

RUTH 3:15-17
THE BLESSINGS OF GOD!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Ruth chapter 3 as we continue our in-depth study of the book of Ruth.

And what an amazing story this is. It is the story of redemption.

The book of Ruth opens up telling us of a family living in Bethlehem during the time period of the Judges. And there was a famine in the land.

So Elimelech picks up his family and moves from Bethlehem to Moab to help his family out during this difficult time.

But, as we have seen, Elimelech moved his family from the House of Bread, Bethlehem, to Moab or a washpot or toilet bowl. They went to the world for help instead of the Lord.

And down in Moab we see that Elimelech dies and his wife, Naomi, is left with her two sons, Mahlon and Chilion and they are down in Moab, a place where she knew no one and now she is a widow!

During their stay down in Moab we see that her two sons marry Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. Something that they should not have done, they were not to marry Gentile women, but when you are living in the world, what else were you going to do!

Then Naomi's two sons die, and she is left with her two daughters-in-law down in Moab and they have been down there now some ten years. Not a short stay, not at all. The world had them and look at all the death and destruction it brought them.

At this point Naomi hears that God is blessing His people back in Bethlehem and she decides to go back home. Not for God, but for the blessings that God was pouring out on His people. Naomi is still struggling with God at this point.

And this struggle is so bad that she tells both Orpah and Ruth to stay in Moab and not to follow her to Bethlehem. She even blames God for all that has happened to her and she is basically telling them, ***“Don’t follow me. I have a target on my back and God keeps hitting me and thus, you don’t want to be close to me or you too will get hit. Look, you have even lost your husband’s and who knows what God will do next!”***

Naomi misrepresented God before Orpah and Ruth because she was not walking with God like she should have been. And instead of taking the responsibility she blames God.

You see, they should have never gone down to Moab, but they did and now when all these things happen, she is blaming God!

And we see that Orpah kisses Naomi and then heads back to Moab. Lots of emotion but no devotion from Orpah and it is seen in her actions.

But Ruth is different. She clung to Naomi and even then, Naomi is telling her to go back home. She basically told Ruth, ***“What is wrong with you. Don’t follow me. Look, your sister-in-law is heading home, go and follow her!”***

But there is something different about Ruth, there was more than emotion towards Naomi and the God she worshiped, there was devotion. And we see that played out in her actions. You see, true faith will be seen in a person’s life or as James tells us, **“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”** James 2:26.

Let me show you what I mean. In Ruth 1:16-17 we are told, **“But Ruth said: ‘Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me.’”**

There is a great display of faith on the part of Ruth. She is going to follow Naomi, but why? Because Naomi is going to the House of Bread, to Bethlehem and to the God of Israel. And Ruth wants to be with the God of Israel and His people. And nothing is going to stop her from going. In fact, only death will stop her, that is what she tells Naomi.

So Naomi is done trying to persuade Ruth and they head back to Bethlehem.

As they return the women recognize Naomi, although those ten years away from Bethlehem took its toll on Naomi. They were not sure that was really her, but she tells them that it is she but not to call her Naomi or pleasant, but to call her Bara or bitter!

Again, her walk with God is off and she is angry, she is bitter at all that life has brought upon her, or I should say, all that God has brought upon her.

But God is not done with Naomi or Ruth as we have seen. There is a kinsman or a relative of her husbands who could marry Ruth and raise up a child after her dead husband's name, Mahlon.

Ruth goes and gleans in his fields, what the poor would be able to do after the owner went through the fields once, they could then come in and glean what they could. And Boaz, the owner sees Ruth and is smitten by her.

And he tells his men to make sure no one touches her and provide extra grain for her, and they did.

Now as we moved into Ruth chapter 3, we saw that Naomi is seeing the hand of God working and she tells Ruth to prepare herself as a bride would and go to Boaz. She tells Ruth, **“Then it shall be, when he lies down; that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.”** Ruth 3:4.

