

Sunday February 28<sup>th</sup> 2016

Ruth

Part Six

1). 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). We have seen in our previous studies how the journey Ruth makes with Naomi to Bethlehem is a picture of our continual process to spiritual maturity as the Holy Spirit takes the scriptures we are taught and opens them to our understanding thereby leading us into all truth, and the Lord has set ministry in His 'Church' to facilitate that end - 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;*

b). This then is the place we come to so that we - Eph 4:15b.....*may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ—*

And having received that which is taught from the apostles and prophets we then need to continue in it - Ac 2:42 ¶ *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.....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,*

And it is essential that we do this because - Ro 10:17 *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

*Col 2:6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.*

This is the process, week by week, that takes us on to spiritual maturity.

c). And all of this, that which is contained in the Books written by the apostles and prophets, given to them by inspiration of the Spirit, the teaching of this same apostles' doctrine and our continuance in it, the process to maturity, is all with a specific purpose as we move towards the goal of our calling - *Php 3:14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

The goal we see realized in - *Re 19:6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."*

*1Pe 1:9 receiving the end [goal] of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

The establishment of Christ's Millennial Kingdom and His rule over the earth from the heavens with His joint heirs, those described in the verses we have just read and pictured through Ruth and Rebekah, of itself necessitates the removal of the present ruler of this age, Satan and his fallen angels. And it is because those engaged in the journey to Bethlehem have set their hearts and minds on attaining these positions of rulership that the spiritual warfare rages. We don't see any detail of this warfare in the Book of Ruth, but by comparing scripture with scripture we know it to be implicit in her journey and subsequent work - in other words it doesn't have to be detailed in Ruth for us to know it's there in the life of the faithful Christian.

d). This warfare in the life of the eternally saved is something we have already seen in the type of the first generation of Israel to come out of Egypt as they moved towards entering the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at Kadesh Barnea. We will no doubt remember the account of what

takes place there - Nu 13:32 *And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. 33 "There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."*

The 10 spies who gave the bad report saw only with their natural eyes, not the eyes of faith, and that which we see described in v33 would adequately describe our own standing with regards to the principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this age, and the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places, as we would look in the natural. But with the eyes of faith we can know as Caleb did - Nu 13:30 *Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it."*

And if we are to gain the victory in the spiritual warfare then we must take note of the first item that has to be in place as we put on the whole armor of God, as it directly relates to the reason for Caleb's confidence as seen in Numbers – Eph 6:14 *Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth,*

Now this verse is not dealing with 'the truth', the truth of the scriptures, but with the sincerity, seriousness and determination we are to have as we make the journey and engage in the conflict. That seen in the belt of truth then has exactly the same idea as Ruth's determination to go on with Naomi as recorded in – Ru 1:16 *But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. 17 Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me."*

And Rebekah's determination to follow the oldest servant in - Ge 24:58 *Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go."*

And we can see very clearly the inseparable connection between this wholehearted, sincere resolve to go on to the goal of our calling and the

progress to spiritual maturity; without the one we will not experience the other. And implicit in this resolve is our absolute trust in the Lord to lead us in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Without such a resolve it is impossible to put on the other pieces of the armor shown to us in Ephesians Chapter 6, and to state the obvious, without the whole armor of God we will not be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

e). Let's also remember that the 10 spies who gave the bad report had heard exactly the same promises of God as Joshua and Caleb, just as Orpah had heard exactly the same from Naomi as Ruth had. But neither the 10 spies, nor Orpah, were able to receive that which they had heard because of their hard heartedness and consequently turned away from the promises rather than having the seriousness and sincerity to press on. In this sense we can see both as not having put in place the belt of truth and therefore not having being able to stand against the wiles of the devil resulting in defeat in the spiritual warfare.

f). So, if we now go back to the experience of the faithful Christian as seen through Ruth then we will realize that Ruth's work in Boaz's field and her preparation for his threshing floor pictures for us the means by which the whole armor of God is kept in place and demonstrates how we are to be successful in the spiritual warfare, success pictured in Ruth's approval at Boaz's threshing floor.

g). In this sense there is a direct parallel between Caleb's request in – Jos 14:12 *"Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the LORD said."*

And Ruth's request recorded in - Ru 3:9 *And he said, "Who are you?" So she answered, "I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative."*

Both requests are made out of the context of a life lived in faithful obedience and patient endurance with sincerity and seriousness towards the hope set before them.

[Power Point]

2). Now as we had seen last week and had read in the opening verse this morning, Ruth's work in Boaz's field starts 'at the beginning of barley harvest', with barley speaking of resurrection following death because of its association with the Feast of Firstfruits and the Lord's resurrection on the day of that Feast - 1Co 15:20 ¶ *But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*

a). And we had also seen that Ruth's work in Boaz's field continued for a specific period of time - Ru 2:23 *So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest;*

And not only does the period of time from the beginning to the end of barley and wheat harvest picture the extent of the time we are to be working during our Christian life, but also describes the process by which our work is to be done. Our work in the Lord's field can only be done in resurrection, only after leaving our old man in the place of death in order to walk in newness of life through the 'new man', the man of the spirit. But as we also know our old man despite being put in the place of death continues to try to assert himself in our life making it necessary for us to be continually putting him back in the place of death again and again – this is what we call 'dying to self' or 'denying our self' and it is only following this action of putting to death the deeds of the body so as to walk in the Spirit that our work will have its proper result – 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.*

b). Just like the spiritual warfare Ruth's dying to self is not explicitly presented in the Book, but it is implicit in her following without question the instructions given to her – this is the place that we should all be reaching for - Ro 6:6 *knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.*

c). The very fact of our spiritual birth means that we are no longer slaves of sin – before we had spiritual life we could do nothing else but live in subjection to our old man, but not so now, unless we choose to do so –

Ro 6:16 *Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? 17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. 19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. 20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting [age lasting] life.*

And again here in v17 we can see the paramount importance of obedience to the scriptures, obeying *from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered* – exactly what we have seen presented through the relationship between Ruth and Naomi.

