

Ruth 3:1-18 Trust and Follow God's Perfect Plans

Proverbs 19:21 states, "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD'S purpose that prevails." And the Lord speaks through the prophet Jeremiah to the Jewish exiles in Babylon in **29:11-13**, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

Ultimately the lesson for you and me concerning plans is that God's will is always best. He wants and desires only what is best for us. (Foundational, vital that we believe that.) In Ruth and Naomi's time, the time of the Judges, self-centeredness and selfishness led men's plans. **Judges 21:25** says it perfectly, "In those days, Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit." And that is what many of us do.

We have already seen that Ruth, Naomi and Boaz are different because they have placed their faith and hope in a faithful God. And as we begin to trust God and live our lives in a way that show it not only do people notice but God notices as well. God is pleased when we step out in faith and trust Him.

Hopefully you have been encouraged to live for God even in difficult times, being challenged to seek and trust God's plan above your own, no matter the circumstances of life. Today, we will see faith in action anew as we see that trusting God is perfect even when His plans are confusing and difficult to discern. Our will causes confusion. Confusion busters.

As we see God at work around us it gives us confidence to trust that He cares for us and that His plan is always best. (Naomi and Ruth) He has also given us authority figures in our lives who really care for us to use as wise counselors.

One day Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not try to find a home for you, where you will be well provided for? Is not Boaz, with whose servant girls you have been, a kinsman of ours?" (sense of excitement and hope) Naomi wants what is best for Ruth and wants to help her. In the absence of a father women were allowed to initiate the process of arranged marriages. Boaz was an obvious choice. (God at work) (kinsman, he had already shown favor to Ruth) **Tonight he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor.** (explain winnowing and the threshing floor) **Wash and perfume**

yourself, and put on your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do." **"I will do whatever you say," Ruth answered.** Submission- withdraw, yield to, when you do not have a King you will not submit.

Listening to wise council

Naomi is giving Ruth specific instructions. Ruth had already submitted herself to Naomi when she made the commitment to her by saying "your people will be my people."

Wise council is a valuable resource that we have available to us in making right decisions in life and we need to seek it out.

What makes a wise counselor?

Naomi- she knew her people, culture and customs (in the church Godly leaders and members) Duet 25:5-10

She had been married before. (experience does not always produce wisdom)

She was not looking out for herself and her desires. She wanted God's best for Ruth. (when seeking wisdom we don't need man's opinion or others plan for our lives, students leaving, getting married, children, people with a kingdom mindset not worldly)

She had faith in and trusted God and it showed in the way she lived her life. (look for someone who is living it)

James 3:13 "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in humility that comes from wisdom."

Wisdom- God's perspective in a given situation

A wise counselor will always lead you closer to and point you to God. To reject it is pride and rebellion. We need each other we all have blind spots.

Act on wise council- step out in faith

So she went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law told her to do. Wise council is worthless if you do not do what they say. ("note the place where he is lying") Ruth was taking a bold step of faith that included risk. Many of us miss out on what God has for us simply because we do not step out in faith. (even salvation) We don't trust God. Our hope is our own recourses and understanding. We act on our

desires. Prov 3:5-6 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.” **When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down.** (She is honoring and respecting Naomi, Boaz and God) (a place of humility, submission to him and God, she is literally putting herself in God’s hands and then waiting for God to work) James 4:10 Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will lift you up. Be a Godly woman. He will provide a Godly man. (Giving in, dressing provocatively-cute, flirting, what you are fishing with.)

Boaz’s response

In the middle of the night, something startled the man, and he turned and discovered a woman lying at his feet. “Who are you?” he asked. “I am your servant Ruth,” she said. “Spread the corner of your garment (she was asking him to marry her, be the answer to his own prayer,

2:12 “May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.” Naomi’s plan had become Ruth’s plan, she told him what she wanted, good idea ladies, notice the boldness of a servant, ask) **over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer.**” (explain kinsman redeemer Duet. 25:5-10) **“The Lord bless you, my daughter,” he replied. “This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor.** Another picture of Ruth not doing what seems right but submitting to God’s plan and ways. Boaz was obviously older than Ruth. Notice the humility in this master **And now, my daughter, don’t be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character.**(same word used of Boaz in 2:1 a perfect match of character) Again Boaz rewards her step of faith by encouraging her. He noticed her noble character as a covenant keeper and a hard worker, a woman of integrity, putting to rest any idea of promiscuity, showing her honor.

Beginning to see the traits of a Godly man **Although it is true that I am near of kin, there is a kinsman-redeemer**

nearer than I. He had already been considering it. Boaz, a man of integrity does not want to do anything out of authority. (parents, father- spiritual father) **Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to redeem, good; let him redeem. But if he is not willing, as surely as the Lord lives I will do it.** (a picture of manhood, a vow, a man of his word, commitment)

Lie here until morning.” You know he didn’t sleep very well, you know that he was tempted. If Boaz would have done what was right in his own eyes we know that would not have honored God or Ruth but I do not want you to miss the integrity and commitment to God. No one would have known and if they did anything, many would have encouraged but Boaz was submitted to God. Boaz was committed to protecting Ruth, a man of integrity, it was late. **So she lay at his feet until morning, but got up before anyone could be recognized; and he said, “Don’t let it be known that a woman came to the threshing floor.”** (continually protecting her reputation and God’s, Boaz is a real man)

Eph 5:3 “But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people.”

1 Thess. 5:22 “Abstain from all appearance of evil.”

Being alone with the opposite sex, flirting with the obvious line. Men need to lead in this.

He also said, “Bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it out.” When she did so, he poured into it six measures of barley and put it on her. **Then he went back to town. When Ruth came to her mother-in-law, Naomi asked. “How did it go, my daughter?”** Then she told her everything Boaz had done for her and added, **“He gave me these six measures of barley, saying, ‘Don’t go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.’**(maybe a sign to Naomi that he will take care of them, another sign of an honorable man of God) **Then Naomi said, “Wait, my daughter, until you find out what happens. For the man will not rest until the matter is settled today.”** Again Boaz goes above and beyond what is expected. Another picture of our extravagant God who does exceedingly more than we could ask for or imagine when we put our hope and faith in Him.

Boaz, a picture of Christ

A humble master who already has us on His mind.

Approachable, personal.

One who encourages us when we step out in faith and trust Him.

One who protects and provides for us.

But most of all one who redeems us from our spiritual poverty and slavery.

He has a plan for our lives and His plan is not only perfect but is also best.

Trust Him with your life. Make some hard choices that honor God.

Go against the culture and even your own feelings, get wise counsel, step out in faith.