Now some see this as wrong, but what Ruth was doing was not wrong, it was not some sexual thing, not at all. As I have said, the behavior of Ruth, in the culture of that day, was an act of total submission to Boaz. A servant would lie at their master’s feet and be ready for what the master tells them to do.

And it is out of that we began to look at four points that emerge from this.

We see in Ruth – ***TOTAL SUBMISSION!***

As I have said, we saw that as Ruth laid down at the feet of Boaz, waiting for him to tell her what to do. And we are to sit at the feet of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and allow Him to tell us what we are to do.

And that brought us to our second point – ***EARS TO HEAR!***

Sometimes we can get so distracted we can’t hear what people are saying to us and that can happen with the Lord. There is so much other noise going on in our lives that we don’t take the time to listen or we just can’t hear what the Lord is saying. Ruth heard what Boaz was saying to her and she obeyed the Lord. That is important as well, not just listening but then obeying what the Lord is telling us.

And this morning, the third point we will be looking at is this – ***THE BLESSINGS OF GOD!***

Ruth is going to be blessed by Boaz as she not only hears what he is telling her but also obeying what He is telling her. And the same is true for us as we will see this morning.

I have broken these verses down into three points and they are as follows,

THE INTENTIONS OF BOAZ – RUTH 3:15

WHAT HAS HAPPENED – RUTH 3:16

EXCEEDINGLY ABUNDANTLY BLESSED – RUTH 3:17

I am sure we have all heard people say something like this, ***“I’ve been blessed by God!”***

What do they mean by that?

Usually, what they are talking about is health, wealth, success, a job, a marriage and we can put all kinds of things there. Listen to some athletes and how they speak of being blessed by God after they won a game.

Now, let’s think that one through for a minute. If they would have lost the game would they have been cursed by God? No, but sometimes, by what is said, that is what it seems to be!

But please understand that the blessings of God are not just material things and if that is our concept of God, we are in trouble because you are limiting what God is doing in your life.

This morning, as we look at – ***THE BLESSINGS OF GOD***, my prayer is that we would understand what this is all about so we can enjoy all that God has for us.

This is where we left off last time which will bring us to our study this morning. In Ruth 3:14 we are told, **“So she lay at his feet until morning, and she arose before one could recognize another. Then he said, ‘Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.’”**

With that said, let’s begin reading in Ruth chapter 3, beginning in verse 15, and let’s see what the Lord has for us this morning as we look at – ***THE BLESSINGS OF GOD!***

RUTH 3**VERSE 15**

Before the sun comes up, before you could recognize people because of the lack of light, Ruth gets up and is getting ready to head home.

But before she goes, we see Boaz give to her six ephahs of barley, even more than what she had gleaned before.

And what Boaz was doing was giving to her a kind of down payment of his intentions of marrying her!

Now we read that, and we may be wondering, ***“What in the world is that about? How in the world does that even apply to me?”***

Those are great questions and let me share with you what I think the Holy Spirit is showing us.

When we come to Christ, when we repent of our sins and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of our lives, we are saved and we, in a sense, are betrothed to Christ.

In other words, we are engaged to Christ and He is coming back for His Bride the Church. We are waiting for that and we call it the Rapture of the Church when all believers will be gathered together, receive their new bodies and we will be with the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ and partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb.

But what about this betrothal period or this engagement period, does the Bible speak about this period of time?

You bet it does!

Like what Boaz did in leaving a down payment for his intentions of marrying Ruth, our Lord has left us with a down payment you might say of His intentions, showing us that He is coming back.

Where do we see this?

In Ephesians 1:13-14 where Paul tells us, **“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”**

Notice the picture of salvation that Paul is painting for us as he is sharing with the Ephesians how they were saved.

First of all, they heard the Word of Truth!

What does that mean?

It means that they heard the Gospel message preached to them, they heard the Word of God and then they trusted in the Lord, the One that Paul had testified to them about!

