

Ruth 2:1-17

God's Providential Plan

There is no such things as luck. Nothing happens to us by pure coincidence because God is sovereignly working in our lives to achieve His perfect purpose in us and through us. How God sovereignly worked in Ruth's life to put her in the right place at the right time to meet the right person to fulfill God's plan for her is amazing to see. Trust what God is doing and obey what you know God wants you to do and you will see God's sovereignty at work in your life too.

I. Ruth's _____ (Ruth 2:1-2)

- Ruth demonstrated the important _____ of work and dependence when she volunteered to go work gleaning in the fields so that she and Naomi might have food to eat. (*Deuteronomy 24:19*)
- Ruth honored Naomi by _____ to take care of them both. Ruth honored Naomi by seeking her _____ before she acted.
- If we want further guiding and provision, we must be _____ to what we already know to do. (*Psalms 37:3-5*).

II. God _____ (Ruth 2:3)

- God sovereignly guided Ruth's steps to this field, even though she was not _____ of it. She was obedient to God and trusting in Him, so God guided her to exactly where God wanted her to be. (*Psalms 37:23*)
- You are _____ of directing the course of your life in such a way that results in your blessing and God's glory. (*Jeremiah 10:23*)
- We must obey and have faith that God is _____ us as we do what He commands.

III. Ruth's _____ (Ruth 2:4-7)

- Ruth was a woman of genuine, _____ character. (*Ruth 3:11; Proverbs 31:30-31*)
- It was Ruth's godly character that really caught Boaz's _____.
- We get to _____ the blessings of God's sovereign plan when we choose walk in righteousness. We _____ the blessings of God when we choose to live selfishly and sinfully. (*Jeremiah 5:25*)

IV. Gods _____ (Ruth 2:8-17)

- God provided Ruth with many things through the generosity of Boaz. The first thing she was provided with was _____. (*2 Timothy 1:12; Isaiah 32:17*)
- With the provision of security can the promise of _____. (*Deuteronomy 33:27; 2 Samuel 22:3; Psalms 46:1*)
- God also provided Ruth with _____ that day. (*Psalms 37:25; Ephesians 3:20*)
- We don't deserve any good thing, but God _____ blesses us with so much more than we even need because He is a kind and loving God. (*James 1:17; Psalms 68:19*)

Conclusion

God has a plan for your life. You do not know all the details of that plan nor do you need to know them. All we need to know, God will show us in due time. Our main concern must be doing now what we already know that God wants us to be doing. We must be _____ to God's word and trust Him to accomplish His will in and through us, and then we will get to enjoy God's guidance and provision.

Ruth 2:1-17

God's Providential Plan

There is no such things as luck. Nothing happens to us by pure coincidence because God is sovereignly working in our lives to achieve His perfect purpose in us and through us. Sometimes we forget this truth and when the unexplainable happens, we attribute it to blind chance. We are not at the whims of randomness. There is a sovereign God who is in control of our lives and orchestrates every event so that we can get the maximum benefit from it and He gets the ultimate glory.

In Ruth 2, Ruth takes center stage in this story about her redemption. In chapter one we learned how God redeemed her from her sin and how she became one of God's people. In the remaining chapters we will learn how God redeemed her from tragedy and turned the worst of trials into the greatest of triumphs. How God sovereignly worked in Ruth's life to put her in the right place at the right time to meet the right person to fulfill God's plan for her is amazing to see. God is working in your life right now just like He worked in Ruth's life. Trust what God is doing and obey what you know God wants you to do and you will see God's sovereignty at work in your life too.

I. Ruth's Obedience

Ruth 2:1-2 And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz; [2] And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.

Verse one introduces a man to us by the name of Boaz who is a main character in the story of Ruth. Boaz was a relative of Elimelech, Ruth's deceased father-in-law, and that is a very important piece of information in this story. We are told is that He is a mighty man of wealth, in contrast to the poverty that Naomi and Ruth were in. Why was this man mentioned and what part does he have to play in Ruth's redemption? We have to read the rest of the story to find the answers to these question.

