

Series: Ruth
Title: At Mealtime Come Thou
Text: Ruth 2: 13-14
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Boaz showed Ruth his free grace: telling her to glean only in his field with his maidens, telling her to drink from his well, telling her that his servants would serve and protect her. Then right after she received all this free grace, while she is still on her face before Boaz, we come to our text and find Ruth asking for more grace

Ruth 2: 13: Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens. 14: And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched *corn*, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.

God's grace humbles his child and makes us beg for more grace. Why? "For that thou hast comforted me." There is no comfort like the comfort of God's grace by which we are freely justified.

So the believer begs for more grace to be comforted more by his grace. "And for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens." There is no voice as friendly as God's voice of regenerating grace. Therefore the believer begs for more grace to be spoken friendly unto.

How does God give more grace through his voice? Where does God give more grace? "And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her." She came to his table to eat of his bread. He reached his hand to her mouth and fed her "parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left."

Around the age of 13 years old I started hauling hay in the summers. We would spend all morning in a hot field following a truck with a flatbed trailer attached. Two or three of us would throw the square bales of hay up on the truck and the person on the truck would stack the bales. But lunch time was meal time. So we went to the edge of the field under the shade of the large oak trees. There we sat down to rest and eat together. That is the setting of our text.

On the edge of Boaz's field, Boaz' provided them a house or a pavilion. That house is where Ruth had tarried to rest a moment when Boaz came to the field and spoke to the reapers then spoke to her and bestowed all this grace upon her.

In verse 7, the reapers are telling Boaz about Ruth. They told Boaz, "And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now that she tarried a little in the house." (v7)

Boaz came to his house at the edge of his field where he introduced himself to Ruth. Having received grace in his sight, she begged him to give her more grace. The way he gave her more grace was to tell her to come to his house at mealtime to eat at his table.

A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE

First, let us understand the beautiful spiritual picture in all this.

“The field” is this world where we live. In Christ’s parable, Christ said, “The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: . . . The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*.” (Mt 13: 24, 38)

This whole world is Christ’s field. He bought this whole world. Christ did not redeem every person. Only his elect are his treasure in the field. Christ told another parable, “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.” (Mt 13: 44)

God’s elect is Christ’s treasure hidden in the field of this world. For the joy of having his people, Christ went to the cross, sold all that he had and bought the field. He did not redeem every sinner in the world only his elect. But he bought the world for those who are his treasure hidden within this world. So this world is Christ’s field.

“The reapers” are you and I who Christ has redeemed and regenerated and sent forth to bear witness of Christ to harvest his redeemed who are yet lost. In Matthew 9: 36-38, “when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers *are* few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”

So the field is the world, the reapers are his witnesses, and Ruth is a picture of one of Christ’s lost sheep just harvested by his grace.

“The house at the edge of the field” is Christ’s local church in this world. We are Christ’s laborers in Christ’s field. We worship in Christ’s house at Christ’s table of Christ’s gospel feast. Everything belongs to our Kinsman Redeemer and is given to his people by his free grace.

CHRIST’S TABLE

When Christ begins showing us grace, he gives more grace the way Boaz gave Ruth more grace—Ruth 2: 14: And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar.

It is in his house through his gospel that Christ first bestows grace. And it is here that he bestows more grace upon those he has called.

Isaiah 25: 6: And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. 7: And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. 8: He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken *it*. 9: And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this *is* our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. 10: For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill.

The only way we have a true hunger to come to his house to feed upon Christ is because Christ said unto us, “At mealtime come thou hither and eat of the bread.” We did not invite ourselves to Christ’s table. Nor did we make ourselves willing or able to come to Christ’s gospel feast. The one way we enter and have a hunger and truly feed upon the gospel is because Christ our Kinsman Redeemer said unto us personally, effectually, “At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread.”

Notice, there is a time set—“at mealtime come thou hither.” Christ arose on the first day of the week. He has ordained the first day of the week to be the saint’s mealtime. Therefore, we find repeatedly in scripture that the saints gathered for public worship on “the first day of the week.”

In God’s providence, he has made it so we can meet for mid-week services. A few times a year, we have special meetings. Whenever the gospel is preached it is mealtime for those Christ has made hungry.

