

Sermon Title: **From Bitter to Blessed**

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Scripture Reference: **Ruth 2:1-13**

Thesis: **Naomi returned bitter from the loss of her family and as she and Ruth settled in, Ruth went to work to keep food on the table and God blessed and provided showing that they were under His care;**

Purpose: **Today, we will see that God blesses and provides for those who come under His care.**

Key Word: **"God's Provision"**

I) Introduction:

Scripture Reading is: **Ruth 2:1-13**

A) The Setting:

- 1) **Last week I asked you if you ever felt that the whole world has turned against you.**
 - (a) Everything you try to do seems to be going wrong.
 - (b) As a preacher of God's Word God will often put us to the test with what we preach.
- 2) **I came home on Friday night to find out that we had no water.**
 - (a) It was late already as I didn't get home until 6:30.
 - (b) I was tired, hungry and the storm clouds were building.
- 3) **I ate my supper, changed my clothes and went out to investigate my water situation.**
 - (a) I checked the power, the water softening system and the well.
 - (b) Still no water; I pulled off the door to my crawl space under my house and began looking at the hook ups.
- 4) **By now the rain has started to fall and it is getting dark.**
 - (a) Wet, discouraged and defeated, I went into the house giving up for the night.
 - (b) I'm thinking, I have a lot of studying to do to get ready for Sunday and it feels like everything is just going against me.
- 5) **No water, on a Friday night before a long holiday weekend.**
 - (a) How am I going to get help and how am I going to pay for it?
 - (b) I decided to sleep on it and attack the problem in the morning.
- 6) **I have always been on city water so having a well is a new experience for me.**
 - (a) A new day had dawned, the rain had stopped, and my head was clearer.
 - (b) So, I called my son-in-law for advice; and he, being a wise young man, googled submersible well issues and sent me a link to a video of a handyman who described what to look for.
- 7) **I learned what a pressure switch is which turns out to be the number one cause of dead head wells.**
 - (a) I took the cover off and rapped on it and sure enough it sparked exactly like the handyman said it would if it was bad.
 - (b) The video even showed how to change it out; so, off I went to retrieve one and a couple hours later the problem was resolved.
- 8) **Now I can't equate this to Naomi's loss of her husband and sons, only in that in the moment of the circumstances going against you it is easy to feel bitter.**
 - (a) Last week, as we began this short series on the Book of Ruth, Naomi and her daughter-in-law, Ruth returned to Bethlehem after being gone for 10 years and losing her family.
 - (b) When she arrived, Naomi said don't call me Naomi any longer as this name means pleasantness or joy.
 - (c) Instead, she said call me Mara which mean bitter; for God has dealt harshly with me.
- 9) **The first thing I want to say here is that God understands our bitterness and the bitterness of life.**
 - (a) But God wants to turn our bitterness into blessings of joy.
 - (b) Chapter 2 of the book of Ruth is about God beginning to turn Naomi's bitterness into an experience of blessing.

10) **Let's read it for ourselves with our scripture reading for today in Ruth 2:1-13.**

B) *Sermon Prayer*

C) (The Body)

- 1) **Naomi has returned to her people with a devoted daughter-in-law, Ruth.**
 - (a) Ruth has given up her own family and pagan gods to worship Naomi's God, be with Naomi's people and take care of Naomi for the rest of her life.
 - (b) That is a transformed life.
- 2) **We don't know how it is that Ruth came to believe in the Living God or be so close to her mother-in-law as to want to devote her life to her.**
 - (a) We can only surmise that Naomi had taught her these things and they had become close in the few years they were family.
 - (b) This is a testimony to Naomi's character even though she is now feeling bitter.
- 3) **But now that they have arrived as a couple of poor widows, Naomi and Ruth need to survive.**
 - (a) One of the first things we all need to sustain us is food.
 - (b) As Chapter 1 ends we learn that Naomi and Ruth returned at the beginning of the barley harvest.
- 4) **One of the Laws given to the Israelites in the Book of Leviticus is that they were to leave the corners of the field for the poor to harvest.**
 - (a) Understanding this law Ruth volunteers to gather grain so that they might have bread and other food to eat.
 - (b) Naomi encourages her to go and she soon ends up in the field of Boaz.
 - (c) He is a near relative of Naomi's husband, wealthy, and a man of valor.
 - (d) **The Hebrew uses the same word to describe Boaz as was used to describe Gideon and Jephthah, both mighty warriors worthy in battle.**
- 5) **When Boaz sees Ruth in his fields and learns who she is;**
 - (a) he instructs his young men servants not to bother her . . .
 - (b) and he further instructs his female servants to allow her to stay and work closely behind them.
 - (c) Then Boaz goes to Ruth and instructs her to work closely behind his servants and when she is thirsty; she can drink from the water supplied by Boaz's men.
 - (d) He even goes so far as to instruct his work crews to leave extra behind for her.
- 6) **This was a tremendous act of kindness towards Naomi and Ruth.**
 - (a) Boaz was offering protection and provision of food.
 - (b) Boaz was assuring that by keeping Ruth near his servant girls he would be protecting her from any remarks that might be embarrassing to a young foreign girl.
- 7) **In providing drink; Boaz was providing above the law and anything expected to do for the poor.**
 - (a) He shows his concern as a member of the family to help those who are in need.
 - (b) And he is fulfilling the Laws commanded by God to leave food for the poor.
- 8) **Ruth is so overwhelmed with Boaz's acts of kindness, that she fell down on her knees bowing before him asking why she has found such favor in his eyes.**
 - (a) Boaz recognized the sacrifice that Ruth has made to care for Naomi.
 - (b) Telling her, that he has heard of all she has done for her mother-in-law since the loss of their husbands.
 - (c) And now he wants to help them.
- 9) **When it was time to take a break, and eat; Boaz invited Ruth to join them.**
 - (a) Showing even more generosity, he purposely had his men leave behind stalks for her to glean.
 - (b) And then told Ruth to stay with his crew for the remainder of the harvest.