And once we were saved, we were sealed with the Holy Spirit!

Now, what does that mean, that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit?

Let me share a few ways that this seal was used, and you will see how this does apply to our lives.

Back then there were many people who could not read or write and thus, a man would have a signet ring that was used to represent his signature.

What they would do is they would take their signet ring and press it into wax or some other soft substance and that would then harden over time and it would be his seal or his signature.

One of the ways that this seal worked in their lives and works in our lives today is that it spoke of – ***OWNERSHIP!***

Think of it like this. If you were to travel back then to a place and decided to buy something and have it shipped back home, you would put your seal upon it and it showed that you not only bought and paid for it, but it now belonged to you, you owned this.

Now they are going to ship it home for you. And when it arrived you would go to claim your property and to do that you would show them your signet ring!

Now let's apply that to our own lives.

Paul tells us here in Ephesians that the moment we are saved we are sealed with the Holy Spirit.

And look at this beautiful picture. God has bought us, and He paid for us with the shed blood of Jesus Christ!

That is exactly what Paul tells us in I Corinthians 6:19-20, **“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”**

You see, He sealed you with the Holy Spirit and He is declaring His ownership of you!

As one writer put it, ***“When the Holy Spirit seals believers, He marks them as God's divine possessions, who from that moment on entirely and eternally belong to Him, The Spirit's seal declares the transaction of salvation as divinely official and final.”***

Not only does this seal speak of ownership, but it also speaks of – ***SECURITY!***

What do I mean by that?

I mean that the moment we put our trust in Jesus, the moment that we are saved, we are absolutely secure in Him!

How can that be?

Let's think about that a minute. God the Holy Spirit has placed a seal upon our lives, I think we can all agree on that.

Now, in knowing that, who can break that seal?

The only person who could break that seal would have to be someone greater than God!

But there is no one greater than God!

Exactly and thus, in knowing that, we are secure, absolutely secure in Christ!

I hope you are encouraged by that. You have nothing to worry about and yet so many Christians do worry that they are going to lose their salvation.

Again, there are those who feel that I can blow it and lose my salvation. I have heard this many times over the years. People feel that they have not attained a certain righteousness and thus, God will cast them out, they will lose their salvation.

Again, let's think about that for a moment.

If that were true, then you would have to be greater than God! Is that true? Absolutely not and yet you negate what God has said in His Word and you are listening to what the Devil is whispering in your ear! Don't do that!

You are sealed by God and that seal cannot be broken by anyone but God because there is no one greater than God and thus, as Paul said in Philippians 1:6, "**being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.**"

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, “**And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up to the time of His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you.**”

The Living Bible puts this verse like this, “**And I am sure that God who began the good work within you will keep right on helping you grow in his grace until his task within you is finally finished on that day when Jesus Christ returns.**”

So not only does God own us as we have given our life to Him, but He has sealed us and no one can break that seal, which tells me that our salvation is secure in Him, He will finish the work that He began in our lives, all of our lives!

Let me illustrate this point like this.

I think we are all familiar with the story of Noah. God was going to bring judgment upon the earth because the thoughts and the intents of man’s heart were evil continually and they refused to repent and get right with God.

And with all that wickedness, there was Noah and his family, and they were right with God, he found grace in the eyes of the Lord and the Lord told Noah to build an ark to preserve not only his family but the land animals as well.

We can picture Noah and his family as a type of the believer in Christ as they are in this ark.

Now Noah builds this huge ark, and all the animals are brought in and Noah and his family enter and the door is closed by God!

What I want you to notice is that God did not tell Noah to put pegs on the outside of the ark and when the flood waters come to have him and his family hold on tight and hopefully they will make it through this judgment. If you can, you made it. If you can't, I guess you our out!

What's my point?

My point is this. With that kind of theology your salvation is like this. ***“I am going to try my hardest to hold on to my salvation, to do the best that I can until Jesus comes or I die, and then, and only then will I make it!”***

What is wrong with that theology?

