

The Returner meets a Redeemer

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[0 : 0 0] Ruth chapter 2 page 267 now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side a man of standing from the clan of Elimelech whose name was Boaz and Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor Naomi said to her go ahead my daughter so she went out entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters as it turned out she was working in a field belonging to Boaz who was from the clan of Elimelech just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters the Lord be with you the Lord bless you they answered Boaz asked the overseer of his harvesters who does that young woman belong to the overseer replied she is the Moabite who came back from Moab with Naomi she said please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters she came into the field and has remained here from morning till now except for a short rest in the shelter so Boaz said to Ruth my daughter listen to me don't go and glean in another field and don't go away from here stay here with the women who work for me watch the field where the men are harvesting and follow along after the women I have told the men not to lay a hand on you and whenever you are thirsty go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled at this she bowed down with her face to the ground she asked him why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me a foreigner Boaz replied I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with the people you did not know before may the Lord repay you for what you have done may you be richly rewarded by the Lord the God of Israel under whose wings you have come to take refuge may I continue to find favor in your eyes my Lord she said you have put me at ease by speaking kindly to your servant though I do not have the standing of one of your servants at mealtime Boaz said to her come over here have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar when she sat down with the harvesters he offered her some roasted grain she ate all she wanted and had some left over as she got up to glean Boaz gave orders to his men let her gather among the sheaves and don't reprimand her even pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up and don't rebuke her so Ruth gleaned in the field until evening then she threshed the barley she had gathered and had amounted to about an ephah she carried it back to town and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered Ruth also brought out and gave her what she had left over after she had eaten enough her mother-in-law asked her where did you glean today where did you work blessed be the man who took notice of you then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one at whose place she had been working the name of the man I worked with today is Boaz she said the Lord bless him Naomi said to her daughter-in-law he has not stopped showing his kindness the living and the dead she added that man is our close relative he is one of our guardian redeemers then Ruth the Moabite said he even said to me stay with my workers until they finish harvesting all of my grain Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law it will be good for you my daughter to go with the women who work for him because in someone else's field you might be harmed so Ruth stayed close to the women of Boaz to glean until the barley and wheat harvest were finished and she lived with her mother-in-law this is the word of the Lord thanks so much for reading that for us Katrina you can find an outline inside the notice sheet if you'd find that helpful as we turn to this passage together be a great help to keep it open at Ruth

chapter 2 I don't know how many of you do Wordle in the New York Times Wordle word of the day on Thursday was glean amazing the nation's being prepared for this morning Ruth chapter 2 let's ask for God's help as we turn to his word we praise you heavenly father for the gift of your light of revelation to us that you have made yourself known to us in the person of Jesus Christ and him to us in your word and so we ask that you would reveal more of yourself to us this morning that each of us would encounter you and where we feel lost would you guide us where we feel self-confident would you show us our need where we feel guilty or ashamed would you reassure us where we feel grief would you comfort us would you take our emptiness and fill us as we come to you for we ask in Jesus name amen well as Jonathan said we started last week this series in this wonderful Old Testament book Ruth and we met Ruth and Naomi two women who found that away from God life in this world can be an empty life emptiness is a theme that we find in our world today it's not hard to find people thinking about emptiness we're hearing a lot of Harry Styles songs in our house at the moment and Harry Styles has got fame he's got riches he's got praise everywhere and then his massive hit song as it was he opens up about what it's like for him at the top of show business he describes one of his parents phoning him in the song and the lyrics are answer the phone Harry you're no good alone why are you sitting at home on the floor what kind of pills are you on he seems to be saying he's got to the top and it's empty he's lonely and he sings in this world it's just us in this world it's just us and he's sitting at home on the floor taking all kinds of pills well last week Naomi Ruth's mother-in-law said to the people who greeted her in Israel as she went back after 10 years away she said don't call me Naomi which means sweetness call me Mara which means bitterness the Lord has brought me back empty how did she get to be empty well she's empty because this these these two women their lives are in the time of the judges that was in chapter 1 verse 1 the days when the judges ruled and that means that

God's people were the Israelites living around Jerusalem they were in the promised land but there was no king to lead them under God's ways and so everyone just did what was right in their own eyes so even the promised land could be a dangerous place when the judges ruled and these women were empty because there was a famine and Naomi and her husband Elimelech went to Moab to take shelter there that was a pagan land it was far from God's people it was far from God's temple from the presence of God and their sons married pagan women Orpah and Ruth and then Elimelech and both Naomi's sons died so Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth their lives are empty their family homes their marriage beds the nursery rooms are empty and then Naomi hears that God is now providing for his people back in the land in Bethlehem where she come from the house of bread and she decides to return to God to return to God's land and Ruth made this pivotal moment of decision her daughter-in-law who's from

