in-law suggested it and she senses that God's at work in this and so she goes and she's obeying and she's taking action, but she's ready to be instructed and she's ready to do whatever Boaz tells her to do because that's what her mother-in-law even told her to do and she's agreeing to. "Yes, whatever he says I will do."

Faith humbly submits so it expresses itself in humble submission. There is a wholehearted submission. "All that you say I will do." When God is working in the heart to help us truly in salvation or in obedient action as a Christian, there is a sense of wholehearted obedience. That's the evidence of faith, that, "All you say I will do." You know, one of the things, and God blesses this. One of the things that trips us up a lot is our pride and this is something I have seen a lot of times in sharing the word with believers and trying to counsel them through various problems and knowing my own heart and how sin is in my own life, sometimes you will be on the receiving end, you will be being counseled by a brother or sister, "Hey, I think you need to do this." You're supposed to test everything by the word of God; you don't take unbiblical counsel, right? So I'm not saying you always...Acts 17:11 is always a helpful balance. You have Act 17:11 that says the Bereans were more noble-minded than the Thessalonians because they

searched the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul was saying was true. It's powerful. The apostle, they were testing him out saying, "Are you faithful to the Old Testament?" The Old Testament. They were looking at the Old Testament saying, "Is what he is saying consistent?"

So there is that element but there is also Scriptures like this that say: submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger. Listen to your brother. Be ready to be admonished. Be ready to humble yourself under the word of God. So you had this tension, right? Well, faith is ready to humble itself, to submit. "All that you say I will do." And so in counseling, sometimes I've encountered this that sometimes when we're working through a problem with someone, they don't see the problem the same way the counselor does, the brother that's looking at it, the pastor, the elder, the brother or sister in Christ. "I see my problem as this." Say I'm the one that's got the problem and, "I want you to help me with this," and my brother says, "I think you need to work on this. You need to meditate on this passage and you need to work on this issue," and I'm looking and saying, "Well, I think you're wrong," in my heart, "I think my problem is over here and I just don't think you know what you're doing." Well, if I trust God and if I have a right view of myself, I may be wrong about what really my issue is. In fact, I'm more likely to be wrong about it than they are because I sure can see their problem well just like they can see my problem well. We can always see the other person's problem clearer than our own.

So we humble ourselves and say, "Okay, Lord, you put them in my life. I'm willing to do what they're telling me to do, to work on this area I don't even see as necessarily germane." And I will tell you that God will bless your obedience to that, even if they're even off. I mean, I'm not saying if they are telling you heresy, of course not. But if they're saying, "Work on, hey, you need to work on this issue of pride rather than this other issue you think you need to work on." Work on the issue of pride. Humble yourself. Faith does that. Faith submits and God blesses faith and the fact is more often than not they are right. God is using them. And on the other side people say, "You know, you were right. I didn't realize this was what I needed to deal with. When you said it, I thought you were wrong but this is exactly what I needed to deal with." God is so good.

Now, so faith gladly submits. Faith expresses itself in action. Faith humbly submits. Secondly, faith gladly surrenders. Faith gladly surrenders. What you have exemplified in Ruth is full surrender, first of all, in her action. She lies at his feet. She is surrendering herself to him. And then in her words. When he wakes up and he says, "Who are you?" and she says, "I am Ruth your maid. So spread your covering over," it doesn't say over me, does it? It says, "over your maid." Do you see that repetition? "Your maid" twice. This particular word for "maid" emphasizes the servility of her position, the fact that she is saying, "I am your servant. I am your slave." It's a word that could be used for a female slave. Most often in the Old Testament that's exactly how it is used. "Spread your covering over your slave, over your servant." So the idea is she is expressing in her words that she will do whatever he says. Now, remember I'm saying, back to the point: this is a picture of how we come to Jesus because Boaz is a type of Jesus. How do we come to Jesus? We come ready to submit humbly and we ought to come gladly surrendering.