3). So with all of this in place let's now continue to look at the nature and substance of Ruth's work, remembering that we must see it in the context of the spiritual warfare, of putting off the old man and putting on the new – Ru 2:1 ¶ *There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz. 2 So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter." 3 Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.*

a). At the beginning of Chapter 2, following the arrival in Bethlehem we have the introduction of Boaz, a mighty man of great wealth who is in the family of Elimelech, Naomi's dead husband. And right here we are able to identify who it is that Boaz pictures.

b). Naomi pictures the nation of Israel who is separated from her Husband, God the Father, by death – the only 'mighty man of great wealth' in the 'family' of God the Father who is able to redeem is God the Son –

Ge 24:35 *"The LORD has blessed my master greatly, and he has become great; and He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys.*

Joh 16:15 *"All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.*

c). In v2 we see Ruth asking permission to go to 'the field' to glean heads of grain that she might find favor with the owner of the field. And in Ruth's asking and Naomi's giving her assent we can once again see the inseparable connection between Ruth's actions and the scriptures, which Naomi represents.

d). And as Ruth goes and begins to glean she 'happened' to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz.

e). That pictured here we have already seen in previous weeks in our study of the Matthew 13 parables – this corresponds to the 4<sup>th</sup> part of the parable of the sower - Mt 13:18 *"Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom.....23 "But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word [of the Kingdom] and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."*

Mt 13:38 *"The field is the world,*

Ruth, picturing the faithful Christian, has heard and understood the word of the kingdom and having been sown out into the world she is seen producing fruit – gleaning heads of grain.

f). Now we know from - 1Jo 5:19b.....*the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.*

If the field is the world, which it is, then how should we understand Ruth being in that part of the field belonging to Boaz? The answer can be found in the prayer of the Lord recorded in - Joh 17:15 *"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 ¶ "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also*

*may be sanctified by the truth. 20 ¶ "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;*

We have all been sown out into the world, but this is not about geography, rather it is about finding ourselves in the midst of this world's systems under the god of this world whilst in possession of the truth of scripture in order to produce fruit. We are in the world, but we are not of the world and that which separates us from the world is the truth of the Word, the word of the kingdom. So, as we find ourselves in the world, but following the things of the Spirit not the things of the flesh so we find ourselves in that part of the 'field' belonging to Boaz – that which has to do with our new man and spiritual things not that which has to do with our old man and carnal things. And as we have already seen it is only by walking in the spirit and keeping the old man in the place of death that we are able to be fruitful. This then is Ruth in the part of the field belonging to Boaz who was of the family of Elimelech. This is the spiritual warfare.

4). Ru 2:4 ¶ *Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they answered him, "The LORD bless you!"*  
5 *Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?"* 6 *So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, "It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab.* 7 *"And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house."*

a). Now Ruth is not the only one 'working' in the field, but she is the one who attracts Boaz's attention once he has come from Bethlehem. And why has she attracted his attention? Because of what she has done and is doing. Let's jump down a few verses for a moment - Ru 2:11 *And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before.*

And where does Boaz get this information? From 'the servant who was in charge of the reapers', which gives us a direct connection with the identical

servant from Genesis Chapter 24 - Ge 24:66 *And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.*

This connection should make it clear for us who the servant in charge of the reapers pictures, once again the servant is a picture of the Holy Spirit within the context of His search for the Bride. And then if we go back to the Matthew 13 parables we can also identify the reapers - Mt 13:39..... *and the reapers are the angels.*

Heb 1:14 *Are they [the angels] not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*

b). So here is the most extraordinary thing that we need to realize – if we are following the example seen in Ruth then we have already come to the attention of our Savior; He has already seen us amongst all the others in the field and He is continually receiving a full report of all we do. This goes beyond the fact that God is omniscient and therefore must know everything, to the intimacy of taking a personal interest in us, of taking an active role in our progress - 1Pe 3:12 *For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; [From Psalm 34]*

c). And this is beautifully pictured for us through Ruth in the verses that follow on from Ruth 2:7 - 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."*

The first thing that might strike us in these verses is that what Boaz says to Ruth is a command with an implicit warning, to which she may or may not listen, 'Do not go to glean in another field.....'

d). For those with ears to hear there is a glorious promise in heeding these words, a promise realized by Ruth because she did listen and a promise strikingly presented in the Messianic Psalm 45 – Ps 45:8 *All Your garments are scented with myrrh and aloes and cassia, Out of the ivory palaces, by which they have made You glad. 9 Kings' daughters are among Your honorable women; At*

*Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir. 10 ¶ Listen, O daughter, Consider and incline your ear; Forget your own people also, and your father's house; 11 So the King will greatly desire your beauty; Because He is your Lord, worship Him.*

e). So, why is it necessary for Boaz to give Ruth this command with its implied warning? We will already know the answer to this, but we will have to wait to look at it until next time – if the Lord is willing.