

# An Unexpected Kindness (Ruth 2)

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 19 November 2023

Preacher: William HC

[ 0 : 00 ] So I'm going to read Ruth chapter 2, which is a sermon passage today, and then I'll pass it on to Pastor William. So Ruth chapter 2.

Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side, a man of standing from the clan of Elimlik, whose name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor.

Naomi said to her, go ahead, my daughter. So she went out, entered a field, and began to glean behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimlik.

Just then, Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters. The Lord be with you. The Lord bless you, they answered.

Boaz asked the overseer of his harvesters, who does that young woman belong to? The overseer replied, she is a Moabite who came back from Moab with Naomi.

[ 1 : 13 ] She said, please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters. She came into the field and has remained here from morning till now, except for a short rest in the shelter.

So Boaz said to Ruth, my daughter, listen to me. Don't go and glean in another field, and don't go away from here. Stay here with the women who work for me. Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the women.

I have told the men not to lay a hand on you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled. At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground.

She asked him, why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me, a foreigner? Boaz replied, I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband.

How you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.

[ 2 : 21 ] May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my Lord, she said. You have put me at ease by speaking kindly to your servant, though I do not have the standing of one of your servants. At mealtime, Boaz said to her, come over here, have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar.

When she sat down with the harvesters, he offered her some roasted grain. She ate all she wanted and had some left over. As she got up to glean, Boaz gave orders to his men.

Let her gather among the sheaves and don't reprimand her. Even pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up. Don't rebuke her. So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening.

Then she threshed the barley she had gathered and it amounted to about an effort. She carried her back to town and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered. Ruth also brought out and gave her what she had left over after she had eaten enough.

Her mother-in-law asked her, where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you. Then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one at whose place she had been working.

[ 3 : 25 ] The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz, she said. The Lord bless him, Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead, she added.

That man is a close relative. He is one of our guardian redeemers. Then Ruth, the Moabite said. He even said to me, stay with my workers until they finish harvesting all my grain.

Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law. It would be good for you, my daughter, to go with the women who work for him. Because in someone else's field, you might be harmed. So Ruth stayed close to the women of Boaz to glean until the barley and wheat harvest.

We're finished. And she lived with her mother-in-law. Thanks, Venus, for reading that. And good afternoon, everyone. I see some grins from some of the women in our church.

I'm not sure why, but we'll find out. Great passage, isn't it? What an engaging story. But of course, with all good stories, we want to pay close attention.

[ 4 : 27 ] So I want to invite you. Feel free to do what it takes to just listen carefully to this part of Scripture. So I'm just going to flight mode my phone and do whatever else you need to.

And make sure we pay attention to the King of Kings as he speaks. Shall we pray? And let's get into this passage. Our Father, we thank you. We thank you so much that your word is living and active. It's sharper than any two-edged sword. And as we come, we are not just feeding from any old story. The story, this book of Ruth, these people, these names and places come as part of your salvation story.

So help us see Jesus, our guardian redeemer, in the pages, in the words of this account. We ask in his mighty name. Amen.

I've heard from a few of you how you've been there and back again from lots of holidays. So some have been to Europe. Some have been to Japan. Some have been to all kinds of places.

[ 5 : 36 ] I had the privilege over the previous holidays to go on a short trip to Christchurch. And so this was Christchurch 10 years ago when Shero and I visited proper.

So actually, Shero and I, when we got married, we honeymooned in the South Island. It was so beautiful. We thought if there was a paradise, surely the South Island would be it. And then the earthquakes happened.

So 2012 was the last time we really just walked around the city and just buildings demolished. I remember going to Brighton Beach and having to snake through the roads because there was liquefaction everywhere.

So just all the mud coming out. And it was just a really gloomy city in 2012. But then September this year, we went back. And it just seemed like a very different place.

Everything was rebuilt. Some of you have been to Christchurch, I'm sure, in recent years. It's actually quite a cool city now, right? Everything's kind of built, rebuilt. They've actually redesigned the city center.

[ 6 : 40 ] So it's actually quite nice. There's actually good food places as well. So we managed to find Korean fried chicken in Christchurch. So a lot of things happening in the city.

So a lot can happen, right? A lot can change in 10 years. And so the question from this passage is, what do we find when we come back after a long time away from a place?

Because that's what Ruth and Naomi have just done, right? Remember Pastor Barry introducing to us this immigrant story. Once upon a time, there was an Israelite dad, mom, two boys.