Faith humbly submits to Jesus and faith gladly surrenders to Jesus so that there is the sense in which we come as his servant. That's why the Bible, this whole idea of Lordship salvation controversy, many who teach that you can receive Jesus as Savior and not as Lord, and then later you might have an experience they say and you'll grow in the grace of Christ and you'll receive him as Lord. That's just not biblical. To receive Jesus as Savior, you must receive him as Lord. He does not come into your life to be just a guest, he comes in to take over, to take charge.

So now, when he comes in, the rest of your Christian life is trying to live out consistently with that, to continue to submit to his Lordship, yes. It's a battle daily. The sin nature working against you constantly, but faith gladly surrenders. It humbly submits. Secondly, it gladly surrenders. "Lord Jesus, whatever you want, take it." That's the sense in which she comes to Boaz. Thirdly, faith not only humbly submits and gladly surrenders, the third aspect of faith expressing itself in action is faith fervently seeks. Fervently seeks. When he asked the question, "Who are you?" and she said, "I am Ruth your maid," and she says, "So spread your covering over your maid, for you are a close relative," there is a sense in which she is imploring him, pleading with him to take action. She doesn't passively just wait, "I'm just here, tell me what to do." No, she asks him, she is surrendered to him but she is also clinging to him. This is what saving faith looks like. She's basically and the interesting typology is she is taking him at his word. The beauty of how this book is put together, Ruth, the way it's put together, Ruth 2 told us what Boaz had said to her himself in their first meeting. When he said in chapter 2, verse 12, "May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be full," he's calling out a blessing upon her. "I want you to receive this blessing. I want you to be rewarded for your work and your wages to be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, and I want you to find refuge under his wings." That's Boaz's heart. So in chapter 3, verse 9, Ruth is saying, "I heard your words. I'm taking you at your word and I'm asking you to fulfill your word." And this is how we come to Jesus. "I've heard your word. I understand what you've said and I'm asking you to fulfill and to operate consistently with what you've promised." She's asking Boaz to be the instrument of actually accomplishing what he said.

There is an interesting play on words there in the first time when she says, "spread your covering over your maid," the word "covering, spread the covering," is identical to the phrase used by Boaz in chapter 2, verse 12, "under whose wings you have come to seek refuge." You could have translated what Ruth said, "I am Ruth your maid. So spread your wings over your maid." So she's saying, "The blessing that you want for me, I'm asking you to effect." There is a kind of a boldness about this. "I won't take no for an answer because I know that you have promised." Like we looked at last week, the Syro-Phoenician woman, remember, who Jesus seemed to push away, didn't listen to her at first. She is crying out and he's not paying attention to her. The disciples, it's so bad the disciples have to say, "Jesus, what are we going to do about this woman?" And he says to them in her hearing, "I've come to the people of Israel. I have no business with a Syro-Phoenician." And she runs ahead into his presence and says, "Lord, help me! Help me!" And he then says directly to her now, he first didn't listen to her, then he talked about her in the third person, now he says to her, "Shall I take the bread and give it to the dogs? Take it from the children to give to the dogs? Does that make sense?" And she says,

"Well, even the dogs get to eat the crumbs that fall from the table." And he says, "Oh, woman. Great is your faith. You have received your blessing." She would not be put off because she understood he had come into the land of the Syro-Phoenicians. He had come out of Israel to the region of Tyre and Sidon to offer salvation. This is that same kind of faith in Ruth. "Jesus, you came into the world to save sinners. You have poured out your blood on the cross to save sinners. You have expressed that you are willing to receive any who come to you therefore I believe you will save me." And you cling to him until he blesses you like Jacob did the angel of the Lord. Ruth is doing that. So faith fervently seeks.