- (c) In this way, he could ensure that Ruth and Naomi were being properly provided for and protected.
- 10) **At the end of the day; Ruth had about an ephah of grain which was about half a bushel weighing around 30 pounds.**
 - (a) This was an unusually high amount to be gathered in one day.
 - (b) Ruth was a hard worker, working all day without resting unless invited to do so.
 - (c) Ruth showed that she was a woman of character respecting the customs of these people.
- 11) **When Ruth arrived home that evening she told Naomi all about her day.**
 - (a) Naomi inquired who this was that was so kind and generous to her?
 - (b) She then learned it was one of her husband's kin, Boaz.

TS: **So, what can we glean from this passage this morning?**

II) Conclusion (Life Application)

- A) **While Naomi had given up in bitterness on God; God had not given up on Naomi.**
 - 1) **Through Boaz God provided for Naomi and Ruth.**
 - (a) Providing food for them to eat.
 - (b) Providing what they needed when they needed it.
 - 2) **Through Boaz God protected Naomi and Ruth.**
 - (a) Protecting them on their journey returning to Bethlehem.
 - (b) Protecting a young woman who has gone out to work in the fields in a foreign land.
 - 3) As God begins to Bless Naomi and Ruth; can you sense the Bitterness leaving Naomi's heart?
 - 4) God does not give up on us either; **Philippians 4:19**, tells us, *"And my God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."*
 - (a) God may be working to transform us into his image.
 - (b) But He is only preparing us to become citizens of his kingdom.
- B) **God wants those who are blessed to share with those who are needy.**
 - 1) **1 Timothy 6:17-18**, says *"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.¹⁸ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share."*
 - 2) **Unfortunately, there are many in this world today who try to take advantage of the system.**
 - (a) They feel as though they are entitled to benefits and that they should not have to work for them.
 - (b) However, there are also many who are struggling for not fault of their own, who if given a chance, would gladly do what they can to help themselves.
 - 3) **Those who are blessed with wealth are not commanded to give it up; with wealth comes great responsibility.**
 - (a) However, God still wants us to be generous and to help those who need it.
 - (b) If God has blessed you so that you are able to help someone else, this is all the more reason you need to be in prayer and letting the Holy Spirit guide you where you should help.
 - (c) **One of the reasons that Jewish people are so prosperous is that they follow the command to help one another of their brethren when they are struggling.**
 - 4) **God blesses not only the person being helped; but those who are giving with a right attitude; . . . what is that attitude?**
 - (a) Doing it as unto the Lord
 - (b) **When we are following God's lead there is always a double blessing.**
 - (i) The blessing of helping someone else.
 - (ii) And God's blessing of storing treasure in heaven.

- 5) **We cannot take anything to heaven with us except for our relationships.**
- (a) However, there is a type of treasure which we can invest in heaven . . .
 - (b) **Matthew 6:19-21** says "*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*"
 - (c) **2 Timothy 4:8** says, "*Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*"
- 6) **The real blessings of God are in store for us in heaven.**
- (a) Are you bitter?
 - (b) Let God turn your bitterness into blessings

III) Invitation: **Let us Pray!**