

# Field Of Gleans

Ruth 2:8-23    October 19, 2025

On April 15, 1912, Captain Arthur Rostron was steaming across the Atlantic in the *RMS Carpathia* toward Austria-Hungary. A distress call came in: The *Titanic*, was sinking. Arthur immediately ordered his crew to turn around and sprint toward the disaster. He and his engineers brought the ship to the limit - pushing her to three and a half knots past her rated speed.<sup>1</sup>

It wasn't as simple as pulling up to the lifeboats. The *Carpathia* had to avoid the deadly ice floating in the water. Dining rooms were converted into hospitals. Crewmen were reassigned. Warm meals were prepared.<sup>2</sup> Their sole focus was to deliver those about to perish in the water. The *Carpathia* rescued 713 survivors that night, nearly *doubling* the number of people aboard.<sup>3</sup>

Arthur Rostron was a devout believer. When issuing orders that night, he was often seen with his eyes closed in prayer. When asked about the risks he took, and the success of their rescue mission, he said, "I can only conclude another hand than mine was on the helm."<sup>4</sup>

Arthur received many awards and accolades for his actions that day. The most iconic was given by a woman he pulled out of the water. She was none other than the *Unsinkable Molly Brown*, and the silver trophy she gave him is known as The *Loving Cup*.

In this text we see a man moving with haste to rescue a woman in desperate need. He was not motivated by pride or greed, or even just by duty or decency. This rescue is born out of the *hesed* love of God.

We must understand that this is not just a *nice* story. This story has been preserved for 3,000 years because God wants us to understand how *He* rescues us. You see, Christ is a Savior Who ran to our aid and Who *pays* so we can be saved. It's not *only* a story of rescue, it's a story of *redemption*. You see, God does not only *help* you, you must be *bought back* from the depths of your sin, from death itself. And, having bought you, the Lord then *brings* you into personal relationship with Him, making you a member of His family, not only saving you from *death* but giving you new *life*.

**Ruth 2:8-9 - <sup>8</sup> Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen, my daughter. Don't go and gather grain in another field, and don't leave this one, but stay here close to my female servants. <sup>9</sup> See which field they are harvesting, and follow them. Haven't I ordered the young men not to touch you? When you are thirsty, go and drink from the jars the young men have filled."**

Boaz is a foreshadow of Jesus and His love for you, His work on your behalf. Right from the start we see that *Boaz* went to Ruth. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. We were helpless and

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur\\_Rostron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Rostron)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.titanicbelfast.com/history-of-titanic/titanic-stories/arthur-rostron/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RMS\\_Carpathia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RMS_Carpathia)

<sup>4</sup> David Watts *Spirituality At Work On Titanic Edmonton Journal*

hopeless and at *just the right time*, Jesus came to us.<sup>5</sup> He is not a God we work to *appease*, He is the God we can *receive*. *He* calls to us. *He* reaches for us. *He* moves heaven and earth to save us.

Boaz already knows about Ruth. He knows about her past. He *could* send her away, but he cares for her. He calls her "my daughter." This is *hesed* love. He has already thought about her situation maybe more than she has. She's there for grain, and he says, "Yes, *of course* I will give you grain, but you're going to need *water*, too. *And* you're going to need protection on top of that."

And so, Ruth is given a choice. Boaz told her very clearly: "*Do this, don't do that.*" He asks her to trust him to protect her and provide for her. But she must stay with him to receive it.

Jesus calls *you* to the same choice - to abide by His boundaries and directions. "*Don't leave this field.*" Jesus said in John 15 that we cannot live unless we remain in Him. He said that when we remain in Him and His words remain in us, the result is life and blessing and love and joy.

But Boaz wasn't *only* giving her boundaries. He invited her to become part of his household. Access to the workers' water jars was a privilege not ordinarily permitted to people coming off the street to beg.<sup>6</sup> He immediately offered her a place in the group and *status* in his house.<sup>7</sup>

Jesus went on in John 15 to say to those who trust in Him, "No longer do I call you slaves, I call you friends." God's love has made it possible for us to become His *children*.<sup>8</sup>

A couple applications for those who are already believers: First, Boaz said, "Watch my servants, follow them." Christians are called to lead and encourage and instruct others as *they* walk with Jesus. We get to instruct those coming behind us and we need to learn from those ahead of us.

Second, Boaz commanded the young men to act correctly toward Ruth. We saw that they were Godly workers in the last passage. But they *still* needed to be reminded and *commanded* to act in a Godly way. Let me speak to the men here today: God has *commanded* you concerning your conduct toward women. If you are mistreating them, if you are objectifying them, if you are sleeping with them while you're not married, that is *ungodliness*. You may claim to be a Christian but you are not obeying God. And He has *commanded* you to conduct yourself in Godliness.

**Ruth 2:10 - <sup>10</sup> She fell facedown, bowed to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor with you, so that you notice me, although I am a foreigner?"**

Ruth's response is *worship!* Now, she's not blaspheming, but her posture is grateful praise and humility and surrender, recognizing that Boaz *did not have* to do all this. She acknowledges that she is a hopeless beggar *and* an outsider. It is only by Boaz's grace that she's given this chance.