God’s saints do not have to have legal constraints or promise of mercenary rewards to make us come to his gospel feast. Job said he needed to feed upon God’s word more than he needed bread for his body. “Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary *food*.” (Job 23: 12)

It is because Christ’s “mealtime” is for our profit. He provides his pastors to preach his gospel: “for the edifying of the body of Christ.” “That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.” That we “may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:” (Eph 4: 11-15)

Therefore, he teaches his child to lay aside anything and everything that would keep us from his house at “mealtime.” That is what Ruth did. “And she sat beside the reapers.” Boaz’s reapers sat down at mealtime and here is this poor Gentile Moabite girl. She was so humbled and appreciative that she took the lowest seat in the house. She sat over to the side, beside them.

The grace of God shows us what we are and what God has saved us from so that we have no reason to exalt ourselves in Christ’s house. In ourselves each believer knows we are just worms. We are sinners saved off the dunghill. All our very best righteousnesses are as filthy rags. We all see through a glass darkly so we can’t exalt ourselves in our knowledge over another. We

have enough ignorance of our own to know better than to criticize another for theirs. We slip and fall in our own sin so much we cannot possibly do anything but cover the sins of our brethren.

After seeing how poor and needy Ruth was and seeing all that Boaz had done freely for her, can you imagine Ruth exalting herself by thinking malicious thoughts toward one of his reapers so that she refused to go to his house at mealtime?

Can you imagine Ruth envying the servant Boaz put over the reapers, whispering about him to the reapers, putting doubtful thoughts in their heads, until they decided they would all just skip mealtime?

There was no way Ruth could do that because she had tasted grace from Boaz. It humbled her down to his feet with a broken and contrite heart. She tasted his grace and she wanted more. So when Boaz told her to come to his house at mealtime that is exactly where she went! And she gladly took the lowest seat beside the reapers:

1 Peter 2: 1: Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2: As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.

Those God has made to taste of his grace are hungry for God's grace. Therefore, they obey his command when he says, "at mealtime come thou hither." They come in the spirit of Mephibosheth who "bowed himself, and said, What *is* thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I *am*?" (2 Sa 9: 8) And by Christ's hand, they are filled.

Matthew 5:6: Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Psalms 84:4: Blessed *are* they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.

PARCHED CORN

Notice who fed her and what—Ruth 2: 14...and he [Boaz] reached her parched corn, and she did eat,...

There had to be cooks and servers who prepared and served that table. But they are not mentioned.

Christ uses preachers to minister bread to the hearers. But the servant at the table is not meant to be seen. Only the head of the house and the bread he provides is to be the focus. Christ is the sovereign Head over his house. Christ comes to his field like Boaz did. Christ calls his redeemed to his house at mealtime. Christ is present when his gospel is preached. Christ is the one who reaches forth his hand and feeds us.

The Bread he feeds us is the soul satisfying gospel of his accomplished redemption. Boaz reached her parched corn. It came from a seed that was put in the ground and broken. Christ is that seed. He said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” (Jn 12: 24)

The grain was bruised and crushed—“He was wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him.” (Is 53: 5)

The corn was roasted with fire so that it was parched. With our iniquities upon him, Christ endured the fiery justice of God in place of his people. “For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.” (Ps 32: 4) “My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.” (Ps 22: 15) “For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.” (Ps 102: 3) And by his obedience unto the death of the cross, “with his stripes we are healed.” (Is 53: 5)

EFFECTUAL GRACE

By God’s effectual grace, we do as Ruth did—Ruth 2: 14...and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.

She ate and was filled and carried home some of the bread to Naomi. “[Ruth] gave to [Naomi] that she had reserved after she was sufficed.” (v18)

As Christ’s witnesses, we spend our days in Christ’s field in the world: in the hot sun in much tribulation, trying to bear witness of Christ, trying to reap his harvest, trying to gather in the sheaves.

Then at mealtime, Christ commands us to come out of the field to his house. So we come into his shade from the hot sun of the field. We come into his rest from all our worldly labors. We come to the feast of Christ’s gospel at his table. He feeds us and satisfyies our hunger and our thirst.

Brethren, if you have tasted the Lord’s grace, lay aside all. Come to his house at mealtime and be sufficed by the Bread of Life. When a sinner is hungry, no one has to beg them to come and eat. Hungry souls gladly come to his house and eat no matter who the cook is or the server, no matter who else is seated at the table, no matter what the plate looks like. We have to have Christ the Bread!

This is only his house in the field. One day, when the harvest is complete, we will all go with Christ to his heavenly house. He said, “That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom....Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.” (Lu 12: 30, 37)

Amen!

