

50 Pounds of Grace

How to Find Who You Are & Whose You Are

May 8, 2016 // Trevor Atwood // Ruth 2 // Where Is God?

When I was a kid, from elementary all the way through High School, whenever I would walk out of the door to head to school, my Dad would always give me the same piece of advice. "Remember Who You Are and Who's You Are."

At the time, I thought, "What does that even MEAN!?!?" ...but now...now that its been 20 years since I graduated high school...now that I have kids of my own that I have to send out the door to school... I understand what he meant.

Knowing the answers to those two questions... "WHO AM I?" and "WHO'S AM I?" ...well, there are not two more important questions in the universe. Everyday that you wake up... you are subconsciously, if not intentionally, searching for the answers to those 2 questions.

Who am I? and WHO's AM I?

On one hand, we all want to have an individual identity. That's "WHO YOU ARE". Something that marks us. Something we are known for. Something that tells us how we should act and what decisions we should make.

... but we also want to know that we belong to a group, a family, a people. That's "WHO'S YOU ARE". We don't want to be alone. We want family, we want...well...we want to be loved and we want to give love and every single day we are either searching for the answers to those two questions...or trying to prove to everybody that we already know.

"I'm a talented athlete....and I belong to the baseball team."

"I'm a funny guy...and I belong with the cool kids."

"I'm a beautiful woman...and I belong with the rich & famous."

"I'm a faithful son...and I belong with my Mom and Dad."

"I'm a loving daughter...and I belong with my brothers and sisters."

From birth, you are trying to both BE somebody...and BE LOVED by somebody.

Today, we have a great gift. A peak into someone's life who was asking those questions... and the way God, like a loving Father...answered them.

We're going to do something a little different today. Typically, I'll read a passage of the Bible up front, then spend the rest of our time wading through its meaning and significance.

Today, because this part of the story is so narratively brilliant, I'll read a little bit of text, we'll talk about it, then I'll read the next piece, talk about it, until we make it all the way through the chapter. Then we'll talk about what it all means for you and for this church at

the end.

In case you missed last week, let me catch you up.

Naomi is a Jew from Bethlehem. She and her husband and their 2 sons moved away to Moab when a famine hit. Then Naomi's husband died, and her two sons married Moabite women. Then, her two sons died.

Naomi decided to move back to Bethlehem, and her daughters-in-law said, "We love you. We'll come with you."

But Naomi, knowing that nobody in Bethlehem likes Moabite women because they had a reputation, tells her daughters-in-law, "No! Stay here! If you come with me, you'll never get married again and you'll end up a bitter old widow like me. Stay here, and you have a shot at a good reputation, a new family, and a good life. If you come with me, you'll be poor, hungry, and destitute for the rest of your life."

That's enough for one of the Daughters-in-law to take off, but the other, RUTH, makes Naomi a promise. "Where you go, I go. Your people, will be my people. And I'm going to leave my family here, and attach myself to you. In fact, I'm going to stop worshipping all the gods in Moab, and I'm going to worship the God the Jews worship, because you have loved me so well."

So they go back to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest, and Naomi gives herself the terrible nickname "BITTER OLD HAG".

By the time we get to the end of chapter 1, we've seen some really hard times for Naomi, and some really beautiful sacrificial love in the middle of those hard times.

But, as chapter 2 starts...things aren't looking real hopeful. Two widows, one too old work and the other with a scandalous reputation that she didn't earn, now have to figure out how to survive without a family... which in this time, is not only your primary identity...its your source of food and income.

And Naomi and Ruth don't have anyone except each other.

So here we go. Ruth 2

Ruth 2:1

Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

There are two things that we find out about Boaz in this first verse that should start us thinking, "Maybe there's hope for Ruth and Naomi!"

First, we find out that Boaz is related to Elimelech. That's very important. In this culture, an individual is a part of a family, a family is a part of a clan, and clans together make up tribes. And the clan is the most important one of those groups.

The second thing we learn about Boaz is that he's called a worthy man. In this case, it means that he is both a man of upstanding character, and that he is financially well off. So, If I'm reading this in its original context, This is the clue that there is a knight in shining armor. A family member of Naomi that has the resources to rescue her and Ruth.