Moab decides to return to God with Naomi her mother-in-law 12 times in chapter 1 we saw that word return it was all about returning in your emptiness to God and the chapter ended with that glimmer of hope verse 22 that they arrived in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning so Ruth has made this pivotal decision she says to Naomi where you go I will go your people will be my God your will be my people your God will be my God she is a foreigner to the people of God in dark times she's empty she's vulnerable but she's a woman putting her faith in the God of the Bible and the key question we're asking as we come into chapter 2 of Ruth is when someone turns to God like this what will they find what will they find when someone with nothing to offer wakes up to see that life without God is empty and returns to God what could they expect to find so our first point this morning Ruth is seen by a godly man who protects his people now we we as the readers the hearers we get a crucial detail in verse 1 of chapter 2 that our women don't know yet do you see that now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side a man of standing from the clan of Elimelech whose name was Boaz and those details are rich with hope they're rich with hope that they might be able to find this relative someone with a relationship that would bring with it a sense of responsibility a duty of care and concern and we're hearing that this relative is a man of standing he's a worthy man could it be that he would have the means and the character to be able to help these women but Ruth doesn't know that yet so when she says in verse 2 to Naomi let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor she's taking a great step of faith presumably in Moab where Ruth was from you couldn't do that you were stealing people's grain from their field there's no welfare state at that time but under God's rules for his people in the land what you had to do if you owned land was when grain got left behind as they were reaping the harvest you had to leave it there leave the gleanings so that the poor could come and glean they could collect what was left over foreigners orphans widows they could pick up the leftovers and so when Ruth steps out that morning she is testing whether the people of God will indeed display the righteousness that God has called them to and then we get this wonderful little phrase at the beginning of verse 3 in the middle of verse 3 there as it turned out as it turned out she was working in a field belonging to Boaz who was from the clan of Elimelech and the Bible is full of these as it turned out moments and moments like that are there to remind us that from our point of view sometimes things happen by coincidence as things turned out I've ended up here but from a God's eye view he is sovereign and he is ordaining things to redeem people even when we can't see it I wonder if you can think of moments in your life like that as you can look back on your life and think you know as it turned out certain things happen but I can see that God was at work in those moments they were for a good reason

I think when we remember that the sovereign God ordains how things turn out it liberates us from our spirits sinking which is a great temptation in my life of thinking it's such a shame that this happened I don't know whether you feel like that ever to think you know it's such a shame that things have that that particular thing happened or it's such a shame that that particular thing didn't happen in my life whereas from a God's eye view he has ordained things and over time he can redeem the situation just as we see in Ruth and Naomi's life that he is at work to redeem and then in verse 4 we get this just then do you see that in verse 4 have a look just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and that word just then what we get as just then in the old fashioned Bibles it would be translated behold it's an old fashioned word but it's a great word because behold has with it look look who's coming

[13:07] Boaz is coming would you believe it picture this Boaz just then arrives in the field that Ruth has come to glean in and Ruth has this first encounter with her Redeemer relative and as she does that he is foreshadowing for us what God will give us in our Redeemer the Lord Jesus descendant of Boaz here is a foreshadowing of the Redeemer whom God sends let's just see how he does that first Boaz is devoted to God and he leads his people in devotion to God so verse 4 just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters the Lord be with you the Lord bless you they answered this is a time when the people have forgotten God but if you work for Boaz you are blessed here is one portion of the promised land where you labor in the Lord's name and they respond the Lord bless you don't you wish you had a manager in your workplace like that who walked into the office or the staff room or the ward and everyone looked up and he gave this big hearted greeting the Lord be with you behold Boaz

I don't know about you but my chest pounds when I read about Boaz what a great bloke he is you might think of an eloquent way to describe him one preacher I heard years ago called Boaz the dude of dudes and so that is how he is known in our family among my children Boaz is the dude of dudes because he is devoted to God the Lord be with you and he notices a woman in his field who he doesn't recognize such is his concern for those who need to glean in his field and he turns to the overseer of his workmen and he says who does that young woman belong to and he doesn't mean who is she a slave to when he says who does she belong to he means belong to in a family way who looks out for that woman who protects her and the overseer says verse 6 she is the Moabite who came back from Moab with Naomi in other words she doesn't belong to anyone no one looks out for her but she's found a measure of protection because Boaz is a godly man and next we learn that he protects the vulnerable so look with me at verse 8 so Boaz said to Ruth my daughter listen to me don't go and glean in another field and don't go away from here stay here with the women who work for me watch the field where the men are harvesting and follow along after the women and then just a hint of how precarious