In verse two we return to Ruth and Naomi. They are now back in Bethlehem where they ought to be, but there is still much uncertainty in their life. They do not have much, and they must turn their attention to providing for their basic needs, including the need for food. It was Ruth who spoke up and asked to go and glean in the fields so that she and Naomi could have something to eat.

The truth that God is sovereign and that He has providentially plan for us does not mean that we get to sit back, be lazy and expect God to provide us with a minimum standard of living. It does not mean that we are inactive, expecting God to drop everything in our lap. God commands us to do certain things and it is as we obey in humble dependence on God that He provides for us and he guides us. You cannot steer a parked car. In much the same way, we must work hard depending on the grace of God and as we do God supplies abundantly and guides sovereignly.

Ruth demonstrated this important balance of work and dependence when she volunteered to go work gleaning in the fields so that she and Naomi might have food to eat. God had commanded that the orphans and widows be sustained by the process of gleaning. In gleaning, people come behind the professional reapers, gathering the crops that they may have dropped or for some reason were not ideal.

Deuteronomy 24:19 When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.

It might not have been glamorous, but it was good, honest work. Ruth was humble and hardworking and it was through that humble hard work that God provided for her.

God has also commanded to honor father and mother. Exodus 20:12 says, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." Ruth applied this command to her relationship with Naomi her mother-in-law in two ways. First, she honored Naomi by working to take care of them both. Because of her age, it was likely that Naomi would have been limited in the amount of physical labor that she could do. Ruth took the responsibility to provide for them both to the best of her ability.

Secondly, Ruth honored Naomi by seeking her consent before she acted. Even though Ruth was an adult woman, she respected the wisdom and experience of her mother in law enough to get her permission before going out to glean.

Ruth did not grow up learning about God and the Bible. She may not have had much knowledge in the Old Testament Law. But Ruth was living up to the light that she had. She was being obedient to what she did know that God has said. Too often we worry about the things we might not know and what we might be missing instead of doing what we already know we should be doing. If we are not walking in obedience to what we know God says, why would we expect God to reveal more to us? If we want further guiding and provision, we must be obedient to what we already know to do.

Psalms 37:3-5 Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. 4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. 5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

The balance between our work and our trust in God comes when our work is done in obedience to God's word and in reliance on God. We do what God has commanded us to do and we trust God to do what He has promised to do.

II. God Guidance

Ruth 2:3 And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.

Naomi consented to let Ruth go and Ruth went out and chose a field to start working in. Ruth did not know who Boaz was so she had no idea that the field belonged to one of her father-in-law's relatives. But her selection of that field began a chain of events that resulted in redemption for Ruth and Naomi. Ruth 2:3 state "her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz." While she didn't select that field for any particular purpose, there was a God in control of her life Who was orchestrating events to benefit her the most and to glorify Himself. God sovereignly guided Ruth's steps to this field, even though she was not aware of it. She was obedient to God and trusting in Him, so God guided her to exactly where God wanted her to be. That is how God guides us all.

Psalms 37:23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.

It is imperative that we recognize this truth and walk in humble dependence on God's guidance. You cannot guide yourself into what is perfect and right. You are incapable of directing the course of your life in such a way that results in your blessing and God's glory.

Jeremiah 10:23 O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

We only have to look back at chapter one of this book to see the he results of a man following the way that seemed right to him. Elimelech did what when he left Bethlehem and he died along with his sons surrounded by ungodliness and idolatry. He did that which was right in his own eyes and the result was disaster. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Proverbs 14:12)

We cannot overemphasize the importance of this one act of obedience by Ruth. If she had chosen to stay home or to go beg on a street corner instead of following God's word and finding a place to work gleaning in the fields, what might have happened? God is sovereign and we participate in God's sovereign plan by following the guidance that He gives in His word. The principles is simple: we go and do what we know God's word says to do and God guides us along the way into His perfect will. We do not have to tie ourselves in knots trying to uncover God's will as if it were a long lost treasure. We cannot lean on our understanding and direct our own paths into God's sovereign plan. We must obey and have humble faith that God is guiding us as we do what He commands.