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<sup>5</sup> Romans 5:6-8

<sup>6</sup> Frank Gaebelien, et al. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 3: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel*

<sup>7</sup> Frederic Bush *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 9: Ruth/Esther*

<sup>8</sup> 1 John 3:1

And that's what we need to understand about what God does for us. We bring *nothing* to the table but brokenness and need. We, like the Moabites, deserve only judgment - to be crushed for our sin. But God *loves* us and *wants* to save. Let us *never* come to Him in pride or self-importance. Instead, may we come to this loving Savior in thankfulness and worship, understanding who we are and Who *He* is.

**Ruth 2:11-12 - <sup>11</sup> Boaz answered her, "Everything you have done for your mother-in-law since your husband's death has been fully reported to me: how you left your father and mother and your native land, and how you came to a people you didn't previously know. <sup>12</sup> May the LORD reward you for what you have done, and may you receive a full reward from the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."**

Boaz is impressed with Ruth's kindness toward Naomi, but that wasn't why Ruth was rescued. The real point is that she had *faith* to seek refuge from Yahweh. In these words, Boaz *explicitly* echoes Genesis 12, verse 1, where God calls Abram out of Ur, from his family, to a land of promise.<sup>9</sup>

You are saved by God's grace *through* faith. Not of any work, not of any effort or deed of piety, but by *faith*. Ruth's faith in Yahweh is what motivated her to serve Naomi. Not the other way around. Good works didn't lead to belief in Ruth's life. Her faith was operating through her choices.

Boaz presents God as *always* providing refuge for those who seek it. *Of course* she would find refuge under His wings. There was always a place for anyone looking for it.

This makes us think of Jesus saying He wanted to gather Jerusalem together like a hen with her chicks under her wings. But an Israelite in *this* era would have another image. What are the wings of the Lord? Well, the Ark of the Covenant had two cherubim whose wings stretched over the top. The *mercy seat*. *There* you will find refuge. There is *always* a place for you in the mercy of God. And with that mercy comes not just forgiveness, but a *full* reward - a life where you will be made complete, perfected, made whole by the powerful grace of God.

**Ruth 2:13 - <sup>13</sup> "My lord," she said, "I have found favor with you, for you have comforted and encouraged your servant, although I am not like one of your female servants."**

In the Hebrew, Ruth said, "My lord, *you have spoken to the heart*."<sup>10</sup> This was more than a legal transaction. There was heart work happening. That phrase, "spoken to the heart," is used nine times in the Old Testament. One of those is in Isaiah 40, where we read:

**Isaiah 40:2a - "Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and announce to her that her time of hard service is over, her iniquity has been pardoned..."**

The tender word of God pronouncing comfort, forgiveness, and a hopeful future.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Alter *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation With Commentary*

<sup>10</sup> Edward Campbell, Jr. *Ruth: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*

**Ruth 2:14 - <sup>14</sup> At mealtime Boaz told her, "Come over here and have some bread and dip it in the vinegar sauce." So she sat beside the harvesters, and he offered her roasted grain. She ate and was satisfied and had some left over.**

Boaz was not just doing charity toward Ruth for a write off. He wasn't just tossing a few coins because people were watching. He shows her *real* kindness and welcome here. Yes, she needed some grain for tomorrow, but he recognized that she would be hungry *now*. And so he brings her over and shares a meal with her. In fact, *he* served her the roasted grain himself!<sup>11</sup>

This is remarkable. Not only has he elevated her from the status of *beggar* to being *with* the harvesters, remember that *he's* the boss. *He's* the CEO. But here he is, serving a destitute Moabite.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for you.<sup>12</sup> He is the God Who washes feet. He is the God Who walks with you. He is the God Who poured out His blood so *you* could be saved. He is not afraid of your past. He *loves* you and reaches out to you, even now, to give you life everlasting.

**Ruth 2:15-16 - <sup>15</sup> When she got up to gather grain, Boaz ordered his young men, "Let her even gather grain among the bundles, and don't humiliate her. <sup>16</sup> Pull out some stalks from the bundles for her and leave them for her to gather. Don't rebuke her."**

God does not humiliate us. He humiliated *Himself* so He could lift us up. Jesus clothed Himself in humility, He bore the horror and the foulness and the shame of the cross so *you* could be saved. So your life could be transformed from ashes to treasure by *His* power and ability and goodness.

Boaz was going well beyond what the Law demanded.<sup>13</sup> "Pull out whole stalks for her." Our narrator uses an unusual term here. He uses a word that usually refers to the spoils of war.<sup>14</sup>

Like Ruth, we would say, "But I didn't *win* anything. I didn't *defeat* sin or death." But Jesus says, "*I* have, and I will share the spoils of victory with you. Walk with Me and enjoy all the things I've won."

