

WILD & WONDERFUL

DISCOVERING COMPASSION WHEN I FEEL UNWORTHY

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Ruth 3:1 – 18

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MESSAGE NOTES

Bottomless despair does not have to be our lot indefinitely. The scars need not be permanent. Christ desires to meet us in those dark corners and lift us to safety by redeeming our dignity and worth. His grace is greater than our shame. Where sin abounds, grace superabounds! He becomes for us our personal shame-bearer who walks with us through those harsh; agonizing days when we feel most alone and afraid. How can He do that? Remember, He's been there. He has felt the aches of indignity and humiliation. In fact, there's no limit to the depth of shame He can see us through, because there's no limit to the grace He can supply.

— Chuck Swindoll, *Getting Through The Tough Stuff*

Ruth's story —

- The Plan
- The Preparation
- The Proposal
- The Provision

*Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human. — Henri Nouwen, *A Restless Seeking For God**

Our story —

- **God's plan —**
I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. — Jeremiah 31:3
- **God's invitation —**
Give ear and come to Me; listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, My faithful love promised to David. — Isaiah 55:3
- **God's acceptance —**
... I spread the corner of My garment over you and covered your naked body. I gave you My solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign LORD, and you became Mine. — Ezekiel 16:8
- **Our redemption —**
In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding. — Ephesians 1:7 – 8

When our hands are empty our hearts can be filled.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Can you share a time in your life where you took a big risky step of some sort?
- Take some time to read back over Ruth 3:1 – 18 and see if you can summarize it in your own words.
- How has Naomi’s demeanor changed since chapter one? What character quality does Naomi exhibit in the first verse?
- What do you think of Naomi’s plan for a marriage proposal? How do you feel about the way dating typically happens in our culture?
- In ancient culture a “foreigner” would be considered suspicious, yet in this story both Naomi and Boaz refer to Ruth as “daughter” and the text repeatedly points to her character. What sort of principle about life and relationships might we draw from that?
- Ruth has clearly chosen a different way of life than the pagan life she knew in Moab. How is her story a living example of Psalm 1?
- What are a few words you would use to describe the character of Ruth? How about the character of Boaz?
- Can you think of ways we can apply those same character qualities in our own lives and interactions?
- How do you see this story reflecting God’s bigger story of loving and redeeming us?
- How does knowing Christ’s love for you change your perspective on life and your future?