They leave Bethlehem of Judah in a time of famine. And this was a time when the judges ruled.

Okay? So we hear that in Ruth 1, verse 1. So we know that in those days, the book of Judges says, in those days in the book of Judges, there was no king in Israel.

And Judges 21, 25 is this repeated phrase, everyone did what was right in his own eyes. That's the context of this story in the book of Ruth.

[ 7 : 45 ] Time of famine. No bread in Bethlehem literally means the house of bread, right? There's a bit of irony there. There's a cost of living crisis. And so chapter 1, scene 1, right?

They head to the fields of Moab. Then they find it a land of sorrow. All right, 10 years in this city, what happens? First, dad dies. Then mom and her two boys, they keep going.

Her two boys marry Moabite women. But then both her sons die too. And now the only Israelite left in the story is a widowed, childless woman.

Her and two daughters-in-law. Scene 2, and chapter 1, they head back on the road. And Naomi has heard of how the Lord has brought back bread to Bethlehem.

And that's where she's headed. But for Orpah and Ruth, these two daughters-in-law, as Venus shared with us, this is a brand new experience. They have never lived outside of Moab. They've never left home before.

[ 8 : 45 ] But they're willing to go with Naomi's people. But there's this intense conversation. It wasn't there. And the word that popped up over and over as Naomi was talking to Orpah and Ruth was,

return, right?

No, you return back. No, I'm returning with you. No, don't return with us. Right? If you walk with me, Naomi said, there's no future for you. In my culture, right?

Without sons, I cannot provide for you. I'm as good as dead. Go back to your home, Orpah. Go back to your home, Ruth. And I'll go back to mine. And go and die there.

And Orpah turns back, but not without tears. But Ruth, we heard this last time, she clings. She cleaves to her mother-in-law. She is determined not to forsake her.

And in words quoted in *Wedding Vows Everywhere* Since, she says, and she pledges her loyalty, she says something like this, Where you walk, I'll walk. Where you lodge, I'll lodge.

[ 9 : 49 ] Your people are my people. Your God, my God. Where you die, I die. This is my solemn vow. Beautiful words. Spoken from Ruth to her mother-in-law.

And so, when they go back, they go back with bitter hearts. Empty wallets. And as Naomi walks in, back into Bethlehem, ten years later, right?

The scene is here. Imagine the whispers of disbelief around them as they walk back. Is that really her? I can't recognize her. Homeless.

Homeless. Childless. Back from the fields of Moab. And the question is, ten years on, what will they find? I don't know your story.

I know some of your stories. But perhaps, if you are someone who is wandering back to God's place of promise today, what kind of God should you expect to find?

[ 10 : 48 ] This is what Ruth, too, wants to show us today. But before we reenter the drama, okay, from chapter 2, verse 2, the narrator, actually, in verse 1, he pulls us aside.

He gives us two comments, all right? So I'm going to highlight them. These are kind of like show notes who listen to podcasts and get little show notes at the bottom. Consider these two show notes from the person who wrote the book of Ruth, right?

First show note, they arrived in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning. Okay? This is significant, right? Because this is the perfect time for refugees who are hungry to come back home. So this is the perfect time for them to come back. A second show note, someone significant. To Naomi's future is about to be introduced, right?

A relative from the same clan. Literally a man of great standing, right? A phrase used to describe kings and famous people in the Bible.

[ 11 : 47 ] Boaz. So two show notes talking about food and family. Two things Naomi was looking for in the fields of Moab and did not find. Lost.

Two things that the Lord emptied from her. Made her bitter. Will God provide her both food and family and a future in this promised land?

I'll just pull aside as well. We're not told who the narrator of Ruth is. So, but I think this narrator, he's a pretty good storyteller. He's got a point to make and which we will find out as we keep going.

So this is not a neutral story. This is a story told with a purpose for us as well. So we want to keep listening. And the chapter we heard today, all right, I read. I've divided it into three main sections because there's three main characters, right?

And we're fixed kind of in one location this time. So last chapter, kind of moving from city to city. Here we're fixed in the fields of Israel. And there are three main characters.

[ 12 : 48 ] So that's what we'll walk through. But I want to highlight two important Hebrew words that shape this chapter. One is favor or grace. And we'll see that appear twice.

And then finally, there's a word loving kindness. And we'll see them appear at each of the three points. So firstly, we're going to see in verses 2 to 7 that Ruth seeks favor.