**Ruth 2:17-18 - <sup>17</sup> So Ruth gathered grain in the field until evening. She beat out what she had gathered, and it was about twenty-six quarts of barley. <sup>18</sup> She picked up the grain and went into the town, where her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She brought out what she had left over from her meal and gave it to her.**

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<sup>11</sup> Daniel Block *The New American Commentary, Volume 6: Judges, Ruth*

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 20:28

<sup>13</sup> Justin Jackson *The One Who Returned: A Retrospective And Prospective Reading Of Ruth*

<sup>14</sup> Alter

Ruth came home with somewhere between 30 and 50 pounds of barley that day.<sup>15</sup> This was an *incredible* provision - equivalent to a half month's wages.<sup>16</sup> *In one day!* Think about it this way: If you make the California minimum wage and you work 8 hours tomorrow, you're going to come home with \$130 before tax. But imagine as you clock out the boss came over and said, "Here's your pay for the day," and they gave you \$2,000! *That's* what happened here.

Now listen: When a person realizes they're a sinner in need of salvation, often the thing they care about most is *not* dying and going to hell. You're like a person bobbing in the sea after the *Titanic* sank. You don't really care about what might happen five years from now.

But understand, the Lord doesn't *only* pull you out of the water. He invites you into His family. He becomes your Friend and Provider and Father and Bridegroom and Teacher and Protector. No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no human heart has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.<sup>17</sup> He does *exceedingly more* than we could ever ask or imagine.

**Ruth 2:19 - <sup>19</sup> Her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you gather barley today, and where did you work? May the LORD bless the man who noticed you." Ruth told her mother-in-law whom she had worked with and said, "The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz."**

Wait just a minute - Naomi said *what* about Yahweh? What did she say the *last* time she spoke about God? That God was against her. That God took everything from her. That God was cruel. She said those things because her heart was filled with sorrow and bitterness, but *now* she is starting to see what is *actually* true about God - not just what her feelings *accused* Him of. When she actually looked at God she saw He *is* compassionate. He *is* kind. He *does* provide, even for poor widows.

**Ruth 2:20 - <sup>20</sup> Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May the LORD bless him because he has not abandoned his kindness to the living or the dead." Naomi continued, "The man is a close relative. He is one of our family redeemers."**

Naomi has hope. "Ruth, you don't know how good this turn of events is. The guy you think is going to be your boss for the next couple of months, well, *hopefully* he'll become your husband!"

But there's a problem. Two little words at the end of the verse. He wasn't *the* family redeemer, he is *one of* the family redeemers. There was someone else. Someone with first dibs. There are obstacles here. Ice in the water. Boaz would have to not only deal with this *other* person, but he would have to *pay* to buy a bunch of property that belonged to Ruth's dead husband.

The *RMS Carpathia* was *not* the closest ship when the *Titanic* went down. But she was the one who went the fastest. Captain Rostron put his engines on the line. He put *his* life on the line to try to save those dying in the sea.

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<sup>15</sup> Campbell

<sup>16</sup> Robert Hubbard *The Book Of Ruth*

<sup>17</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:9

Now listen: if you're not a Christian, Jesus *wants* to redeem you, but understand that death, sin, and the Devil stood in the way. Nonbelievers are enslaved to sin and held captive by the Devil. Jesus had to go to war to save you. But He did it. He laid down His life *for you*. So He could offer you His love, in hopes that you would receive it and love Him in return.

**Ruth 2:21 - <sup>21</sup> Ruth the Moabitess said, "He also told me, 'Stay with my young men until they have finished all of my harvest.' "**

The text *never* lets us forget that Ruth was a *Moabitess*. An outsider. What would happen? It's great news that she had a job for the rest of the harvest, but what about the *next* season? The *next* winter? The next year and the year after that?

What is going to see *you* through the seasons of life? What will you rely on on the day of your death? What is *your* hope for the future? Do you have one?

**Ruth 2:22 - <sup>22</sup> So Naomi said to her daughter-in-law Ruth, "My daughter, it is good for you to work with his female servants, so that nothing will happen to you in another field."**

Outside of Christ you are not safe. *With* Him, you are not only safe and saved, it is *good*. Your version may say, "My daughter, it *will* be good." A life with Christ is not only good now, it will *continue* to be good because *God* is good. He *abounds* in goodness toward you and works all things together *for the good* of those who love Him.

Ruth *could* look for another field, but it would *not* be good. There was nothing better out there. In fact, there was only danger in those other fields. No kindness, no compassion, no *redemption*.

**Ruth 2:23 - <sup>23</sup> Ruth stayed close to Boaz's female servants and gathered grain until the barley and the wheat harvests were finished. And she lived with her mother-in-law.**

These two harvests would've lasted six or seven weeks.<sup>18</sup> So we're left on a cliff-hanger. What would happen next? Of course, we'll see. But in this summary verse we see that Ruth believed and obeyed. She *did* stay in that field. She trusted that Boaz, who began this work of kindness and compassion, would be faithful toward her. Ruth didn't know how it all would work out, but she knew *this* was the place for her to be. To believe and to trust and to yield her future to this man who was showing *hesed* love toward her.

That's our choice. Whether you've been born again or you've never received Christ as Savior, we still are presented this choice. Will we *choose* to abide in Christ? To stay in His field, trusting that His direction, His provision, His boundaries, His activity, His methods, His plan is *good* and the only life worth living? The Redeemer is making each of us an offer of life today. Take Him up on it.

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<sup>18</sup> Block