It is wrong! The Scriptures don't support it. I don't have to even say more than that. If it were true, then my salvation would be based upon my finished work. Yes, I need Christ, but I must maintain my righteousness to enter in. And the only problem with that, well I guess not the only problem, but the Bible says that my righteousness is like filthy rags, so no matter how good I think I am, I am not going to make it!

What did God tell Noah and his family to do? He told them to, ***“Come into the ark.”***

And then God shut the door and you might say that Noah and his family were sealed in this ark, just as God has sealed us in Christ with the Holy Spirit the moment we got saved!

I don't think Noah could have gotten out of the ark even if he wanted to, but of course he did not want to get out of the ark because outside of the ark was certain death!

Now, with Noah being sealed in the ark, do you think he felt trapped?

Not at all. Do you know what he felt? He felt – ***SECURE!***

Also, during the flood, as the ark was being tossed around, do you think Noah fell down, stumbled from time to time?

I am sure that happened often, but he was never tossed out of the ark!

Let me ask you this. I know, I am asking you a lot of questions this morning, but I want you to think about this.

As a Christian, do you ever stumble and fall?

Of course we do and yet, we never fall out of Christ and perish! That is important to know and understand!

And if you are still not sure, let me share with you what Paul is talking about in Romans chapter 8.

Notice how this chapter opens up, **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”**

Paul opens up by telling us that in Christ there is no condemnation. The Law condemns but the Spirit gives life.

And that is an important place to start and then, as Paul ends this chapter, he speaks of the fact that we will never be separated from God because nothing can separate us from God! In other words, we are eternally secure in Christ because we are sealed by God!

Listen to what Paul tells us in Romans 8:38-39, **“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

What is there that can separate us from Jesus? ***ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!***

Thus, ***NO CONDEMNATION FROM GOD*** and ***NO SEPARATION FROM GOD!***

When we come to Christ, when we ask Jesus to forgive us of our sins and to be Lord and Savior of our lives, we are safe and secure in Him and we are sealed with the Holy Spirit as a guarantee that our voyage in this life will one day end in heaven when we will come face to face with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and God the Father, we are their possession forever!

You see, the word “**guarantee**” here in Ephesians 1:14 speaks of earnest money or a down payment made which will ensure that He is coming back for us!

That word can also speak of an engagement ring.

Here again is the surety that the Lord is coming back for us and we don't have to fear.

Earnest money is something you put down when you are going to buy a house and it is telling the seller that you are coming back to purchase this house and here is the guarantee!

Also, an engagement ring is a ring you give to someone you want to marry, and it too is a guarantee that you are going to come back and marry them.

The Holy Spirit is our engagement ring given to us by Jesus and as He goes and prepares a mansion for us, a new home that Jesus speaks of in John 14:2-3, a place for our spirit and soul to dwell in, and when He is ready, He will return for His Bride, the Church and we will forever be with Him!

As one writer put it, “*When the Holy Spirit seals believers, He marks them as God's divine possessions, who from that moment on entirely and eternally belong to Him, The Spirit's seal declares the transaction of salvation as divinely official and final.*”

We are secure in Christ and the Holy Spirit guarantees that what the Lord has begun in us, He will complete, we will be with Him for eternity!

That is what Gaebelin wrote, *“The seal is therefore the Holy Spirit Himself, and His presence in the believer denotes ownership and security. The sealing with the Spirit is not an emotional feeling or some mysterious inward experience.”*

For Ruth, she hears – ***THE INTENTIONS OF BOAZ***, or that as he gives her this grain it is a down payment of his intentions to marry her!

As we read on, we will see the next point – ***WHAT HAS HAPPENED?***

VERSE 16

As we read this verse it seems a little strange. And what I mean by that is this.

As Ruth returns home to Naomi, Naomi asks her this very strange question, **“Is that you, my daughter?”**

Why did Naomi ask this question? Did she not recognize Ruth anymore? Was she getting old and senile?