Ruth 2:2

And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."

This is Ruth and Naomi on welfare. See, in the Law that God delivered to Israel, he commanded that if you were a farmer, which most people were, you had to leave the edges of your field un-harvested, and you were supposed to leave all the grain that fell off on the ground. So that the poor and the foreigner without family, would have something to eat. SO, Ruth goes out to try and get some scraps of food for her and Naomi, hoping that someone notices her and has pity.

Ruth 2:3

So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech.

Pay attention that word "happened". Essentially, it means "as luck would have it" she just stumbles upon Boaz's field. This is the author showing you sort of ironically, that God is behind all of these ordinary events.

Ruth 2:4

And behold, (that's Hebrew for "well, wouldja looka there?" its another ironic appeal to God's behind the scene work) Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they answered, "The LORD bless you."

This verse is also a quick look into Boaz's "worthy" character. I mean, this guy loves God, and he loves his employees. He cares about them...and they love him back. Its kind of like Michael Scott. Would Boaz rather be loved or feared by his employees? BOTH, he wants them to fear how much they love him. Boaz definitely has a "World's Best Boss" coffee mug.

Ruth 2:5

Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, “Whose young woman is this?”

Now we've got the tension in the chapter. On one hand, good news. Boaz, this knight in shining armor, this World's most caring boss, this hope of Elimelech's family...has noticed our poor Moabite girl. That's good news.

He asks this guy who plays the challenging dual role of both his intern and his wingman... kind of Dwight Schrute character....he says, “Who is this woman?” He's interested in her... but...he's asked the worst possible question you could ask. “Whose clan does Ruth belong to?” This is the question that would make your stomach sink because Ruth doesn't belong to any clan. She's an outsider and a Moabite. She's one of THOSE women. And any self respecting Jewish man won't have anything to do with Ruth once he finds out she's from Moab. In fact, there were many people that would physically or verbally abuse a Moabite woman in Bethlehem at this time....just for being a Moabite. So...what the Hebrew reader would expect next is for Boaz, though he seems interested in Ruth, once he has this question answered...this relationship is going to be over before it starts.

Ruth 2:6-7

And the [assistant to the regional manager] who was in charge of the reapers answered, “She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. She said, ‘Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.’ So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest.”

Welp. There it is. Secret's out. RUTH IS UNDATABLE! At best, we can hope for a little pity from Boaz. Being a worthy man, we certainly wouldn't expect him to verbally or physically assault Ruth, but being a good Jew, we also wouldn't expect him to pay her any more attention than necessary.

Ruth 2:8-9

Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women. Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn.”

Last week I told you there were no miracles in the book of Ruth...but if there was one, this would be it...or at least the start of it. Not only does Boaz NOT run away from Ruth...he throws off all the stereotype, all the taboo, crouches down beside Ruth...who has been tirelessly working this field from the very early morning to gather whatever grain she can...

and he says... "Listen my daughter."

I know what you're thinking. "My daughter"...not exactly your best pick-up line, Boaz. But Boaz is not driven by sophomoric sexual angst here. He's not trying to see how quickly he can get Ruth into bed. When he calls Ruth, "My daughter" he is showing his desire to break down all the barriers that keep them separate.

Even though Boaz knows she is a Moabite, he is willing to take responsibility for her...and protect her, like a loving father would a daughter. This is like a white man in the Jim Crow 1960's putting his arm around a poor young black woman and saying, "This is my sister. You will not mistreat her."

Here's something else about this verse. Boaz is completely reversing the social order here. See, it would have been foreigners that filled jars of water for Israelites to drink. It would have been women that filled jars for men to drink. But Boaz says, "These Israelite men will fill as many jars of water as it takes to satisfy the thirst of this Moabite woman." If you were reading this in its original context...right here you start to say, "Ok, Ok, Boaz. We get it. You're a great guy. Time to cool it. Now you're just getting ridiculous."

