



## Daily Devotionals

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### RUTH 2:14-18 GODLY LIVING

**Written by Rev. Dr. Charles D. (Chuck) Alley, Ph.D., Rector of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Richmond, Va.**

<sup>14</sup> *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. <sup>15</sup> As she got up to glean, Boaz gave orders to his men, "Even if she gathers among the sheaves, don't embarrass her. <sup>16</sup> Rather, pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up, and don't rebuke her."*

<sup>17</sup> *So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and it amounted to about an ephah. <sup>18</sup> She carried it 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.*

The generosity of Boaz went far beyond the provision of the law for dealing with the poor. Harvesters were to be "sloppy" around the edges of the field, leaving stalks so that the poor could come and avail themselves of enough grain to sustain themselves. Like other laws of the Covenant, it was a law based not on legalistic premises but on relationships. In the community the "haves" and the "have nots" were both to understand that whatever they had came from God and was for God's people. Such laws were to encourage a generous love rather than an onerous obligation.

A godly man lives a godly life, so here when we read about Boaz we cannot miss the echo of the feeding of the 5000 by our Lord Jesus (John 6). Jesus had compassion on those who were following him, so he fed them thoroughly and the disciples collected 12 baskets of left over barley bread. Jesus not only made the gleaning easy for the people, he gave them abundant provision just for showing up. The ultimate manifestation of this generous love is seen in that Jesus gave himself for the salvation of the world.

<sup>51</sup> *"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."* (John 6:51)

The laws of God are not given as mechanical restraints that rule our every action. God's laws are provided as reminders of God's covenantal love for us and as guides for maintaining loving relationships among his people. The purpose of the law is not to condemn, but to redeem. The godly man is not the one who completely adheres to the letter of the law, but the one who perfectly fulfills the purpose of the law.

***Gracious Father, as you have provided for my eternal well-being by allowing me to glean in the fields of the kingdom, may I also be generous with my neighbors out of a sense of love rather than obligation. Renew my heart so that it might be more like your heart and strengthen my generosity so that your generosity might be manifested through my life. Amen.***

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