

Let's Worship God

9th-14th October 2023

Ruth

A photograph of a golden wheat field at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow across the sky and the field. The wheat stalks are in the foreground, some in sharp focus and others blurred. The word "Ruth" is written in a large, white, elegant cursive script across the middle of the image.

Ruth

Ruth

Monday - Ruth 1:19 - God's Discipline

The Lord had visited Naomi's family, and He had chastened her for sin. God's discipline upon us can be hard, and it can be heavy. It can take a variety of forms. It can affect our souls. He may bring into our mind guilty feelings because of past sins that haunt us. He may take away from us any sense of peace or comfort. He may remove from us a sense of assurance of faith. He may remove from us the vitality of our relationship with Him, so that although in the past it had been easy for us to go and read the Scriptures, and it had been easier for us to pray and to sing, yet now it's so hard, and it seems fruitless. But also God can afflict our bodies physically and outwardly. He can bring illnesses in our own bodies, or He can bring it to those that we love and hold dear. He can visit us with death, whether that be that we're bereaved or whether that be that we go through the valley of the shadow of death ourselves because of our sin. And indeed, we can be brought to such a low point, to such a weary point, that like Naomi here, our very appearance can be altered.

God's discipline upon his children is not always because of some particular sin. Discipline can be for a variety of reasons because God is intending the best for his sons and daughters. Perhaps he disciplines us in order to expose the remaining corruption in our hearts. We may think that having been converted and having tried to fight against sin and perhaps having achieved victory over sin, having overcome in Christ, we may think that we're doing quite well. And yet we don't see the deceitfulness of our heart. God may discipline us to show us what's remaining in our hearts. God disciplines us sometimes simply to humble us. He brings hardships our way, not because we have sinned against Him. Indeed, we could have been very faithful to Him. And yet he puts us in the crucible to further prove us, to further show his grace in our lives, and that we would be humbled, so that we would have a closer dependence upon Him.

Question

1. How can God's discipline affect us?
2. Is discipline always a result of a specific sin?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that God loves us enough to discipline us.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Your people shall be my people, and your God my God." Ruth 1:16b

Praise: Psalm 29 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Ruth

Tuesday - Ruth 1:19-20 - Three Bad Responses

How do we respond when God disciplines us? There are four ways in which we could respond, and the first three are bad ways.

The first way that we can respond to God's discipline is that we can ignore it. We can try to pretend that God is not really dealing with us, that these are just natural things that happen to us in the world. But that's a particularly foolish thing to do. God speaks in a variety of ways. He speaks by creation to show that he's real. He speaks by providence, he speaks by the Scriptures. But often is it not the case that this message from God is ignored? Whether or not it's a judgment for past sin, there is a lesson to be learned in your hardships.

The second thing we can do with affliction is we can despise God's hand. We recognize it comes from God, but we hate God for what he has done to us and we turn against God. How could you do such a thing to me? And more often than not it's expressed in grumbling and complaining. The other way in which we can despise God's chastening is when we fail to repent. We say, no, I'll resist God. I won't turn from my sin, I'll continue on. I'm not saying it's easy. No discipline is pleasant, it's painful, but it's for our good. Don't despise it. Bless God for it. He could have left you to yourself, he could have left you in your sin, he could have left you unholy, but he has chosen to give you medicine.

Thirdly, don't faint under God's hand, or don't be discouraged by it. When God rebukes us sometimes we are so discouraged that we're tempted to give up. Don't turn back to your former ways. Don't turn your back on the One who loved you and gave Himself for you. Don't give up, but also don't doubt God's love. See rather that God's heavy hand upon you is for your good, that he loves you so much, that he wants your eternal well-being, not just your pleasure in the moment, but what's best for you for eternity.

Questions

1. What are the three bad responses to God's discipline?
2. What does God's discipline tell us about his love?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for the love of God for His people.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.” Ruth 1:16b

Praise: Psalm 30 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Ruth

Wednesday - Ruth 1:19-22 - Mara or Naomi

What is the right way to respond to God's discipline? It's to be resigned to God's hand, to submit to it, and to do so with faith and with humility, and indeed also with cheerfulness, because God knows best. And that's what Naomi does here. She doesn't despise this chastening of the Lord. Although she says, Call me bitter, she doesn't say that she herself is bitter. She herself is not grumbling. She's not angry at God. No, she recognizes that God had every right to deal with her in this way.

And yet, although she tells the people to call her Mara, no one actually does call her Mara. In the rest of the book she is never once called Mara. God doesn't allow her to be called Mara. He doesn't allow her a drop more bitterness. He is going to call her Naomi. He is going to treat her as the child of his love. And so it is for us. We're not to conclude from our discipline that God is against us. Rather, God is for us. She remains Naomi to the Lord - the one whom he loves deeply. And everything that he has done for her is to bring her back to Him, to bring her to dependence in Him, and to empty her of all her sin and unrighteousness, so that He can fill her up with his blessings. God is going to provide for her exceedingly abundantly, above all that she could ask or even think. It's very difficult for us to bless God for our hardships. But if we have spiritual eyes to see, we'll see good things that the Lord has in store for his people. And if you can't see those good things, well, then look harder! Look not with the eyes of sight, but with the eyes of faith. Look to the promises of the Scripture. Naomi actually comes back with a great blessing. She comes back with a convert. She has been used mightily by God. And is it not true, that sometimes we don't understand the reason God afflicts us? Yet, through it, we become a blessing to others? God prunes the branches so that they'll bear more fruit. And so it ought to be for us.

