

WILD & WONDERFUL

DISCOVERING HELP WHEN I STEP OUT IN FAITH

October 3/4, 2020

Ruth 2:1 – 13

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MESSAGE NOTES

When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD your God. — Leviticus 19:9 – 10

Certainly the work of justice brings marvelous rescue and joy to the victims of injustice, but God wants His people to know that the work of justice benefits the people who do it as well. It is a means of rescue not only for the powerless but also for the powerful who otherwise waste away in a world of triviality and fear.

— Gary Haugen, *Just Courage*

The sin of injustice is defined in the Bible as the abuse of power — abusing power by taking from others the good things that God intended for them, namely, their life, liberty, dignity, or the fruits of their love or their labor. ...The biblical response is to seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

— Gary Haugen, *Just Courage*

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter — when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. — Isaiah 58:6 – 8

1. When you hit a wall — look for a gate.

What is the difference between an obstacle and an opportunity? Our attitude toward it. Every opportunity has a difficulty, and every difficulty has an opportunity. — J. Sidlow Baxter

Misfortune cannot be conquered by furious and continuous resentment. We win victory ... only when we face our loss, accept our loss, and then make our way through and beyond our loss. You ask how we make our way through it and beyond it? We do so by deliberately reentering the world of daily activity — the busy world of problems, duties, friendships, opportunities, and satisfactions. A resentful, self-pitying life is a doomed life. Only the life which deliberately picks up and starts again is victorious. — Pastor James Gilkey

The LORD is righteous in all His ways and faithful in all He does. The LORD is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear Him; He hears their cry and saves them.

— Psalm 145:17 – 19

2. Watch for God's movement through circumstances and people.

*People who have come to know the joy of God do not deny the darkness, but they choose not to live in it. They claim that the light that shines in the darkness can be trusted more than the darkness itself and that a little bit of light can dispel a lot of darkness. They point each other to flashes of light here and there and remind each other that they reveal the hidden but real presence of God. — Henri Nouwen, *Return of the Prodigal Son**

3. Take action where you can now, with what you have now.

While clearly Jesus was preaching the Good News to all, He showed throughout His ministry the particular interest in the poor and the downtrodden that God has always had. Jesus, in His incarnation, "moved in" with the poor. He lived with, ate with, and associated with the socially ostracized ... God loves and defends those with the least economic and social power, and so should we. That is what it means to "do justice."

— Timothy Keller, *Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just*

4. Accept God's provisions with gratitude not entitlement.**5. Keep your heart close to God, work faithfully, trust His hand.**

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Take some time to read back over the narrative in Ruth 2:1 – 13.

- We notice right away that Ruth takes action despite all the potential challenges. What are some challenges she may have faced being an immigrant from Moab and now living in a foreign land?
- What connection is there between Naomi and Boaz?
- What do we learn about Ruth's work ethic from verse 7?
- How would you summarize what happened in verses 8 – 9? What does that reveal about the character of Boaz?
- What character quality does Ruth display in verse 10?
- How would you describe the reasons for Boaz' kindness in verses 11 – 12?
- What do we learn about Boaz' relationship with God in verse 12?
- What do we learn about God's heart from Leviticus 19:9 – 10? What are some ways we can practically care for the poor or the foreigner in our own culture?
- Isaiah 58 is a great chapter that reveals the concern of God for the poor and oppressed and clearly calls us to take action where we can. How would you summarize verses 6-8 in your own words?
- How are we personally changed for the good by following God's directives in this area?