Ruth's position is I have told the men not to lay a hand on you and whenever you are thirsty go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled I was hearing just last week a comment that one of the reasons masculinity is so under attack in our culture and it is under attack is that this person was saying it's because the reality is that in our culture and in most cultures men have power in lots of cultures men have power because they are physically strong men have power in our culture because they often have advantages that women have to struggle to get and men have often misused that power that's the reality and that is why there is often pushback against masculinity because of misuse of power and then here is Boaz behold Boaz a different kind of man when you hear what he says don't you wish that he owned more fields that he had more power because look at how he uses his power to protect people who are in need so folks here is Ruth stepping out in faith returning to God what does she find she finds a redeemer and I think the message for Israel over the years as they heard

Ruth told to them the message was if you will return to God in faith he will provide you with a redeemer like this and the message for us today is we have a redeemer like this waiting for us to return to him Jesus' message to the world was the time has come repent and believe the good news return to God and believe the good news now we don't return to God by going to the land today we return to God by going to Jesus Christ Christ is our land our promised land and even if you're someone who's already returned to him as many of us have here and you've become a Christian we live lives of daily returning to God where we recognize we've wandered from him in the day we've drifted from him but will we return to him maybe you're already a Christian but you can think of an area of your own life where you've got into the habit of trying to fill your life away from

God and you're finding that it's empty you're not full and maybe you're in a situation where you know what God would ask of you in that area of life but you don't know whether you trust him but if you really obey him and trust him he will fill you so if we return to God what do we expect to find well Ruth chapter 2 gives us that glimpse of the redeemer who we would find one who is committed to you like a relative so that he sees a duty to protect you and we hear in Hebrews chapter 2 that Jesus the eternal son who the angels worship became fully man so that he can stand before God and Hebrews 2 says he's not ashamed to call you his brothers and sisters we have a redeemer who was devoted to God who fulfilled all righteousness all his life so that when they baptized him and John baptizes him and he came out of the water the voice they heard from heaven was

[19 : 32] I'm well pleased with him we have a redeemer who protects the vulnerable and as Boaz says to Ruth in verse 8 my daughter do we not see a shadow there of Jesus in the marketplace when the woman who's been bleeding for 12 years reaches out and touches his cloak to be healed and he turns and says who touched me and she tells her story and he says daughter daughter your faith has made you well so that's our first point Ruth is seen by a godly man who protects his people and do you know if Ruth stopped there if that was the end of the book I guess we would think God is good God is good because these women are being cared for when they took refuge under God's wings they found food but when you return to God his generosity through his redeemer is much richer than this so more briefly our second point

Ruth encounters a generous man who provides for his people let's pick things up with Ruth's response to Boaz in verse 10 he's spoken to her directly that's the encounter and verse 10 at this she bowed down with her face to the ground she asked him why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me a foreigner and as Boaz replies to her look at what we learn about Ruth and the kind of woman she is the woman of faith verse 11 Boaz replied I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before may the Lord repay you for what you have done may you be richly rewarded by the Lord the God of Israel under whose wings you have come to take refuge so just as Boaz gives us this picture of God's redeemer in the chapter

Ruth models for us the life of faith of trusting God she comes to God empty handed she's got no sense of entitlement she knows she's from Moab she's a foreigner to God's promises she's an outsider and that's true of us isn't it that we come to God as outsiders empty handed foreigners to his blessings and we take refuge under his wings and then we see the overflowing rich provision of God look at that for her in verse 14 at mealtime Boaz said to her come over here have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar when she sat down with the harvesters he offered her some roasted grain she ate all she wanted and had some left over this woman from a pagan land is now sitting at the redeemer's table eating the bread and the roasted grain until she's satisfied and gathering the leftovers up to take back home to Naomi it's just a picture for us of the extravagant provision of the living God when you come to him he provides for all his people all we need until we're satisfied it's a picture that

Jesus takes up himself one day when he sees the crowd like sheep without a shepherd and he teaches them and then when they're hungry he takes the loaves and he takes the fish and he gives thanks and he breaks the bread and he gives 4,000 foreigners enough food until they're satisfied and at the end there are seven baskets full of leftovers and then the extravagant reckless generosity goes on so look at verse 15 as she got up to glean Boaz gave orders to his men let her gather among the sheaves and don't reprimand her even pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up and don't rebuke her you can almost imagine you can almost hear the labourers grumbling they've just packed up those stalks they've just got everything tightly packed and now their land owner is throwing away his money but this is what our God is like through his redeemer he fills the hungry with good things that was what Mary said when she found that she was pregnant with God's redeemer

God's son he welcomes the outcast the stranger and he is recklessly overflowingly generous towards us so that we're satisfied and we have left over and it cost Boaz to be this generous didn't it presumably compared to other field owners he looks foolish giving away his grain but not as much as it cost the Lord Jesus to be generous to us and if Boaz is a picture for us of glimpses of our model redeemer and God's goodness to us in him Ruth is a model in her response so let's turn to our final point Ruth returns from a redeemer who astonishes his people I think we see three models to think about in Ruth's response the first is that she's a model of kindness in response to her redeemer so she returns to Naomi and she comes with 13 kilograms of barley in verse 7 the field master told Boaz that Ruth had stayed in the field from morning until now except for a short rest in the shelter and then in verse 17 we read that she gleaned until the evening and then she threshed the barley and she carries the heavy weight back home to get it back to