Make no mistake about it, Naomi was not getting senile, she was not confused, she knew exactly who this person was, she knew that the person coming through the door was Ruth.

And the reason I can be so confident about that is because, in the Hebrew, it expects an answer about the character or condition behind the name.

And what I mean is this. Naomi was asking her ***“Are you still Ruth the Moabite, or Ruth the future wife of Boaz?”***

That really is what the chapter is all about. The preparation of the marriage between Boaz and Ruth.

And at this point, we see that Ruth has submitted her life to Boaz and Boaz has given her a down payment, in a sense, that he is going to marry Ruth.

And the point here that I want to bring out is this – ***WHAT HAS HAPPENED?***

Ruth's life has changed, and it was seen in her actions and her willingness to submit her life to Boaz.

And that is true for us as well. Paul put it like this in II Corinthians 5:17, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**

Paul is speaking of the new life and what God is doing and has done! Don't live in the past, you are brand new in Christ and thus, live accordingly.

It is as Clarke said, ***“The man is not only mended, but he is new made . . . there is a new creation, which God himself owns as his workmanship, and which he can look on and pronounce very good.”***

One author put it well when he wrote, ***“God plants new desires, loves, inclinations, and truths in the redeemed, so that they live in the midst of the old creation with a new creation perspective (cf. Gal. 6:14). That perspective, as it is nourished and developed, helps believers gain victory in the battle against sin and conforms them to the image of Jesus Christ.”***

May we not forget that! God sees the finished product; we are perfect in a positional sense.

And in a practical sense, God is still working, just don't live in the past and what you have done, but in the present and what God has done and is doing in your life!

But what has happened in our lives since we have been saved? What are people seeing as they look at our lives? Do they see Christ, or do they see our flesh? There should be a change and as we grow and mature in the Lord, they should see more of Christ and less of us manifested in our lives.

And what I am speaking of is the nature of Christ flowing from our lives.

Let me give you this example. My son and his family moved to Colorado and the house that they bought, well, some problems came up.

They let the previous owners stay a few weeks after closing and while they were staying there the water heater blew and there was water all over the basement.

The big problem was that they did not tell my son and they did not clean it up, so there was a lot of water damage, the carpet needed to be pulled up and the walls taken down.

Not only that but some of the plumbing was not up to code and had to be replaced. This was going to cost my son a lot of money to repair this even though some was covered with his insurance.

And my son was going to try and get back some of the cost of all these damages and was going to sue them.

He was at church on a Sunday and both my son and his wife felt the Lord telling them not to sue this family. So instead, he wrote a letter telling them that they were no longer going to sue them.

And he told them that he was a Christian and he felt it was not right to do that. So they were no longer going to sue them. He also told them that he thought that they were Christians as well, as they had Bible verses up on their walls and he closed by saying that he is leaving it in God's hand and whatever they decide to do, he is fine with that!

Who would do something like that today?

Someone who has been changed inwardly by God and it is then manifested in their outward actions!

Let me share with you this true story. We are told,

One night while preaching at a halfway house in Taegu, South Korea where Mrs. Worley and I were missionaries, a group of inmates, after hearing the Word of God came forward to receive Christ as their personal Saviour. We were happy to help them.

After we had thoroughly led them through the Word of God, we then felt that they understood. Colonel Kim Chang Hup was one of them that gladly received Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

We then were having fellowship with them and I learned that the Colonel, who just received Christ as his Saviour was a North Korean. Then I learned his story.

It seems that he was a spy that had been caught attempting to come South in order to cut the President's head off, who at that time was Park Chung Hee.

Colonel Kim Chang Hup, was the leader of the spies. He had been in the South Korean prison for a number of years and had finally been rehabilitated.

That was the Colonel's lucky day. He heard the wonderful story of Jesus Christ and was saved.

