

# Ruth 2:14-23

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/ruth/ruth-2/ruth-214-23/>

*Boaz allows Ruth to eat with his workers and gives them further instructions to help her. Naomi is very glad when Ruth tells her she worked in Boaz's field, she recognizes that he is a close relative.*

In addition to providing protection for Ruth from the other workers and water when she thirsts, Boaz invites Ruth to join his workers for a meal he provides. Also, Boaz allows Ruth's reaping to go as smoothly as possible as he informs his workers to intentionally leave grain untouched so she can easily harvest it. But even though Boaz has made it much easier for Ruth to get grain, she continued to be diligent. Rather than quitting early, *she gleaned in the field until evening.*

When Ruth returns to her mother in law, Naomi recognizes that Ruth had a particularly bountiful day. They were able to eat enough to be *satisfied*. Given their circumstances, it is likely they were used to going to bed hungry. It is hard for many modern Americans to identify with the reality that for most of human history, and still for much of the world, not having enough food to fill their bellies was the norm.

Naomi then inquired how Ruth's good fortune came about, asking *Where did you glean today and where did you work?* The text makes it clear that this was an unusually bountiful gleaning, and Ruth must have had help, since Naomi adds *may he who took notice of you be blessed*. Ruth then recounts the story, and reveals that *Boaz is the man with whom she worked*. Naomi now blesses *the Lord* for showing *kindness* in this circumstance. Naomi is consistent. She attributes both good and bad circumstances to God. Naomi then tells Ruth something Boaz had not revealed, *the man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives*.

By this time, the women might have felt an excitement they had not experienced in some time. After all the difficulty they had endured, losing husbands and sons, returning to Bethlehem as widows, now something favorable had befallen them. Part of the message of this story could be tied to God's admonition to Israel to remain in the land in order to be blessed. The blessings begin to fall on Naomi when she returned to Israel.

It is interesting to note that Naomi permits Ruth to go and glean, but Naomi doesn't participate. The story doesn't tell us why. Perhaps she was physically unable. Perhaps she was too proud. Whatever the reason, it certainly seems Ruth is willing to bear the complete burden of work. So far, we see in Ruth commitment, loyalty, humility, diligence and gratitude.

Ruth discloses further information to Naomi, stating Boaz told her to *stay close to Boaz's servants until they have finished all his harvest*. Naomi encouraged Ruth to continue in Boaz's fields. The comment Naomi adds, *so that others do not fall upon you in another field*, is similar to Boaz's comments regarding her safety. Perhaps this is a reason Naomi didn't go gleaning. It seems there was considerable danger for a single woman gleaning. Accordingly, Ruth stayed

*close by the maids of Boaz in order to glean until the end of the barley harvest and the wheat harvest.* All this time she continues to live with Naomi, inferring that Ruth continues to provide for her mother-in-law.

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>14</sup> At mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come here, that you may eat of the bread and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.” So she sat beside the reapers; and he served her roasted grain, and she ate and was satisfied and had some left. <sup>15</sup> When she rose to glean, Boaz commanded his servants, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not insult her. <sup>16</sup> Also you shall purposely pull out for her *some grain* from the bundles and leave *it* that she may glean, and do not rebuke her.”**

**<sup>17</sup> So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. <sup>18</sup> She took *it* up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also took *it* out and gave Naomi what she had left after she was satisfied. <sup>19</sup> Her mother-in-law then said to her, “Where did you glean today and where did you work? May he who took notice of you be blessed.” So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, “The name of the man with whom I worked today is Boaz.” <sup>20</sup> Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed of the Lord who has not withdrawn his kindness to the living and to the dead.” Again Naomi said to her, “The man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives.” <sup>21</sup> Then Ruth the Moabitess said, “Furthermore, he said to me, ‘You should stay close to my servants until they have finished all my harvest.’” <sup>22</sup> Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his maids, so that *others* do not fall upon you in another field.” <sup>23</sup> So she stayed close by the maids of Boaz in order to glean until the end of the barley harvest and the wheat harvest. And she lived with her mother-in-law.**