Then fourthly, the fourth action of her faith is: faith joyfully selects. Faith joyfully selects. She has made a selection, a choice. Boaz immediately commends that when he says, "May you be blessed of the LORD, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness to be better than the first by not going after young men, whether poor or rich." He's basically saying and commending her last kindness better than her first. He's saying, "You've made a choice. You made a deliberate choice not to go after younger men who could have solved your problem of needing provision, your need for rest and well-being. You could have gone after younger, more attractive men. You could have gone after younger men who were more likely to live as long as you. You could have done that but you didn't and you have chosen in this, this choice is even greater than your previous choice to show kindness to Naomi." Now, what is he talking about? I think what ultimately he's talking about, who is the recipient of the kindness? I think, again, the recipient of this kindness and this is chesed here, the character of God where God, his lovingkindness, his steadfast love, some translations take that word, but really lovingkindness I think is the best description of it, even though it's kind of an archaic term; it's love and kindness and mercy all wrapped in one. Chesed is when you see someone in need and you work to meet that need. A person freely gives to that need. There is no compulsion. And so what he's saying when he says, "this act of kindness is greater than the former," he says, "Your first act of kindness," which he described in chapter 2 when he talked to her, her first act of kindness was when she left the land of Moab and went with Naomi. She saw Naomi in a destitute position and she went with Naomi to somehow try to minister to her and help her and Boaz commended her in chapter 2 when he first met her, "Listen, all that you've done for your mother-in-law has been fully reported to me, how you left your father and your mother and the land of your people, and you went to a land and to a people you did not know. This has all been reported to me, what you have done." And he is basically saying now that was the first act of chesed, "You actually demonstrated the heart of God in looking at a person in need and you gave to them. There was no compulsion. But now this act is greater than that." When I first read it I thought he was talking about himself. "You could have gone after all these younger, more attractive bachelors in Bethlehem but you didn't. You went after the old guy, Boaz." And he is a lot older because how does he refer to her? "My daughter." My daughter. In fact, Ruth's name only occurs one time in this chapter, five times she's called "my daughter": three times by Naomi and twice by Boaz. So Boaz is apparently closer in age to Naomi than he is to Ruth.

She's making a choice to go after the older man and he says this is a great kindness but the kindness, he's not thinking of it personally, "you have shown me kindness," he's, again, looking at Naomi. "What you have done, Ruth, is you have decided rather than just take care of your own need to find a husband and well-being and I know you would have cared for Naomi in that house, you are choosing, you are selecting a man who can fulfill the ultimate purpose of God in this situation. You are choosing kingdom work of God in this situation. You are choosing the whole issue of Levirate marriage. You are choosing to marry a redeemer so that someone can raise up the name of your deceased husband and your deceased father-in-law. You are fulfilling the purpose of God," which we looked at last time, Leviticus 25 and Deuteronomy 25 that speaks about the issue of Levirate marriage. "You have chosen something wonderful. I see what you're doing. You have your eyes on the kingdom of God." What he's basically saying is what we saw in the passage Jess read earlier, by faith. What is it that the faithful see? They see that which is invisible. They are looking for the city whose builder and maker is God, and you are looking to God and to what God is doing in this situation and you are choosing that over the temporal blessings of this world. That's what saving faith looks like. There's an element in which the person surrenders whatever is necessary in this life that I might have that. This is what she is doing. She could have had a younger man and met her needs but she wants God's full blessing.

This might be a moment to take just a brief excursus on marriage. It isn't the main point of the sermon but it is certainly interesting that she decides to get married with as little knowledge as she had of Boaz and she does so because she does have knowledge that he is a man of God. What does she know about him? There is no compatibility test that they've gone through. There is no evaluation. I'm not saying those things are all bad, what I'm saying is clearly the one thing that matters is this: does the person love Jesus Christ? And if you get that right, get married. Okay, back to the message.