Ruth 2:10

Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"

Now we come to the second crucial question of this chapter. The first was "Whose woman is this?" Now, in response to Boaz's kindness Ruth says, "Why are you breaking the rules for me? Why I have found favor with you? Why would you notice me?" Ruth is floored by Boaz's kindness. This shows you that Ruth has settled into her identity that she didn't earn. If you asked her "Who are you and Whose are you?"....she would say "I'm one of those poor, dirty Moabite women...and I belong only to my Mother-in-law, Naomi. I really don't fit in anywhere." She can't figure out why in the world Boaz would care for her like this.

Now, listen to Boaz's answer.

Ruth 2:11-12

But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!"

Boaz tells Ruth, The kindness you showed to Naomi, by leaving your homeland to come here and care for her...it moved me. "you put your Faith in the God that I worship...in order to love this destitute woman...and I want you to know that My God is faithful."

Then he prays this prayer. "May the LORD fully repay you for what you have done...because you have sought your refuge in him."

You know what just happened? Boaz just reminded Ruth who she is, and whose she is. First, he says, "You are a selfless, loving person who humbled yourself and sacrificed your life so that someone else could live." That completely contradicts the narrative about being a dirty, seducing Temptress...that most Israelites believed about Moabites...and that, perhaps, Ruth was buying into.

Then He reminds her to WHOM she belongs. "Don't forget Ruth, you have placed yourself under the wings of the Lord. Like a hen gathers her chicks...Like an eagle spreads her wings over her eggs...so the LORD has gladly taken you in. Boaz asked "Whose woman is this?" And when it's clear Ruth has forgotten...Boaz answers the question for her and Ruth is deeply moved by it.

Ruth 2:13

Then she said, "I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants."

She says, "you've given me something I didn't deserve. You've treated me as though I am one of yours...even though I'm not. Thank you." But Boaz isn't done. Now he takes her on a date.

Ruth 2:14

And at mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over.

My man just took her Carrabba's and they got that bread basket with some olive oil to dip it in. I'm sure Boaz's Assistant to the Regional Manager came out with an apron and a pepper grinder and said "Fresh Pepper"? But this is more than just a meal. This is symbolic. A meal is a picture of fellowship, equality, acceptance. To share a table with someone is to say, "You and I are friends."

Then...he SERVES her. Boaz doesn't have Ruth serve him...HE PASSES HER THE GRAIN. Boaz is now serving this Moabite woman at his table. The Lord of the Harvest, the Rich Land Owner...is now serving her. He's not HAVING HER served by his servants...he's doing it in the flesh...and then, GIRLFRIEND gets a take out box for her left overs. She can only finish half of her Roasted Grain Lasagna, so Boaz boxes it up for her. She not only eats her fill...she HAS LEFTOVERS!!! Her take out box runneth over.

Ruth 2:15-16

When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her.”

Now, look at Boaz's heart of generosity. The law says that he's supposed simply leave the leftover grain in the corners of his field for the poor to glean...but Boaz isn't interested in looking at how little he can give...he's not interested in simply saying "what does the law require of me?" He wants to know, "How much can I give?"

He doesn't just leave the leftovers for Ruth...he tells his men...let her walk in the middle of the field and take the good stuff. In fact, here's what you need to do. Go pull out some of the big bundles of wheat and when you're loading them on the truck, just sort of 'accidentally' drop them.

This is like when the grandparents come over to the house and Grandpa pretends to get something out of his pocket...and when he pulls his hand out candy and money fall all over the floor. OOPS! Thanks Grandpa! Woops! Looks like we dropped some SHEAVES.

Ruth 2:17-18

So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. And she took it up and went into the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied.

An Ephah of Barley is about 50 pounds of grain. 50 pounds is like carrying two big cases of water bottles. Or 3 big bags of charcoal. Ruth carried that all the way from the field, back into town. Which means, Ruth is probably not a dainty little princess. She has the strength and stamina to work all day long in the fields and then carry home her 50 pound paycheck after a nice dinner out.

Young men and young ladies, please note. Boaz is not superficial. He is not looking at Ruth and judging her by her looks...he is moved by her sacrificial love, and by her determined work ethic.

In other words, Boaz noticed Ruth while she was working, not while she was Twerking. See to it that your relationships follow suit.