Question

1. How does Naomi respond to God's discipline?
2. How do we bless God for our hardships.

Prayer Points

1. Pray that you may become a blessing to others.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Your people shall be my people, and your God my God." Ruth 1:16b

Praise: Psalm 31 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Ruth

Thursday - Ruth 2:1-7 - Gleaning

Where are Naomi and Ruth going to find food when they haven't planted? Presumably they have little money to buy food. Ruth must go out and glean. God's law particularly guaranteed the rights for the poor and the strangers to glean in the fields. Leviticus 19:9-10 says, "when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field... You shall leave them for the poor and the stranger." Some could say, is it not better for me to go over the field very carefully and to take every last bit of grain so that my profits are as big as they possibly can be? But God said, no, leave it for the gleaners, leave it for the poor that they can have something to eat. Leave the corners. And though we don't have the practice of gleaning today, the principle is still true. Don't push the boundaries so far, so that your coffers gain more and more money, but the poor are left with nothing. Do we work to help others, to bless other people? That should be an important part of our work ethic. But notice also for the poor, they weren't just to sit around and expect that someone would do them a good turn.

Ruth sets herself to go out gleaning. It was the days of the judges when everyone did what was right in their own eyes. A young woman alone in the fields, was not particularly safe. This was a dangerous thing, and yet Ruth was determined to do it. Why was it that Ruth came to this portion of the field? Because the hand of God was on her and led her there. How often in our lives the hand of God guides us in ways that we just don't fathom until after the fact.

Every word that Boaz speaks in this chapter drips grace. And every action shows that he's a virtuous and upright man. Boaz believed in the Lord. In the dark days of the judges, when people were turning aside to idols, Boaz was a man of faith. He was a man who lived out his faith seven days a week.

Questions

1. What is gleaning?
2. How does Boaz demonstrate his faith?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that you would have a generous spirit.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Your people shall be my people, and your God my God." Ruth 1:16b

Praise: Psalm 32 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Ruth

Friday - Ruth 2:8-13 - Under His Wings

Boaz gives Ruth four blessings. First of all, he tells her not to glean in any other field. That's not to restrict her, but it's to show how much blessing she can expect in his field. He gives her another blessing - stay close to my young women. And then he tells her that he's charged the reapers not to touch her, not to molest her. And then he gives another blessing. Anytime you're thirsty, go to the vessels of water and drink freely.

Boaz has heard of her kindness to Naomi, and he seeks to repay it. He has heard that Ruth has left behind her family, her father and her mother in Moab, how she's turned her back on the old way of life, how she's left her gods, how she's come to Israel. He has heard that she has said to Naomi, your people shall be my people, and your God shall be my God. And he blesses her for that. And he seeks that the Lord God of Israel would bless her, because she has come for refuge under his wings. That idea of hiding under the wings of God shows to us the tender care of God, he's not simply a shield and a buckler, but he gathers us under his loving arms, under his wings, to protect us.

The Lord Jesus Christ desires that people come to Him in faith when the Gospel is preached. There is refuge under his wings. But how many there are who are just not willing. The Lord Jesus Christ is able to protect us from eternal harm that would befall us in body and soul, but we must come under the wings. Ruth has done that and responds to Boaz in humility. I have had so much sin in my past, and yet you have shown such mercy and grace to me. I am unworthy. And for those of you who have come under the wings of Christ, who have come to faith in him and have been saved, can you not have that same sense of humility in your heart that you would fall down before Christ and say to him, who am I that I am worthy of such grace?

Question

1. What blessings does Boaz give Ruth?
2. How does Ruth respond?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for the shelter under Christ's wings.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Your people shall be my people, and your God my God." Ruth 1:16b

Praise: Psalm 33 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Ruth

Saturday - Ruth 2:14-16 - Gleaning From Christ

Boaz continues to bless Ruth. Why is it that Boaz does all this? It's because he loves his Lord and his God. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and all your strength, and your neighbour as yourself. Boaz sets for us an example to follow. As you have opportunity to do good, do good.

But Boaz also points us to the Lord Jesus Christ. Ruth was unworthy of even the least of the mercies of this man. She was a stranger. And yet Boaz gave her over and beyond what was expected of him. Think of the Lord Jesus Christ. He does not despise our unworthiness when we come to Him. He will by no means cast us out, he doesn't rebuke us. Even despite our past sins, he welcomes us in. He gives blessings greater than we could imagine or ever expect.

Ought we not go to Jesus and glean in his fields? And what fields does he have? He's got the fields of His Word filled with promises. Go and glean in those fields. You must go each day and find a portion that you need, to come close to Him, to sit at his table and to eat with Him. He gives you the field filled with grain every Sabbath. There is the Word read publicly and preached. But you'll only benefit from it if you glean it. If you get down on your knees beforehand and pray for a blessing. If you humble yourself under the Word of God, listening and receiving. The riches of the harvest of Christ will not be exhausted by your gleaning. So keep gleaning, keep searching the Scriptures, keep seeking Christ, keep praying for a blessing and you will receive from Him.

Where are you gleaning today? Where are you seeking that which will support you and strengthen you for the week ahead? Are you seeking it in the Scriptures? Are you seeking it from the Word preached? Are you seeking it from Christ and in close communion with Him? Or are you seeking it elsewhere in the world? We will starve as Christians, unless we glean in the fields of Christ.

Question

1. How is Boaz like Christ?
2. How do we glean in Christ's fields?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Your people shall be my people, and your God my God." Ruth 1:16b

Praise: Psalm 34 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

Let's Worship God is produced
by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

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