Faith expresses itself in action so saving faith humbly submits, it gladly surrenders, it fervently seeks, it joyfully selects, it chooses God and his kingdom. But then the third point after faith expresses itself in action, our third point is: faith receives its welcome. Faith receives its welcome. First of all, you see that what she receives when she comes to Boaz, remember he's a type of Christ so how is he going to receive her as she expresses this desire, she chooses him over the other? We are choosing Jesus over anything else. You could have a different life, "I choose Jesus." That's what this faith is. When that looks like, when that is your heart, what kind of reception do you receive? Well, what she receives from Boaz is a picture of what we receive from Jesus when we come to him. When we come to him in faith, he receives us, first of all, by protecting us. He protects her. Verse 14 when he says, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor," he's protecting her reputation. Remember we talked about how this was a questionable, borderline plan that they hatched, that Naomi hatched, but it was within the realm of acceptable things but it was just a little bit that way, going to the threshing floor and all of that, and so Boaz understands her reputation could be at stake and so he covers anything that could be shameful. He tells whoever else is there, "Nothing is to be said about the woman who came to the threshing floor. You protect her reputation."

And that's how Jesus receives us, he protects us. He protects us from our shame. He covers it over. When you come to Jesus no matter how much shame and filth you have, he covers it. "Let nothing be said about his past. Let nothing be said about her past." You may have been this but you once were this but now you've been washed. This is the picture of how God receives sinners who come to him. The most wonderful image of that of how he covers our shame is in the story of the prodigal son. Remember how the prodigal son has been so incredibly unkind to his father and yet when he comes home after years away squandering his father's wealth, he dishonored his father before he left, what happens? The father seeing him from afar off runs to his son. In ancient culture for a man, an older man to run was a shameful thing. You only ran because you had to run. You ran from a bear or something. You didn't run for any other reason. As an older man, a wealthy man particularly, everybody runs to you. And for this man, this landowner, this wealthy man to have to pull up his, remember they didn't wear pants, they're wearing kind of like the skirt and he's got to pull up his stuff and run, was shameful. He made himself a spectacle. People were looking out the window, "What in the world is he doing running?" What he was doing was he was running to welcome his son. He was willing to, what he was doing was covering his son's shame. What would have happened if his son had walked on down the street to him and they'd said, "Look at that. Yeah, about time he came back. I hope he sends him away, that filthy, rotten, ungrateful son." But that was lost in the fact that here's the father running. He's covering the shame. That's the heart of God. That's the welcome that God gives to sinners who come to him. "Though your sins are as scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. I will remember them no more. As far as the east is to the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." What a Savior.

So faith receives this welcome. God protects. Secondly, he provides. And you see this in a number of ways. First of all, in verse 11 he says, "Don't fear. I will do for you whatever you ask." He's generous. It's interesting, there is a parallel. It's almost word for word what Ruth had said in verse 5, "All that you say I will do." Boaz, there is like one word difference, "I will do for you whatever you ask." It's basically, "All that you ask I will do." When you come to God with a heart that says, "All that you ask I will do," he says to you, "All that you ask I will do," because you have met the condition. You are surrendered to him. This is why he says things like, "Ask anything in my name and I will give it to you," it's because when you really meet the condition and you're really asking in his name and that's a big deal, it's not a magic formula, it's when you're asking for his kingdom and his glory and his name to go forth, he will give you. His heart is to give lavishly. We see that in this situation.

He commits and he's going to redeem and he says, "Look, there's a guy that is ahead of me. We've got to do it appropriately. If he will redeem, good, but if he does not wish to redeem you," verse 13, "then I will redeem you as the LORD lives. I am determined to pay the redemption price. I promise you."

Then he not only says that but he demonstrates it in verse 15 when he says, "'Give me the cloak that is on you and hold it.' So she held it, and he measured six measures of barley." This is an astounding amount of grain he put on her. The commentators talk about six

measures, it's a little unclear because the word "measure" is supplied, it's basically "six of barley," and the question is what measurement? It can't be six ephahs, that would be 180 pounds. We think the common sub-measurement would've been a seah which is a third of an ephah which would mean six seahs equals two ephahs of barley. If you remember, she got an ephah of barley after that whole day of work and I told you it was about 35 pounds, 30-35 pounds in a 5 gallon jug. He's giving her two ephahs of barley and apparently she's got a really stout piece of clothing and he fills it up and it says he puts it on her. I mean, he has given her 60 pounds to carry home. It may seem unwise. What is he doing? He is showing the lavish generosity of his heart and it's a message to Naomi in that but there is also a message to Ruth, "Will I provide for you? Will I love you? Yes, I will love you. Look how much I love you. I'm giving you twice what I already gave you. I'd give you more but you can't carry it." That's the heart of God.