At this time, the average ration for a male worker per day, was 1-2 two pounds of grain. Ruth walks in the door to Naomi's little place and in one day throws down 50 pounds of grain. Then, she pulls out her leftovers from Carrabba's and looks at Naomi and says, "You want this...I'm still stuffed".

Think about this for a minute. Naomi has been sitting at home all day, being bitter...hoping for...maybe praying for...someone to show them kindness. Maybe, at best she expects Naomi to come home with half or a quarter of a typical wage...if she comes home with anything.

Naomi is expecting Ruth to walk in with maybe a quarter pound of grain...and she drops 50 lbs on her and some Italian takeout.

Ruth 2:19

And her mother-in-law said to her, “Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you.” So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, “The man’s name with whom I worked today is Boaz.”

Look at the change in Naomi. She is beside herself. She’s giddy. She can barely get the words out of her mouth. She has gone from BITTER to BLESSED.

Now, there is a reason the narrator saves the name BOAZ for the last word of the sentence. See, this is classic Romantic Comedy type stuff. Ruth knows where she’s been working in the fields of Boaz, but doesn’t know the significance of Boaz. Naomi knows who Boaz is and that he has the power to save them from their poverty, but she doesn’t know whose field Ruth has been working in. So the tension is hanging in the air.

Its like we the audience know that Jim likes Pam, and Pam likes Jim...but they won’t TELL EACH OTHER. Its like knowing that Meg Ryan likes Tom Hanks, but Tom Hanks doesn’t know that Meg Ryan IS the woman who sent the letter, or the email, or whichever Sleepless in Seattle; You’ve Got Mail mashup you want to do with that.

As the reader here, we are BEGGING Ruth to say, “I was in this guy Boaz’s field” because then Naomi can tell her...that BOAZ is a part of our clan and he actually has what it takes to save us from this desperate situation. So we get it finally at the end of this verse. The man’s name is...DUH. DUH. DUH. DUH....BOAZ!

Ruth 2:20

And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!” Naomi also said to her, “The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers.”

Now Naomi fully reveals why this is such a good thing. Boaz is a close relative, which means he can be a redeemer. Here’s what that means. In the Jewish law, it says that a member of your clan has what’s called the “right of redemption.” In other words, you can “buy back” a fellow member of your clan, to be a part of your family if they are without family. Naomi recognizes this...and finally, she begins to see how God is at work.

And then we come to the final question of this story.

First there was “Whose woman is this?” Then there was “Why have I found favor in your eyes?” But this last question is different. It's not a question the narrator asks, it's not a question one of our characters asks....It's a question that we, the readers are supposed to ask.

See, there's not really a good indication of exactly who Naomi is talking about when she says “whose kindness”. Is she referring to the kindness of The LORD, or the kindness of Boaz?...I think the answer is YES!

See, Boaz's kindness IS the Lord's kindness.

You remember earlier when Boaz prayed, “May the Lord repay you for your kindness to Naomi?”...well...Boaz not only asked that prayer...he became the answer to the prayer. Boaz IS the way that the LORD shows favor and kindness and provision to Ruth.

It doesn't seem very supernatural, does it? Until you realize, the only way an Israelite would ever serve a Moabite woman this way is if something supernatural had gripped his heart.

So now we come to the end of the chapter.

Ruth 2:21-23

And Ruth the Moabite said, “Besides, he said to me, ‘You shall keep close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.’” And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, “It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, lest in another field you be assaulted.” So she kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

Now here's the twist at the end of the book...we're left hanging. See Ruth had 2 major problems at the start of this chapter. She was out of food....and she had no family.

One problem got solved. She brought home 50 pounds of grain and a Carrabba's take out box. That solved her food problem....but...that didn't solve her family problem. While she was reminded that she belonged to the LORD...she is still alone, with no family and no future.

She is still a Moabite woman living with her mother-in-law. You know, we are hoping they are gonna get together. You get to the end of this chapter and Ross and Rachel still haven't kissed. Jim won't tell Pam he loves her. But just like those shows, the author is drawing you forward, deeper into the tension....and it's going to be epic. But that's for next week.

Before we leave today, let me show you what we learn about God here...and what that means for this church...and for you.

