

The Everyday Ordinary

"AND RUTH THE MOABITNESS SAID TO NAOMI, " PLEASE LET ME GO TO THE FIELD AND GLEAN AMONG THE EARS OF GRAIN AFTER ONE IN WHOSE SIGHT I MIGHT FIND FAVOR." AND SHE SAID TO HER, "GO MY DAUGHTER." SO SHE DEPARTED AND WENT AND GLEANED IN THE FIELD AFTER THE REAPERS; AND SHE HAPPENDED TO COME TO THE PORTION OF THE FIELD BELONGING TO BOAZ, WHO WAS OF THE FAMILY OF ELIMELECH." --RUTH 2:2-3

God is in the everyday ordinary. When we rise up in the morning, He is there. When we cook the dinner meal, He is there. When we do our work each day, He is there. When we struggle with grief or pain or loneliness and believe He has gone around the corner or turned His back on us—no, He is there right beside us, filling the void.

Such was the case with Naomi, the widow of Elimelech. She buries her husband and her two sons in a foreign land and turns home to Bethlehem. She states to anyone who will listen:

- "the hand of the Lord has gone against me." (Ruth 1:13)
- "The Almighty has dealt very bitterly against me" (Ruth 1:20)
- "the Lord has witnessed against me and the Almighty has afflicted me." (Ruth 1:21)

In her grief, she cannot see past the pain and despair. But one person can: her daughter-in-law, Ruth. Somehow this Moabite, a foreigner, has seen God in the midst and wants to adopt Him as her own as well as Naomi and her people as her own. Ruth leaves everything behind to accompany Naomi and seek refuge under the eternal Father's everlasting wings.

The shelter and protection they find comes in the daily, ordinary dealings of life. There are no major miracles here. It is a simple story of obedience and faithfulness in the normal every day. The Law of Moses has set up a provision for the poor: the corners of the fields were not to be reaped but left for the needy. (Leviticus 19:9) How humbling to walk the fields, amongst people you do not know, a foreigner and a stranger, fearful for your safety, gathering grain to feed two widowed women who have no other means.

In the midst of this story there is a precious jewel: "and she happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech". (Ruth 2:3) Wait a minute—Elimelech--that's Ruth's father-in-law who died in Moab. Wait a minute—Boaz—this is who would become Ruth's husband. Wait a minute—Boaz and Ruth together—they would become the great-grandparents of King David. She just so H-A-P-P-E-N-E-D to glean in the one field on this one day that would bring life anew, provision, and protection both from God on High and Boaz here on earth. This is such a beautiful example that there are no coincidences in life because God is in the details and He ordains our very footsteps.

During this pandemic our days have become very plain and ordinary. There is so much routine and sameness to the cooking and cleaning and the daily schooling of our children, going to be bed exhausted, getting up and repeating the whole routine all over again. No makeup. No haircuts. No coffee with friends. But the name Ruth translates “friendship” in the bible. And she was known as a “woman of excellence” (Ruth 3:11) for simply doing her job well; being faithful in the ordinary, everyday. It is easy to see the Lord God Almighty in the parting of the Red Sea and when the walls of Jericho come tumbling down, but do we see Him in the everyday ordinary tasks?

The phone call to a friend. The dropping off of some cookies to a neighbor’s home that needs encouragement in the loneliness. The standing in line to buy some groceries for our family. Ruth’s faithfulness and love for her mother-in-law allowed Naomi’s grief and bitterness to turn to celebration and joy. Ruth’s faithfulness also allowed the women of Bethlehem to celebrate with them and say to Naomi, “Blessed is the Lord who has not left you without a redeemer today.” (Ruth 4:14). Others around Ruth and Naomi could see God in the midst of their lives and rejoice with them. Can others see Jesus, our redeemer, amid our daily tasks and be blessed by our relationship with Him?

Rise up this morning and ask the Lord what He has in store for you today. In His footsteps the ordinary becomes extraordinary. When Ruth went out to glean a field for food, she did know that her story would be recorded in the Old Testament for all to read and be encouraged by for thousands of years, and she did not know that her name would be recorded in the lineage of Jesus Christ in the first book of the New Testament. She was simply faithful to perform the tasks set in front of her day by day because she was obedient to God’s calling. May we follow in her footsteps and do the same.

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