

## Articles and Sermons :: The Story of a Woman Who Found God and Also a Good Husband by Zac Poone

### The Story of a Woman Who Found God and Also a Good Husband by Zac Poonen - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2018

The story of Ruth's marriage is an interesting one. There was a famine in Israel and so Elimelech and his wife Naomi went into the land of Moab along with their two sons. These sons grew up and married Moabite women, violating God's laws. Then Elimelech died and the two sons also died. Naomi, being a kind lady, then told her two daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, to go back to their own land and find new husbands (Ruth 1:8). Both Ruth and Orpah wept aloud when they heard this (Ruth 1:14). Orpah then kissed her mother-in-law and said, "Goodbye, Mum. I must go back home and find another husband. I have to take care of my own life." But Ruth clung to Naomi. She had learnt something about the true God from Naomi, and she wanted to worship and serve this God, more than she wanted a husband. Orpah however wanted a husband. There was a fork in the road there and Orpah took the wrong road. Ruth took the right turning - and that made all the difference, for all eternity. We never hear of Orpah again. Wherever she is today, she is undoubtedly regretting her choice.

Now Naomi had a close relative, a man of great wealth, by the name of Boaz (Ruth 2:1). There was a law in Israel that if a married man died, his closest relative must marry his widow and raise children in the dead man's name (Deut.25:5-9). So Naomi thought, "Well, Boaz is a close relative of mine and he is still single. Perhaps he can marry Ruth." But Ruth didn't know that law (being a Moabitess) and Naomi never told her, lest her hopes be raised. Ruth in any case, was not interested in getting married again. She did not come to Israel to look for a husband. She came in search of the true God. It was Orpah who went to Moab looking for a husband. But because Ruth sought God first, she not only found God, but found a good husband and a good heritage for the future as well. God honours those who honour Him. Those who seek God's kingdom first, find that God adds all the other things necessary for life on earth, automatically, without their ever seeking for them. Such things fall into their lap.

Naomi and Ruth were poor but Ruth was a hardworking girl who was not ashamed to do lowly jobs to earn her daily bread. So she told her mother-in-law one day that she would go and pick up the leftovers of the grain from the grain fields of the rich people. Now, there was a law that God had made in Israel that when people glean their grain, they must leave out the corners of their fields, and should not go over their fields a second time to pick up what was left over - but must leave such grains for the poor (Lev.19:9,10). Ruth went to pick up such left-over grain. Being a poor girl, she wanted to do what she could to take care of herself and her mother-in-law.

The sovereignty of God led her amazingly to the field of Boaz. It is wonderful to see how God in His sovereignty brought together these two whom He had planned from all eternity should become husband and wife. Boaz saw this woman gleaning there and asked the workers who she was. They replied that she was the Moabite woman who had come back with Naomi. Boaz was a very kind and godly man. He was concerned that Ruth should not be molested by any of the men, and so he told her not to go and glean in any other field, since that would be dangerous. He told his servants not to harm her in any way. Ruth was so touched by this that she fell on her face and asked why he was being so kind to a despised Moabitess. Boaz replied that he had heard about all the kindness she had shown to her mother-in-law and also how she had chosen to follow the Lord, having forsaken her old Moabite idols. Boaz then told his workers to drop some handfuls of grain on purpose so that Ruth could pick them up.

Why did God pick such a girl to be the wife of Boaz and the ancestor of David and in the genealogical line of our Lord? First of all, because Ruth was a very humble girl who did not think too highly of herself. She was also hard-working and gracious, a woman of steadfast faith, who had forsaken her home and her relatives in order to follow the Lord, and one who treated her mother-in-law with respect, kindness and love. These are the qualities that God looks for, even today, even in young girls.

When Ruth came home, her mother-in-law asked her where she had gleaned and she told her. When Naomi heard that, she told Ruth that she would try and find some security for her and told her that Boaz was a close relative. She must have explained to Ruth about the law of God that commanded a close relative to redeem the property of a widow and to marry her. So when Boaz met her, she requested him to redeem her and marry her, since he was a close relative (Ruth 3:9). Boaz was glad to see that Ruth did not choose the more handsome, younger men who were there. Boaz was a much older man, and young girls are not usually attracted to older men. But he told her that there was another relative even closer than him. Being a righteous man, Boaz said that he would have to ask that man first whether he would redeem and marry her (Ruth 3:12,13).

The next day Boaz promptly went to the gate and asked this other relative whether he would redeem Naomi's property, as her closest relative (Ruth 4:3-10). He promptly said, "Yes, I will redeem it." But Boaz reminded him that he would also have to marry Ruth and raise up sons in the name of her dead husband. When he heard this, he withdrew his offer and said he could not do that, since her sons would later claim an inheritance along with his sons, and he didn't want that complication! So he refused to redeem the property. Thus Boaz became first in line to redeem the property and to marry Ruth. He readily agreed to do that. That was a bold step for a prominent man like Boaz to take "to marry a Moabite girl. But he had seen some outstanding qualities in Ruth and respected her for having come out of her heathen family. Christian boys often hesitate to marry girls who have been saved from non-Christian families. But in most cases, such girls are stronger Christians and more godly than those born in believing families.

Boaz married Ruth and they had a son called Obed who became the father of Jesse who became the father of David (Ruth 4:17). Thus God honoured a woman from an incestuous, heathen background, because she honoured God. What we learn in Ruth is the truth of 1Sam.2:30, "Those who honour Me I will honour." There is no partiality with God. This story shows how God cares for His children who may be despised by others, to find good marriage-partners for them. So we can trust the Lord even for such earthly matters. God cares for us and He wants to meet all our earthly needs "whatever they may be.