1) The LORD cares about the poor, the widow, and the orphan...and so do his people. There are a number of themes you cannot escape in the Bible.

This is one of them. You know, the only reason Naomi would consider going back to Bethlehem to find food, without any family there, is because she knows that the law, which is the revelation of God's character to his people. And the law requires that the widow and the foreigner are taken care of.

James 1:27

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

God cares about the outsider. He cares that hungry people are fed. He cares that those without family are brought in...and so should those of us who call ourselves him.

I'm honored to be a part of this church where so many of you have shown a heart for the fatherless, through foster care or adoption. We have no fewer than 9 families in our church who have welcomed in orphans into their home through foster care or adoption...or both. But there's more work to be done. Many of you are being called by God to open your homes to kids without a family. But you've resisted that call...and its time to stop pushing the Lord away. You need to take the step to begin the foster care or adoption process. This church can help you.

Additionally, Every 3rd Monday of the month, City Church is serving the hungry at the Journey Home. That's coming up a week from tomorrow. Why don't you come help? Also, there's another simple way you practice this. Start opening up your home. Sometimes young men and women have biological family, but they have no spiritual Mom's and Dad's. So many of the college students who come to this church aren't coming from families where they were really taught much about the Lord at all. Don't keep your doors closed. Open them up....and don't wait for a church to start a program to do it. Walk across the room....look a person in the eye and say, "Will you come over for dinner? OR lunch today?"

And of course, for those who have been left alone, due to divorce or abandonment, or death... being a single parent, is difficult. The church should be there to help...reflecting the way God loves those who are in desperate situations. When is the last time you cared for a single mom or Dad and their kids? Wouldn't Mothers' day be a great day to start that?

2) The LORD gives generously, and so do his people.

God provides for Ruth through Boaz answering his own prayer. He asks the Lord to be generous with Ruth, and then he becomes that source of generosity FOR her. He doesn't pray about it...and then go back to counting his stacks of grain. He gives them to Ruth...and listen. He doesn't ask how little he can give and still be fulfilling the law.

No. Boaz has God's heart. So he gives an overflowing amount. He thinks, "What will overwhelm Ruth with the loving-kindness of God?"...and so she walks away with 50 times what she expected.

That's grace. That's love. That's generosity.

Listen, I get questions quite a bit about giving...things like, "Should I give to the church or give to other people that have needs that I meet personally?" My answer is always...YES! Both!

How much should I give? 10%? My answer: Why are looking at the law? Why not look at the loving kindness of God who gave his only son so that you can live? Let that inspire your giving.

See, when you give according to the way God has been generous with you...I guarantee, you are going to go well above the law. So give to the church. Give to the poor. Give to those who the Lord sovereignly brings across your path. But "I'll have to lower my standard of living!" you say. Listen, you won't lower your standard of living. You will have a smaller house, a clunkier car, less vacations, cheaper food...but there is no standard of living higher than living with a heart that joyfully gives away so others can have life. It's the best kind of life there is. Lose the world, find your soul.

Finally,

3) The LORD works upside-down to show you "Who You Are and Whose You Are"...and so do his people.

The Israelite men filled the jars of the Moabite woman. The worthy Lord of the Harvest served the scandalous outsider. The one who was supposed to be rejected was accepted...and the bitter became blessed...and because of that upside down love, Ruth is reminded that she isn't really a dirty Moabite temptress...she's actually a child of God. Protected. Provided for...she's a daughter. And because she knows she belongs to the LORD of LORDs....she can be the generous and loving daughter-in-law to Naomi.

But Ruth and Boaz aren't pointing us to themselves...they are pointing us where the Bible always points us...to Jesus.

See, you could leave this sermon today with a conviction to adopt a child, give away more money, and even to begin showing favor to the down and out...but that would get old...You would do it for 2 weeks and then you'd be back to your old ways.

You have to see first exactly HOW God has loved you like this...and then keep your eyes on THAT LOVE...in order to keep expressing it to others.

You have to BE SURE you of WHOSE YOU ARE...and then you can be sure of WHO YOU ARE.