Favor from the fields of Bethlehem. Let me remind you of Ruth's background. We all lived very privileged lives. The author tells us she is a Moabite. Actually, the word Moabite comes up so often that I think he's trying to make a point.

This is not an Israelite. Fresh off the bus. We are a very multicultural city here in Auckland. But here in Bethlehem, a Moabite would have stood out. Stood out.

But it seems like she's learnt enough of the local customs from maybe her mother-in-law. She knows enough to know that actually in Israel, in Bethlehem, there were certain parts of a farmer's field that should be left for the poor and destitute.

[ 13 : 55 ] Kind of like a food bank on the corners of your farm. Just like Leviticus 19, 9 to 10 commanded. If you've ever driven past farms in New Zealand, sometimes there's like an honesty

box.

You can grab some food. Imagine that in the fields of Bethlehem. And so, verse 2, Ruth is asking in a sense, Mum, let me go out and see what grain we can find.

Or some food to sell. This is Ruth exercising her newfound faith in the God of Abraham and Jacob. But it's going to be tested. If she steps out of faith, what will she find?

What will she find? Will she find favour or failure? So, she heads out of town. Verse 3. That's what it says. And she begins to glean in the fields behind the harvesters.

She finds a field. And literally, the story then says, her chance came. Right? As it turned out. Her chance came. Because of all the fields she could have started to pick from, the plot of land she's standing in belongs to Boaz.

[15:05] From Naomi's husband's family. And then, verse 2. Look who comes along. Boaz from Bethlehem. You couldn't script this.

This is the Lord's doing. And look, in the time of, remember, judges, chaos, everyone doing what's right in their own eyes. Remember, here comes Boaz. And what are his first words?

The Lord be with you. This is a different man to all the men in the time of the judges. Right? The Lord is with you. Imagine working for your boss, and they show this kind of faith.

Wouldn't that be wonderful? And look, it seems like Boaz's crew appreciate him, right? And because they reply back, may Yahweh bless you, boss. I guess he's in the field.

He's surveying the workers, making sure everyone's doing a good job. But then, something or someone catches his eye. A young woman he doesn't recognize in this field, whose family and clan are unfamiliar to him.

[16:10] I'm going to warn you now. There's a wrong turn we shouldn't take. The wrong turn we shouldn't take in this story is, here is when boy meets girl.

Oh. And Boaz is not asking, is she taken? All right? Dating is not the first priority in the narrator's head.

Listen again to verse 5. I'll tell you this. The Hebrew translates very literally as this. Boaz said to his young lad, okay? To whom does this young lass belong to?

Everyone in his life is young. Young man, young woman. Boaz is probably more like Casey's age. If you can imagine that, okay? An older man. This is actually how Naomi talks.

Notice in chapter 1, right? It was my daughter, my daughter. And it's how your parents talk. This is a first generation person, right? Boaz is probably the oldest guy in town, in this scene.

[17:10] And we don't know his situation. The narrator doesn't say. Perhaps he is widowed. Perhaps he never had the chance to get married. But he's successful. He loves the Lord.

And remember, at this point, actually, Ruth still had no idea about Boaz or the fact that she'd enter his field, okay? But what do we see?

As we see Boaz hearing Ruth's faith in action, right? Hearing about how she's gleaned from dawn to dusk verses 6 to 7, Boaz is amazed.

He's amazed and he's impressed. And he is stirred into action. So in that first section, while Ruth was trying to find favor, right from verse 8 onwards, we see Boaz extend generous grace to a foreigner.

Okay? Listen to verse 8 again. So have a look in your Bibles. Verse 8. Look. So Boaz said to Ruth, My daughter, listen to me. Don't go and glean another field.

[18:13] Don't go away from here. Stay here with my servant girls or women. You see, Boaz is the devout boss of this farm.

All right? And he invites Ruth to make herself at home. All right? As the men, this is how it worked in harvest time, as they lead the pack, they cut and scythe the field with their, you know, kind of their knives.

All right? And then the ripe grain falls to the ground. It's pretty physically demanding work. Okay? So when you go to the gym, and if you do this all day, you'll get tired. All right? This is what they do all day. And then the women come behind, and they pick up and gather up.

They glean. All right? What falls to the ground. We step back into our Western 21st century shoes, and this invite, right, from Boaz to Ruth, Hey, come and join us.

