



Daily Devotionals

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RUTH 2:19-23 YOUR LIFE AND THE LIVING GOD

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¹⁹ 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. "The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz," she said.

²⁰ "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 our close relative; he is one of our kinsman-redeemers."

²¹ Then Ruth the Moabitess said, "He even said to me, 'Stay with my workers until they finish harvesting all my grain.'"

²² Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It will be good for you, my daughter, to go with his girls, because in someone else's field you might be harmed."

²³ So Ruth stayed close to the servant girls of Boaz to glean until the barley and wheat harvests were finished. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

It has been said that God's grace is a gift that he chooses to mediate through men rather than delivering over ruling men. The covenant loving-kindness of God honors the giver and the receiver, as well as edifies and instructs the observer and the participants. The natural manner in which this divine (unnatural) loving-kindness is delivered rescues us from the trap of thinking that it is impossible for us to receive or convey. For specific purposes there are times when like the Widow of Zarephath the oil is miraculously replenished in the jar, but even then Elijah was provided for by God through the agency of the widow and the widow through the Prophet (1 Kings 17). There is never any reason for despair for those who have a knowledge of God and that is especially true in the presence of other human beings.

So many times in life we feel like God is not listening to our prayers or that somehow there is an impenetrable barrier between sinful human beings and our righteous God. We pray and pray and pray, yet do not receive an answer. So we either give up or pray without the expectation of an answer. Perhaps our "problem" with prayer has more to do with our expectations than reality. We desire the direct intervention by God in answer to our prayers so that we can have the absolute assurance that God is answering. If that is our expectation, then we will simply miss or dismiss any answer that comes in the more ordinary activities of our day. It is highly unlikely that Naomi understood Ruth's decision to go out and glean in the fields as an answer to her prayers. Yet God was listening and was guiding Ruth into the field of Boaz, and Boaz into the

recognition of Ruth so that Naomi's prayers were answered and a kinsman-redeemer brought into her life.

The story of Naomi, Ruth and Boaz is a great encouragement to us for it demonstrates how we can participate on both sides of the equation of God's loving-kindness. We can receive the grace of God through others and we can be the agency of God's grace to others. All it takes is a God-centered attitude toward the life and circumstance in which we live. Maybe our problem with prayer is that we are concentrating all our effort on a distant God in the heavenly places instead of the God who makes himself present to us right where we are and among the people with whom we live.

May my heart and eyes be open to you, O Father, as you are at work in the world around me and through my brothers and sisters. Amen.

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