Centuries after Boaz met Ruth, another Israelite man from Bethlehem sat down with a scandalous outsider...but she wasn't hungry...she was thirsty. She wasn't a Moabite, she was a Samaritan...which in Jesus' time is just about the equivalent. And just like with Boaz and Ruth, it was hard to see how God was involved...So, the woman who met Jesus at the well, it took her a while to understand that she was sitting across from God in the flesh.

There sat the LORD of the harvest...the king of universe...and said to the young woman, "Will you give me something to drink?"

"Me? You sure you know who you're talking to? You are a Jewish man...and I'm a Samaritan woman...you can't just...talk to me! That's not how it works."

Jesus said, "If you knew the generosity of God...if you really knew WHO I Am...you would ask me for a drink. And I would give you water that no jar could hold. And I won't just give you one drink, this drink will become a spring inside you welling up to eternal life."

She said, "I want that water."

And Jesus said, "You aren't ready for it. See, you don't know WHOSE YOU ARE YET!"

He said, "Do you have a husband? Do have anyone that claims you?"

She said, 'No. Nobody claims me. I'm nobody. I'm nothing. I'm damaged goods. That's why I'm out here alone.'

Jesus said, "You're right. In fact, you have had 5 husbands...and they've all divorced you. And the guy you are shacking up with right now...he's using you too."

...but then Jesus said, "But see that's the problem. You don't know who you are. You keep trying to define yourself by the way these men define you..."

" but, Oh dear daughter, you have a Father that loves you. You have a redeemer who's seeking you. He wants you. You are loved."

She said, "Oh yeah, I know...there is a Messiah, a redeemer...and when he gets here...then I'll have hope."

And just like Ruth saying, "I worked in the fields of a man named Boaz." Jesus tells the Samaritan woman..."That Messiah...that redeemer...you're talking with him right now."

The Lord of the universe served living water to the outcast...and it changed her forever.

See, the reason Jesus could do that, is because he was going to take that Samaritan woman's place.

He was going to be rejected so she could be accepted. He was going to lose so she could win. He was going to be separated from his Father, so she would have a family. So she could know WHO SHE IS and WHOSE SHE IS.

Jesus, on the cross, would lose his identity, his belonging, his acceptance so every Moabite, Samaritan woman,...every poor, destitute, humbled sinner could be renamed... daughter, son...More THAN CONQUERERS!

Jesus was better than Boaz. See, Boaz showed loving kindness to Ruth because he had seen all that Ruth had done for her mother in law. He asked God to repay her for that kindness.

See, Ruth didn't deserve her reputation, but the Samaritan woman did.

But Jesus, though he saw everything that Samaritan woman ever did...and everything you've ever done...he asks the LORD "DO NOT Repay them for what they've done, but instead, repay them for what I've done."

Let them reap the harvest from the field I planted and watered with my blood.

And then, he answered his own prayer when he died on the cross in your place.

And when you see that, when you believe it. You can know exactly WHOSE you are. You have taken refuge under the wings of the Almighty Father...and he will not lose a single one of his sons or daughters.

...and forever, because we know we are reaping what we did not sow, we know we are getting so much better than what we deserve...

In humility we'll always respond to God's grace like Ruth did to Boaz...

Ruth 2:10

“Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me?”

Flannery O'Connor wrote-

“All human nature vigorously resists grace because grace changes us and the change is painful.”

Its not easy to receive grace. It changes who you are. It changes whose you are. And that change...is very painful. You have to let go of all the ways you've been trying to define yourself. You have to let go of the lies you've believed about how you find belonging and acceptance...and safety.

Grace has to be received. It has to be believed to be effective. If Ruth would have run away from Boaz...there would be no hope of redemption.

If the Samaritan woman would have run away from Jesus, she would not have been changed.

...likewise, today, if you run away from Jesus...from this invitation into his family...you won't walk away full, you won't taste the satisfaction of living water....and 50 lbs of grace with stuff leftover in the takeout box.

...you'll keep scrounging from field to field believing that you are a Moabite...you are a Samaritan...and you will miss your redeemer entirely.

Now,... you are the tension in the story...what are you going to do with JESUS? What are you going to do with this redeemer? What are you going to do with 50 lbs of grace? Reject it... or believe it and be changed.

Lets pray.