Come and glean with us. It seems like a random act of kindness, right? Just from a decent bloke. Not too unusual, right? Wouldn't you offer a cup of sugar to your neighbor? Wouldn't you help give directions to some older person who doesn't know where they're going?

[ 19 : 20 ] That's the culture and context we live in, right? But have a look at verse 10, and you'll see that Ruth is literally floored by Boaz's offer.

She knows that this is not something she should expect. All right? Look, if I gave a grocery voucher to maybe someone in need that I met, the last thing I'd expect in New Zealand is for them to fall down on their feet and bow down to me.

But this is exactly what happens. Remember, this is a culture that is different to ours. It's a bit more hierarchical, right? A daughter-in-law without children, a foreigner, no inheritance. Look, Ruth's status is as secure as an asylum seeker without a visa to stay in this country. We'll see later on as well.

It's a bit dark. Boaz has to tell his men more than once, don't reprimand. Actually, literally, don't touch her. Don't shame her. Don't rebuke her. I think swirling around, Ruth is a vulnerable woman.

[ 20 : 28 ] Could be her gender. Could be her ethnicity. Could be her financial position. Maybe all those things make her vulnerable. And yet, in Boaz's field, she finds favor.

She experiences grace, undeserved grace. Why? Look at verse 11. Boaz replies. And from his reply, we realize that actually Boaz himself has connected the dots.

He's realized now, look, through the grapevine, he's aware of the story of the young Moabite who came and joined an Israelite mother-in-law back home, who literally walked into the promised land, forsaking her own family, cleaving to her childless mother-in-law.

A hero story. And so, I think, in verse 12, this is where we get Boaz's reply that we're trying to memorize, right? He commends her in the Lord's name. He says, May Yahweh repay you.

For what you've done. May your reward be full from Yahweh. And those words repay and rewarded, the word literally behind it in Hebrew is shalom, okay, or to make shalom.

[ 21 : 45 ] Shalom is kind of this word that means peace, wholeness, completeness. You see, Boaz is praying, right, that his promise-keeping God will grant Ruth peace and wholeness as she willingly steps under the wings of the Lord as her refuge.

And just so the reader knows that this prayer of Boaz is not just empty praying, he follows it up with some incredible actions, right? The rest of the section, verse 14, we see there's a meal break, and Boaz is definitely breaking social protocol, right?

Offering this new migrant, hey, come, sit at our table. Come, eat the food that we're eating right now. Remember, you know, all the food that Ruth is getting, it's kind of like uncooked rice.

You can't do much with it. Okay? But here's something we prepared earlier, and you're most welcome to join in. Food for a famished stomach. Isn't that kind?

And look, verse 15, when she gets up to glean, again, and go back to work, Boaz even instructs her staff, can you please just do it on the side, but upgrade Ruth's collection.

[ 22 : 58 ] Yeah, just drop some more, so when she picks it up, there'll be even more. If this was seen as like a Super Mario level, the coins would be like super large right now, and Ruth is just getting all the coins.

Boom, boom, boom, boom. All the bonuses, right? The stars are all big. She's just grabbing as much as humanly possible now. Is that not, church, a picture of what a people of peace, a place of peace could look like among God's people?

Isn't this an amazing place that is being described here, right? Imagine this. Whether you're young or old, whether you're foreign or you've been here a while, we're all sharing in the Lord's abundant grace together.

Right? What a picture of wholeness. Who are the people in our lives who are seeking this kind of grace, longing for this kind of peace here in their lives?

Could it be possible if they walk into this field that they would find it? I mean, we don't have Moabite women visit us and walk through our front doors, but plenty of people walk through these doors.

[ 24 : 14 ] And what are they looking for? They're looking for grace. They're looking for hope for their future. They might be looking for a meal. Look, if someone who's not been in church for 10 years comes back, I'm sure there's a few.

We're 30 years old. I'm sure there are a few you know. How would you respond? Would you exclude them? Oh, you left us a while ago. Or could we sit with them with grace?

Welcome home. Our world out there is yearning for justice and peace. And here is a glimpse of what it could look like, even in the pages of Ruth's story.

Wouldn't it be great if we were gracious followers and we were extending the Lord's grace to the foreigners in our midst, to those seeking favor? Imagine a church like that.

Could we be that kind of church? Our story goes from Ruth seeking favor, Boaz and offering generous grace.

