

Ruth Series – Part 5
October 15th, 2006

The Harvest – Part 2

1). Let us remember once again that the Book of Ruth provides for us a word picture – a type – of the life of the Christian who will be found worthy at the Judgment Seat of Christ to be a coheir with Christ.

a). This Book provides enormous spiritual truth concerning the journey we are making, the work we are to do, the preparations we are to undertake.

b). And finally it gives us a glorious promise by showing that future time when the faithful Christian will receive a full reward, becoming the Wife of Christ, as Ruth becomes the wife of Boaz.

2). Ru 1:22 *So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.*

a). Last week we saw Ruth with Naomi return to Bethlehem and begin work in Boaz's field.

b). We saw that they arrived at a specific time – the beginning of barley harvest and that Ruth worked for a complete period of time – from morning until evening and from the beginning of barley harvest to the end of barley and wheat harvest.

c). We saw in the barley harvest that connected with resurrection, barley constituting the sheaf of grain that was waved before the Lord on the Feast of Firstfruits. This is a festival that fell on the third day following our Lord's crucifixion pointing to His being raised from the dead –
1Co 15:20 ¶ *But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*

d). Teaching us that it is only that done in the Spirit that is able to produce fruit in relation to the coming Kingdom - Ga 4:30 *Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."*

i/ The other types – Genesis Day 3 / Red Sea Crossing /

Baptism

e). We saw in the wheat harvest things connected with both death and resurrection - Joh 12:24 *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it*

produces much grain. 25 "He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal (Age lasting) life.

f). This teaches us the necessity of keeping our 'old man', our sin nature in the place of death and choosing to walk in the Spirit instead. Something that happens on a continual basis subsequent to our eternal salvation.

g). And we also saw that the work Ruth undertook was done in the part of the field belonging to Boaz

3). We read in - Ru 2:17 ¶ *So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.*

a). In this we see Ruth's work and we see her having gathered a certain quantity of grain – about an ephah of barley.

b). This would be the same as that presented in the Parable of the Sower - Mt 13:8 *"But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*

c). Which is part of the same picture as - 1Co 3:13 *each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.*

d). And this would lead to the fulfillment of that promised in – Mt 21:43 *"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.*

4). So the question for us today is, 'Exactly what does this work and the producing of fruit look like for us?' – And God has seen fit to provide us with a whole chapter in Ruth dealing with the work in the harvest, which is full of instruction for us.

a). And as often happens with scripture we need to view this from several interrelated perspectives.

b). We need to see the work as it relates to each of us individually

c). As it relates to our individual ministry to others

d). How the work relates to the corporate ministry of the church in respect of us as individuals

e). And how it relates to the corporate ministry of the church in respect of those beyond these walls.

f). And throughout we must keep in mind that this is work to be done in - Php 3:10.....*the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,*

5). And one of the keys we have to this is in our scripture from Ruth from earlier - Ru 2:17 ¶ *So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.*

a). We have a gathering in and then that which has been gathered is worked on, removing all that which is useless, leaving only the pure grain.

b). In the Parable of the Wheat and Tares we see this - Mt 13:30 *'Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, **but gather the wheat into my barn.**"'*

c). At the end of the age, of which this is a picture, it is the wheat, that which has been 'beaten out' that is gathered into His barn.

6). Now with regards to us as individuals we have a responsibility to beat out that which is worthless from ourselves and this would of course be that connected with our first birth – our old man – our sin nature.

a). This is exactly the idea encompassed in - Php 2:9 *Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. 12 ¶ Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*

b). I want us to see the context for working out our own salvation with fear and trembling – because the day is coming when every knee will bow to Christ as King and every tongue will confess that He is Lord we need to choose obedience to God's Word.

c). And because we have to 'work out our own salvation', we are clearly not dealing with the free gift of eternal life, but that salvation to be revealed in the last time, that salvation to be granted as a result of our faithful obedience subsequent to our redemption – the salvation of our soul.

d). 1Pe 1:9 *receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

7). This is what James writes about - Jas 2:21 *Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the*

friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

a). In essence then, believing what God has said and then organizing our lives accordingly and this necessitates choosing to exchange the wisdom of this world with God's wisdom – choosing to reject the value systems of the world replacing them with God's – choosing to reject what this world has to offer looking to what God has promised concerning the coming of His Kingdom.

b). Our old man is in complete harmony with the things of this world and is therefore in conflict with the things of God - Ga 4:28 *Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. 29 But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now.*

c). This is why we must put to death the deeds of the flesh.

d). Ro 8:13 *For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

e). Ro 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

f). Ro 6:11 *Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.*

g). 1Co 3:18 ¶ *Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness"; 20 and again, "The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile."*

h). And every time we do this, this is work, we are producing fruit, just like Ruth's ephah of barley – and we as a grain of wheat, are beating out the chaff leaving us a pure grain.

i). (Object lesson)

8). Now not only do we have an individual responsibility for ourself, but we also have a responsibility toward each other - Eph 4:25 *Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.*

a). This is not finding fault and dishing the dirt, this is encouraging one another in respect of our race of faith - Heb 10:24 *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the*

assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

b). And if we find our brother or sister in sin we are not to beat them up or sit in judgment, but help them with a view to restoring them to a place where they will not lose their inheritance.