The welcome that we receive: he protects, he provides, and then lastly: he praises her. This is the welcome that faith receives: faith is protected, faith is provided for, faith is even praised. He says to her in verse 10, "May you be blessed of the LORD, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness to be better than the first." Then he says in verse 11, "Now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you ask, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence." He says, "Listen, you are demonstrating chesed in a wonderful way. You are a woman of excellence." This is what faith receives when it comes to Christ. She didn't know what she was going to receive. She is going on her mother-in-law's advice and some knowledge of Boaz and what she thinks is true, but she really doesn't know. She, remember, after all, is a Moabitess. Five times in the book when her name is mentioned 12 times, Ruth occurs 12 times, five of those times it occurs with the phrase after it, "the Moabitess." One other time it's right in close proximity, "from Moab, Ruth." So half the times her name is mentioned the author wants you to remember she's from Moab. She's not from Israel. And remember, the Moabites were particularly despised.

This is an amazing thing that God is receiving this Moabitess and how does he receive her? He receives her generously. He is even praising her. "You, the Moabitess, have exemplified incredible chesed," which is that which belongs to Yahweh. "You are a woman of excellence." This word "excellence" is a full word. It pictures strength, power, virtue. It's a word which is used a couple of times, well, it's used many times but a couple of times to speak of women. It's used in Proverbs 12:4, an excellent wife. Proverbs 31:10, an excellent wife, who can find. The excellent wife is Ruth. He's basically saying, "You are an excellent woman. You are a Proverbs 31 woman." This is how Boaz receives her. In fact, God continues praising her because in the Hebrew Canon, our Bible, we follow the Septuagint ordering of the books of the Bible, in the Hebrew Canon, the way you read through the writings, Ruth comes right after Proverbs. You read Proverbs 31 and then you go right into Ruth because they were placing it there because Ruth is the excellent wife. So placement in the Canon was praising her.

It reminds me of when Jesus says about the woman who showed audacious faith, Mary when she anoints him for burial, remember and Judas is complaining. Matthew and Mark tell us that Jesus says, "I tell you what this woman has done will be proclaimed wherever

the Gospel is preached." He honors those who honor him and when you honor him with a surrendered heart, he lavishly praises you. He says to us when we get to heaven, "Well done, good and faithful servant." He glorifies his people. This is the salvation that comes to those who trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ and Christ alone. When you place all of your hope in what he has done, acknowledge your poverty, and you acknowledge that his offering, that he is the great one, the great Savior, that his righteousness is sufficient for you, that his blood covers you and washes away your sins, that his resurrection proves that he is God's Savior, when you place your faith in him, this is the welcome you receive.

He protects. He provides. He praises. Our God is a glorious God and his Son is a glorious Savior. Why would you not say yes to him? If you don't know Christ, today is the day of salvation. Repent and believe today. Give yourself to him completely. Humbly submit. Gladly surrender. Fervently seek. And choose him above everything else and he will wondrously receive you because he is faithful to his promise.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, we thank you for the wonder of the salvation which you have made known to us in Jesus Christ. We pray, Father, for each one of us here that you would search our hearts, that you would help us to have, by your grace, a persevering, overcoming faith. For those that are here that know they're not Christians, Lord, today help them to repent and believe the Gospel, to run to Jesus with the same attitudes that Ruth ran to Boaz. And Father, for those of us who profess faith in Christ, help our faith to be more and more real and living and active every day that passes, that we would keep clinging to our gracious and glorious Savior all to the praise of your glory. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.