[ 25 : 20 ] And then now we turn to Naomi, right? This is what happens at the end of chapter 2. From verse 17 to the end, we're brought back to her mother-in-law's vantage point. And she discovers the loyal love of a redeemer.

Have a look at verse 17 in your Bibles. So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. She then threshed the barley she had gathered and then amounted to an ephah. And she carried it back to town and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered.

Right? Okay. I know most of us are not parents, but I want you to pretend you're a parent, right? Pretend you're a 21st century parent who is always anxious about where your kids are at every hour of the day.

Look, I can relate. Cheryl and I, we do get anxious sometimes. Recently, our girls took up a new sport. But it meant that they had to read a map and run off into the distance and then we wouldn't see them again.

This was like not in our schema. What will we do? How will we survive? So actually, we bought some walkie-talkies for them. And so we are such helicopter parents. They're like, Williams, Edith, where are you?

[ 26 : 25 ] Oh, okay. You're just around the corner. That's fine. Okay. That's the kind of anxious parenting, right? That we live in, right? Age. Imagine Naomi, though, right? How would she have felt?

By my daughter, off to the fields to look for something. She knows she's living in times of darkness when every man does whatever's right in his eyes.

So imagine your first reaction when your daughter-in-law walks through that door. I'm home. What would be your reaction? Relief?

Thankfulness? Yeah. But next, imagine her shock, right? Then what does Ruth do? She brings out everything she gleaned and got, lays it out in front of Naomi.

An effort of barley, by the way, is 10 days worth of food, right? That's nearly two weeks of a full pantry. About 500 bucks at Pack and Save, I'm sure, or more, depending on what you buy.

[ 27 : 28 ] And not only that, it's not just groceries. Here's a doggy bag of this roasted grain lunch that I had. That was really nice. Come and have some, Mom. Remember at this point in the story, Naomi has no idea about the grace that Ruth's been shown.

Right? She's just been worried sick all day, possibly. And then suddenly Ruth comes back. So that's why she asked, verse 19, where did you glean and work? May the one who noticed your plight be blessed.

And when Ruth name drops Boaz, now it all clicks. Naomi, she's now caught up to what we, okay, the readers have known since verse 1, right?

Naomi finally gets it. The Lord has not just brought her home, but blessed her with food, with family, with a future, perhaps.

Let me explain a little bit. The way that Israelite culture back then worked was that, look, without a husband, you had no land. And without land in a very agricultural society, you had very few options to make ends meet.

[ 28 : 38 ] You'd be bankrupt. You couldn't sign up to be an Uber driver back then. And now for Naomi, a thrill of hope emerges. And as she makes this discovery, right, of loyal love, she says, blessed be Boaz in the Lord.

The Lord, he has not forsaken his kindness, his loyal love. This is a very key word, his loving kindness, his chesed, to the living and the dead.

Naomi is making an important realization here. Look, before, Naomi, she kind of longed for Yahweh to show loving kindness to Orpah and to Ruth, right? Go return to your families, right?

Let the Lord show loving kindness to you there. As for me and my house, we're done. But here, her realization is different. She's realizing that the Lord has been kind to her as well.

And Naomi adds something very important, right? The second half of verse 20, what does it say? It's crucial. She reveals to Ruth, that man is our close relative. He is one of our guardian redeemers.

[ 29 : 50 ] Okay? It sounds like some kind of Marvel superhero movie, but guardian redeemers has a very specific meaning. And it means this.

What Ruth had no idea when she chanced upon that field of barley that morning, what Naomi has just realized and revealed to us is that this is not just a kind old man, Boaz.

He's a guardian redeemer. He's a close relative. It means he has a family obligation to look after Elimelech's family, right?

Naomi's husband who died, right? Who left this whole family tree bankrupt. Here's someone that could look after and give them a future.

Scattered through the laws of Moses in the Old Testament, there's this idea of a guardian redeemer. I'll flick a few verses up and you can see. So this idea of someone who's going to stand up for justice, for peace, right?

[ 30 : 48 ] For the welfare of maybe someone who's dead or someone who's been wronged. Okay? You need a guardian redeemer. Okay? And so by the laws and customs of the time, Boaz is now introduced to us as someone who can bring hope to Naomi's empty situation.

And even as this chapter closes with excitement, right? Hey, mom, I've got work for the summer, right? I'll just keep gleaning. Sure, daughter, stay with this man and his women.