III. Ruth's Reputation

Ruth 2:4-7 And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee. [5] Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? [6] And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: [7] 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.

The importance of Ruth's choice that day is immediately seen when Boaz returns to the field from town that day. After a brief exchange of greetings with his employees, he asked the supervisor of the reapers about Ruth. "Whose damsel is this?" The answer reveals much about the character of Ruth.

First, it was no secret that she was not a Jew by birth but that she was a Moabite. That made the following information all the more striking. She was known to all as the one who chose to leave Moab and faithfully follow Naomi back to Bethlehem. The supervisor relayed how she approached him respectfully, requesting permission to glean in the fields that day. Having been granted permission, she worked steadily all day until that time when she had stopped for a short break.

Such a simple picture reveals to us that Ruth was a woman of genuine, godly character. She was obedient to God, respectful of authority, humble enough to accept menial labor and willing to work hard to provide for herself and others. Later in the book she is described as "virtuous," and is the only woman in the Bible that we know by name who was described that way. (Ruth 3:11)

Proverbs 31:30-31 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised. [31] Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

It was Ruth's godly character that really caught Boaz's attention. That is what God used in Boaz's life to motivate him to want to take care of Ruth. We cannot misconstrue the sovereignty of God as an excuse to live however we please. Our choices do matter. We get to enjoy the blessings of God's sovereign plan when we choose walk in righteousness. We forfeit the blessings of God when we choose to live selfishly and sinfully. As Jeremiah 5:25 says, "Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you." Because of her godly character and right decisions, Ruth received a tremendous blessing.

IV. Gods Provision

Ruth 2:8-17 Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: 9 Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn. 10 Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? 11 And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. 12 The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust. 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. 15 And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: 16 And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not. 17 So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley.

God provided Ruth with many things through the generosity of Boaz. The first thing she was provided with was security. For Ruth, Boaz gave her the security of always having somewhere to come and glean: his own fields. She did not need to worry about finding other places to glean for she was always welcome with his workers.

One of the most basic human needs is the feeling of security. People do not like to feel unsure about their life. Ruth had experienced tremendous insecurity up to the point she met Boaz. God will allow times of insecurity to come in our lives like He did to Ruth to teach us to trust in Him. When we learn to place our trust in Him, we find that only in God is their true security.

2 Timothy 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Isaiah 32:17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

With the provision of security can the promise of safety, which is something we all desire. No one likes being put into situations where they are afraid of what might happen to them. True safety comes through the security that God safety. God is our “refuge” and a refuge is a place that you run to be safe. In God, we find protection.

Deuteronomy 33:27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.

2 Samuel 22:3 The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.

Psalms 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

God also provided Ruth with sustenance that day. Boaz gave her the basic necessity of food. That was why she had come in the first place and God made sure that she didn't leave emptyhanded. In fact, she went home with so much that Naomi was shocked at how much she had. When you trust in God, He will provide you with all that you need.

Psalms 37:25 I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

God can also supply us with an abundance if He chooses. God doesn't promise that we will always have more than we need, but He is certainly able to give us more than we need or even more than we could imagine!

Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Ruth was sent home with about an ephah of barley grain, which is a little more than a bushel. That is more than sixty pounds of grain and enough to feed her and Naomi for many weeks!

When Ruth asked why Boaz was showing her so much kindness, he made it clear that it was her godly testimony that motivated him to bless her. He said, "The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." (Ruth 2:12) God had a sovereign plan that he was working in Ruth's life and Ruth's part in that plan was obedience and faith.

Unbeknownst to Ruth, Boaz later ensured that she would always have enough by instructing his employees to purposely drop extra for her. "Let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her." That is a beautiful description of God's blessing on our lives. We don't deserve any good thing, but God purposely blesses us with so much more than we even need because He is a kind and loving God.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Psalms 68:19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.

Conclusion

God has a plan for your life. You do not know all the details of that plan nor do you need to know them. All we need to know, God will show us in due time. Our main concern must be doing now what we already know that God wants us to be doing. We must be obedient to God's word and trust Him to accomplish His will in and through us, and then we will get to enjoy God's guidance and provision.