

## Ruth 2 Grace and Favour (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)

1. Have you ever come close to subsistence living – eating what you can get that day? Or have you met such people? Would you agree that there is no shame in honest poverty and (with Robert Burns) 'that a man's a man for all that'?
2. Naomi and Ruth were not new to subsistence living. In v.1, what two things about Boaz made him the focus of the widows' hopes on their first morning back in Bethlehem.
3. Read Deuteronomy 24vv19-22 and Deut. 10vv17-19  
What do these passages tell us about God's attitude to the poor, widows and foreigners? Why were the Old Testament people of God to be especially mindful of strangers in their midst?  
At Poynton Parish Church, the PCC encourages us in regular giving for local poverty through Wellspring and Wood Street plus overseas poverty directly to Mary's School and through several Christian agencies. How do you set aside help for the poor in a regular way?
4. Read 2vv.8-16. In v.10 it seems Ruth's hopes were answered (v.2), but she is puzzled as to why Boaz would take any notice of her. How does Boaz answer her? What indications are there in the passage that not everyone might treat Ruth so kindly?
5. It is easy to think about rights and 'what I deserve' instead of grace and favour. Ruth is helpful in reminding us that all good things are a gift from God and that our best response is thankfulness, humility and reflected grace to others. How does Ruth express it?  
In some ways Boaz is showing family solidarity and gratitude for Naomi, but he seems to overcome the loaded issue of foreigner/different race and also goes far beyond the expected family duty. How might this be a work of God?
6. In Ephesians 2vv.8-13, these themes are used in encouraging our right attitudes to God in the light of his grace in calling and saving us as his people. Do you talk of your becoming and being a Christian using words and ideas like grace and favour? Why or why not?



Ruth 2 Where do you look for hope in times of trouble?

7. One of the most telling phrases in Ruth 2 is 'as it happened' (v.3). Often we only acknowledge the providence of God when we look back but Ruth challenges us to consider this doctrine in each chapter. How do you acknowledge the providence of God in the big things and the small things each day? How do you make sure your thanksgivings and grace before meals do not become perfunctory and meaningless?

8. How is the character of the God of Israel reflected in:  
a) the laws regarding foreigners and harvest?  
b) the behaviour of Boaz, the godly Israelite, towards Ruth?

9. Read Ruth 2:17-23.  
What did Ruth do after all her hard work?

10. What was Naomi's reaction to Ruth's news?  
What new piece of information do we learn about Boaz?

11. This chapter of Ruth is just a day in the life of Ruth, a rather ordinary life. Does it strike you how important to God are ordinary days in ordinary lives, including yours?

- Pray for those people in poverty, nearby and far away
- Pray for Mary's School, for Wellspring, for Wood Street, for Gary Ion in Central East Africa
- Pray for wisdom in sharing God's heart for the poor and knowing how to give wisely to help those in poverty
- Pray for humility for you to rely on God's grace alone
- Give thanks for kindness and goodness, two excellent godly gifts which transform our experience of life