c). Jas 5:19 *Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.*

d). I would remind you of - Pr 11:30 ¶ *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who wins souls is wise.*

e). Sometimes it may be necessary to employ tough love – Jude 1:22 *And on some have compassion, making a distinction; 23 but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.*

f). But in all of our dealing with others in this respect we must remember - Ga 6:1 ¶ *Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.*

g). And as we would embrace this responsibility towards one another, according to the scripture, so we are on the one hand producing fruit for ourselves; and on the other helping 'beat out' the chaff attached to our brother or sister. This is work in the harvest. (Object lesson Part 2)

9). Although we have a very definite personal responsibility for ourselves and a definite responsibility towards each other, God has provided a corporate ministry within His Church to minister to us as individuals as we individually work in the field.

a). We will remember - Heb 4:11 ¶ *Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. 12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

b). It is the Word of God alone that is able to illuminate the division between our souls and our spirit.

c). Without the Word of God how would we be able to recognize the old man within us?

d). Without the Word of God how would we distinguish between the truth we are to believe and the lie the enemy would have us believe?

e). Ro 10:17 *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

f). Eph 4:11 *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ-- 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

g). If there were no need for this ministry within the church then Christ would not have supplied it.

h). If you would see yourselves as ears of corn then it is the ministry of the Word through the work of the Pastor/Teacher that is beating out the grain from the chaff in each one individually, and preparing each one individually for the work of ministry.

i). In those who receive the Word and those who proclaim it we should see fruit production. In those who proclaim it, as they are faithful to our Ephesians scripture, and those who receive it as they are faithful to what is proclaimed. This is work. (Object lesson Part 3)

10). And then there is the work in relation to the collective, corporate ministry of this body of believers beyond these walls.

a). And this we may understand has two facets

b). The first of which is characterized in the ministry of Paul

c). 1Co 15:1 ¶ *Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,*

d). We see in vv1- 2 reference to the gospel, the good news, which Paul has preached, by which the Corinthians are saved 'IF'. Clearly referencing the gospel of the glories of Christ, the message surrounding the coming Kingdom.

e). In vv3 – 4 we then see reference to what Paul delivered to them first of all - *that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,* - that which we know to be the gospel of grace, that relating to our eternal salvation.

f). So then it is the corporate ministry of the Church to declare the gospel of grace to those who are eternally lost, and once they have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, moving from eternal death into eternal life, the Church is to declare to them gospel of the glories of Christ – the purpose for their salvation – the message of the Kingdom.

g). In this sense the lost on receiving the gospel of grace are planted in the field and once planted we begin the process of gleaning and beating out.

h). It really is very simple and very straightforward.

i). There is really no ambivalence as to the task of any body of believers, or any individual ministry for that matter – we are to preach the whole counsel of God - Ac 20:25 *"And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. 26 "Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.* This is work.

11). The second facet of the corporate ministry of the church is really encompassed in Paul's subsequent declaration to the Corinthians after the gospel of grace.

a). But in this instance, rather than declaring the gospel of grace first – to those who are lost we are dealing solely with those who are already saved.

b). Ac 18:25 *This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.*

c). Given our current geographical location we are more likely to encounter those who are already Christians, those who already understand the gospel of grace, and to these we should declare the gospel of the glories of Christ. This is work.

12). Now hopefully we can see how the work in the field relates to us as individuals and us as a body of believers.

13). What we need to do now is see this work within the context of additional information given to us in Ruth.

14). Ru 2:8 *Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women. 9 "Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn."*

a). We are not to work in another field and we must keep our eyes on the field belonging to Boaz – in other words we are only to work in relation to being led by the Spirit, which we would understand to be faithful obedience to God's Word.

b). We are to stay close by Christ's 'young women' who are also working in the same field who I would suggest are representative of the five wise virgins, those who are also working out their own salvation in fear and trembling.

c). Now the young men being commanded not to touch Ruth may appear difficult until we realize that the work in the harvest cannot be separated from the outcome of the harvest, and it is in relation to the outcome that the young men may not touch her.

d). Who are the young men?

e). Ru 2:4 ¶ *Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers,*

f). They are the reapers – now see again the parable of the wheat and Tares - Mt 13:39b...*the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.*

g). At the end of the age - Mt 13:41 *"The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 "and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

h). At the end of the age, at the completion of the harvest, at the conclusion of the work the angels will gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend – this is Orpah once again. But Ruth, and therefore the faithful Christians whom she typifies, will not be touched by the angels.

i). Rather in respect of the faithful Christian we would understand angelic ministry in this way - Heb 1:14 *Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*

15). Ru 2:15 *And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. 16 "Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."*

a). And here is something incredible – whether we are dealing with issues in our own sin nature, helping our brother or sister with their issues, winning the lost or winning the saved – God provides for us that with which we are to work.

b). The headless chicken syndrome of much Christian ministry is completely unnecessary.

c). We need to keep our eyes on the field and wait on the Lord, and what He provides we are to pick up and work with.

d). We have all experienced this – personally, sin in our lives that is dealt with at different times.

e). Collectively – the CD/DVD ministry

f). Those who walk through the door

g). The Bible studies

h). Ac 2:44 *Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*

16). Ru 2:14 *Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, "Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar."*

a). And in complete accord with our scripture from Ephesians 4 God has provided a time for us to be refreshed, provided bread for us to eat and water to drink, that we might be properly sustained to continue the work.

17). To close - Ru 2:12 *"The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."*

a). Isa 40:31 *But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.*

b). Ps 37:9 *For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth.*