[25 : 38] Naomi why because Naomi is a widow and she's elderly and she's empty and so Ruth gets home and she pulls from her bag the leftovers from her meal with Boaz which she'd also kept back back for Naomi all through this little book Ruth we see the kindness of God bursting through for people but it comes time and again through the kindness of those people so you look at Boaz who takes the generous blessing of God in the fruitful harvest and he protects others and then he richly provides for their needs and you look at Ruth and as God is kind to her she works tirelessly all day so that she can show kindness to her mother-in-law and fill her emptiness just imagine what it would look like for the church to fulfill that picture today if the church is the community where men make women even vulnerable women feel perfectly safe because the men stand between them and danger and church is the community where we don't just think how much do I have to give but where we see everything we have as given to us from

God and an opportunity to give freely to anyone in need and if the workplaces in our city if it became known in the workplaces all around us that people really wanted to work for Christians and with Christians because they knew that it's Christians who treat people with fairness and with kindness and I guess some of you will feel as we look at this picture of Boaz and Naomi that you have not experienced the kindness of God from his people or from people who said they were his people and sadly that can be the reality for some of us but could I urge you to be reassured from Ruth chapter 2 that if you will return to God to Jesus you will find all of God's kindness in him and he will never let you down he is steadfastly kind to his people with rich provision and protection so that it transforms you and you can show that kindness to others so Ruth models this response to God's grace kindness because she is transformed and secondly

Ruth models with Naomi astonishment she is staggered isn't she and Naomi is staggered when Ruth walks in with all this grain she says where did you glean today blessed be the man who took notice of you and Ruth says his name is Boaz and the penny drops for Naomi that this is the kindness of God verse 20 she says the Lord bless him he has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead that man is our close relative he is one of our guardian redeemers and she urges Ruth to stay with him so you picture Ruth laughing with Naomi at the 13 kilograms of barley that she's dragging home and them dancing around it with delight and Naomi exclaiming after 10 years of hardship this is the Lord's doing it's his kindness they're astonished aren't they they're astonished just as we can reflect on God's kindness to us in our lives that by his grace it just so happened that we met people who could tell us about Jesus that just so happened in our lives and when we came to

Jesus we found that he is a redeemer who has given us the right to become children of God and he's put into our hearts the first fruits of what's coming the gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives and by his resurrection he's given us living hope so that death now is just a doorway to life with him forever where Jesus will invite us to sit at his table and eat with him so Ruth is a model for us of kindness also of astonishment at God's goodness and thirdly she's a model of anticipation at this point in the book as we just read in verse 22 Naomi's guidance it will be good for you my daughter to go with the women who work for him and then in verse 23 Ruth stayed close to the women of Boaz to glean until the barley and wheat harvest were finished and she lived with her mother in law and you get this sense that her story isn't over yet because she still doesn't belong to anyone and the nursery rooms are still empty could there still be more to come from Boaz to redeem the lives of these women so they respond with kindness astonishment but also anticipation what else will come if we stay with this redeemer and as we get back from our summer breaks for many of us could we be inspired to feel some of that ourselves in our lives with our redeemer that we could have a desire to show kindness to others with all that God has filled us with a desire to praise

God to others because we're astonished that he's been so good to us in our lives and a desire to pray to him in anticipation of what might be to come if we stick with him what might our redeemer do for us in this coming year might we as a church see more people coming under the sound of the gospel might we see Jesus at work bringing peace and healing and growth in our church family folks our time is gone like Naomi and Ruth have you experienced that life away from God in this world can be an empty way of life well then what should we expect if we return to God with nothing to offer him Ruth chapter 2 says expect a redeemer one who worships the Lord is devoted to the Lord upholds the law protects those who come to him and invites us to come and sit at his table because he fills the hungry with good things and his generosity never stops let's pray together just a moment of quiet to reflect on God's word heavenly father as we see your kindness to Ruth and Naomi we praise you that when we return to you and seek refuge under your wings you have given us a redeemer one who is righteous and protective and provides richly for us we turn to you again may we reflect on your goodness to us this week that we might respond as your people with kindness with kindness astonishment and anticipation for Jesus name's sake amen amen well we're going to sing in response to God's word

[33 : 47] Thank you for rovers so before that we thank you and by the way to be rejected when to be ■■■■■ or may or may or may dare is to be killed as soon as we die as we see it in our country to be to Kaufman Again and if you thank you all players it might as well not to support us after you have antis Earthquist and persecution for Marty Friedrich is enough and once there is not gonna head G diy