You might not be so safe in other fields. Even as the story ends, what does the last verse say? And she lived with her mother-in-law. Okay? That sounds like, you know, a nice episode from, I don't know, a sitcom.

Actually, that sentence is saying their hope will still run out. Two widows in a farming culture without land and without children. That is what we are left with at the end of chapter 2, right?

Bags of barley will feed them for a time. But how will they go once the harvest is over? Once the first fruits are gone, will they find lasting grace?

[ 32 : 03 ] Who will bring full redemption to them? Who will give them the Lord's loving kindness? The story has to go on. It cannot end here. Brothers and sisters, what do you and I find when we return to the promise-keeping God?

When we go back home from the fields of Moab? What do we experience when we step away from the false hopes of this world and come back to Him?

To His place? Ruth 2 tells us you'll find a Redeemer. A worthy man who is pledged by blood to care for you, to protect you, and your poverty, and your loss, and your bankrupt state.

A Redeemer is who you'll find. And He will extend undeserved grace to you as a foreigner to God. Because if the guardian Redeemer in Ruth's story is Boaz, then the guardian Redeemer for your story, for my story, is the Lord Jesus.

And to seek Him out, you will need to exercise maybe some brave, courageous faith. You may need to go out to the field.

[ 33 : 28 ] You may need to go to church and come under God's refuge. Look, God is sovereign over every decision that you make, that Ruth made.

And yet, Ruth had to venture into that field, did she not? Searching for grace. Us too. If you know that grace will not be found in the fields of Moab, the lost hopes of the world, then you need to come to this field.

With God's people. Under His refuge. Don't go to the empty wells of this world. Come back to the fields where God can grace you.

Where you can experience His loving kindness. Grace will only be found in the Lord's place, with the Lord's people, through the Lord's guardian Redeemer. Nowhere else. Because in a land where everyone is doing what they want in their own eyes, whether it's in the bedroom, the boardroom, wherever, grace will not be found there, friends.

Grace will not be found there. But grace will be found in our Redeemer's place. And so the very easy question is, do you have a Redeemer? Do you know of one? Are you going to Him?

[ 34 : 47 ] Are you covered by His bloodline? Because unlike Boaz, Jesus, He offers a shared table. He is generous and kind.

But He is God too. So He is infinitely generous and kind. He looks at each of us. We are foreigners to the promises of grace. And He steps into our lives.

We were by nature, Ephesians 2.11, without hope and without God in the world. And yet like Ruth, we have been showered with the riches of His grace. Is that not true, friends?

Is that not true, church? Because of Jesus' death and resurrection for our spiritually bankrupt state, we have a new status. We are not second-class citizens.

We are now co-heirs with the living God through Christ. And like Naomi, look, when you and I return to God, when you and I return to God, you will find in Jesus the firstfruits of a Redeemer's kindness.

[ 35 : 53 ] His first down payment is His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who dwells in every believer's heart, guarantees a future harvest of eternal fullness and joy.

You need only trust Him by faith. You need to glean from His field and no other and watch as your life is transformed by His grace. If you and I are looking at the story and we are marveled by Boaz's kindness, how much more should we marvel when we look at the cross?

The cross where our guardian Redeemer showed His wondrous love for us as He satisfied God's justice, as He brings shalom, peace, wholeness to us.

And just like Ruth 2 ends unfinished, you and I need to remember there is more to come in our redemption story. It's only half done.

As broken people showered with grace, we still need to remember Romans 8.23, we are Christians who have the firstfruits of the Spirit. Yes! And yet we groan inwardly, don't we?

[ 37 : 10 ] We suffer and hurt. We are longing eagerly for the adoption that awaits us as sons and daughters of the living God. We are longing one day to be fully redeemed, body and soul.

And so, church, our redemption story continues. But in the meantime, who will you and I invite to the table of the King, the Redeemer, who showers us with unexpected kindness, generous grace, and eternal hope?

Let's pray. Father, even now, as we reflect on your kindness and grace, we remember that everyone needs compassion.

Everyone needs the kindness of a Savior, as with some. So, Father, let your love fill our hearts and lives through the Holy Spirit. Forgive us of our sins and trespasses.

Show us how much we need a Redeemer. And we thank you, Father, that you have sent us a Redeemer. There is a Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

[ 38 : 28 ] And through His Spirit, we rejoice, we grieve, but we wait with hope at the full harvest that will come when He returns and to call us His own.

We thank you, and we pray that you'll help us keep worshiping in Jesus' name. Amen.