

Reference: RUTH 2

Church: GRACE

Date: 5/23/99

He Cares for Those who Trust in Him

Purpose: To show the wonderful care of God for His children - that they want no good thing. To encourage believers to trust Him more even in the hard times and to call unbelievers to come to Him now.

1. Introduction

Life isn't fair

Often say that to children when they complain

But it's true

Believers often more "unfairness" to endure – see Ps 73.

Saw something of this this morning

Some say the Christian should always be well

Some say the Christian should always be rich

If believers are unwell or poor then it is lack of faith

This is nonsense, of course – look at Bible characters

But how can we deal with the hard times?

How can we use them to strengthen our faith, not shipwreck it?

Best advice is to know the Scriptures

Ruth 2 will give us helpful insights into this whole question

2. The Frowning Providence

Ruth has arrived in Bethlehem

Warned by Naomi that there seemed little hope for the future

She accepted that and still committed herself to the Lord

For Naomi, the story has been going downhill from the start

First she left Israel – support of family, friends, church

Then she lost her husband

Then her sons intermarried with Moabites

Then she lost her 2 children

Then one of her daughters-in-law left her

Ruth the only comfort in all of this

She came back to Bethlehem full of bitterness (1:20-21)

Now she and Ruth have to set about keeping alive

Had probably once been wealthy (1:21)

Now she has nothing

You can almost hear her crying, "It's not fair!"

"Why has God dealt with me like this?"

"What have I done to deserve this?"

"Has He forgotten to be gracious to me?"

Maybe that's where you are tonight

You are a believer – maybe have been for years

But feel your life has been going downhill – worse and worse

May have lost people or possessions you counted on for support

And just when you need Him most, the LORD seems far away

You're tempted to blame God

"Why has God dealt with me like this?"

"What have I done to deserve this?"

This passage is for you:

Ruth shows us how to deal with these times

3. The Persevering Saint

How does Ruth react to these hard times?

By living to please God

3.1. *She was concerned to honor her mother-in-law*

Ruth clearly knew the Law

Poverty – provision of the law for the needy and the stranger

Leviticus 19:9-10 Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the Lord your God.

But didn't go charging out -

Asked Naomi's permission to go vs 2

Had in mind providing for them both

Didn't go barging in to the field – again asked for permission vs 7

Took food back for Naomi to share

How pleasing to God!

Exodus 20:12 Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

1 Timothy 5:16 If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, she must assist them and the church must not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed.

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

3.2. Humbled herself

Accepted the status of a beggar without grumbling

Ruth recognizes she deserves no good treatment – vs 10, 13

Moabites excluded from the Israelite congregation

Deuteronomy 23:3-4 No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the Lord; none of their descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of the Lord, 4 because they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.

Ruth was there by grace

3.3. Worked long and hard gleaning and then threshing

Started in the morning and worked consistently

Carried on until evening

Then threshed out the grain

In all these ways Ruth showed herself a true child of God

Sought to honor Him by living in conformity with His law

This is how to react to difficult times – serve the Lord!

Don't grumble & complain! get on and persevere in good works

Look at Job –

Job 1:20-22 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

22 Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

Job 2:9-10 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!" 10 But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Lamentations 3:38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High That both good and ill go forth?

Get our problems into perspective

Even if all 70-80 years was adversity – compare with eternity!

4. God's Providence

See how God deals with His faithful child, Ruth

In the midst of her obedience, He works

Out of her industry He brings blessing

"Her chance chanced upon the portion of the field of Boaz"

Look at this man Boaz

4.1. A man of Power

Boaz a mighty man (vs 1) stoops to feed a poor stranger (vs 14)!

What humility! What graciousness!

4.2. A man who took Interest

All had been **fully** reported to Boaz (vs 11)

Made Intercession (vs 12)

"Under whose wings you have come to take refuge" (vs 12)

4.3. A man who made Provision

Boaz does more for her than the law requires - generous

For her own needs (water to drink (vs 9) , food to eat) (vs 14)

and those of Naomi (pull out some stalks for her – vs 16)

Ample provision

She still had to work but the provision was sure

Promised continuance (vs 8, 21)

4.4. A man who gave Protection

From mockery and insult by his own servants (vs 16)

From injury at the hands of others (vs 22)

4.5. A man who gave Comfort

Comfort from his words – indicates the suffering had been real (vs 13)

4.6. A man who brings Hope

Ruth returns to Naomi well laden

30lbs of threshed barley (vs 17)

Leftovers from lunch (vs 18)

Who was it who had been so gracious?
It was Boaz
Here is joyful news indeed
Boaz is a kinsman-redeemer (Goel)
Not only has he promised to maintain his kindness to Ruth
Through the barley and the wheat harvest
He has legal right and responsibility to redeem land of Elimelech
To take Ruth as his wife, maintain the name of the family in Israel!
What a change this brings to their circumstances!
Brought to the end of themselves
Cast entirely on the mercy of God
What do they find?
He is faithful! He is kind and good
Working all along to do greater good than they could imagine
Behind His frowning Providence He hid a smiling face

5. We have a Boaz too!

“That’s AVWB, but I don’t have a Boaz”

A knight in shining armor to deliver me from my troubles
Yes you do, if you are a believer! We have One greater than Boaz
Look at Christ!

Isn’t He powerful? ALL powerful!

Isn’t He interested?

Matthew 18:12-14 What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying? 13 If it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. 14 So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish.

Isn’t He interceding for you right now? – He ever lives to do so!

Doesn’t He Provide for you?

Doesn’t He protect you?

Hasn’t He given you THE comforter?

Isn’t He your kinsman redeemer – your hope for a better future?

Isn’t He the sovereign LORD?

What does Rom 8:28 say?

Is it true? Do you believe it?

6. Conclusions

We will know hard times as a believer
How do we cope with the hard times?
Persevere
Live to please God
Look to Christ
Trust in Him
He is faithful
He is unchanging
Will He do less for you than Boaz did for Ruth?

Unbeliever – who will you turn to when things go wrong?

Who is your Boaz?

What is your hope for the future?

God is **not** working things for your good

Come to Him now!