Later after he was released, he was baptized and was very faithful in our Taejon Bible Baptist Church.

Work was very scarce at that time especially for an ex-communist spy. Therefore I put him in as the janitor of our Church. From the high rank of a Colonel he was promoted to be janitor of our Taejon Baptist Church. He held that position until I went 100 miles further South and began a new Church in Taegu.

- Dr. Worth Worley

That is an amazing story of a spy who was going to kill a leader in South Korea, to him coming to saving faith in Christ and how that changed his whole life.

Think about your life before you were saved and the things you did, the things that drew your attention. And I am sure there were many things that you were involved in that God would not have approved of.

And maybe there were things that you wanted to change, and you tried to change, but to no avail, you just couldn't break that bondage you were in and make those changes you wanted!

But when you came to Jesus things changed in your life. God not only gives you the desire to change but He also gives you the power to change those things in your life that have you in bondage, those things that are displeasing to God can be removed!

For me, just one point, to go to church and sit for 90 minutes and hear Bible teaching and sing worship songs would be horrible. I could not imagine doing that before I was saved!

And then the Lord got a hold of my life and as soon as I got saved, I had such a hunger to know God and to know His Word.

I could sit and listen to pastor Phil teach out of the Bible for over an hour and worship the Lord with joy.

I not only went to church on Sunday but on Thursday evenings and even prayer on Saturday! I just could not get enough and that is something that God had placed in my heart and it is still there, a hunger to know Him more and more and a hunger to know His Word more and more!

And the more I do study the Word the more my life changes to be more like His!

But I could never do this on my own. That desire, that hunger to know God was so strong and the desire to have my life changed so deep, and now I had the power of God to help transform by life to be more like His!

Applying this truth to the Christian life, the desire to change comes from within, but the power we need to change is only made available through the work of the Holy Spirit.

It is as Paul said in Philippians 2:12-13, **“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”**

Please understand that we are saved by Grace through Faith and not by the Law through works!

Then what is Paul saying here?

Paul tells us that we are to **“work out”** not ***“work to get in”*** our salvation.

His point is simple, since God has worked in you, now let that flow out into your actions, the things you are doing, bear fruit in your life showing you are abiding in Him!

You see God put it in you and now you must work it out in your daily life. You must humble yourself and surrender your life to God, be in obedience to what He has said, like Jesus demonstrated for us, and that is how it starts to look as it’s working its way out into your life.

Keep in mind that the verb **“work out”** carries the meaning of ***“work to full completion,”*** such as working out a problem in mathematics. In Paul’s day it was also used for ***“working a mine,”*** that is, getting out of the mine all the valuable ore possible.

In other words, Paul is telling us that we are to reach for our full potential in all that we do for God's glory and that is only going to be accomplished as we surrender our lives fully to His will and purposes!

James put it this way in James 2:14-18, **“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”**

It is as Calvin said, *“Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is never alone!”*

Let what God is doing in you impact your life in such a way that it is manifested in your actions as you honor, respect the Lord and as you do, it brings God pleasure as you minister to the people of this world!

You see, God has put in our lives His heart and thus, our heart has this desire to do His will, but then it is our responsibility to *“work His will out”* in our daily lives.

The problem is, along with the new heart and nature God has given when we received Jesus, we still have the old fallen nature we inherited from Adam and it wants to impose its will on us so that we don't obey the will of God.

Look at what I mean. In Galatians 5:17 we are told, **“For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”**

Also, in Romans 7:22-23 Paul wrote, **“For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”**

So what is the answer to this dilemma, this battle?

The answer is this as Paul tells us in Galatians 5:16, **“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”**

You see, when we choose to obey the Spirit and not the flesh, we allow our salvation to be **“worked out”** into our daily lives.

The Holy Spirit not only gives us godly desires, but He also gives us the power we need to help those desires be fulfilled in our lives.

There was a change in the life of Ruth and when people look at our lives, they should ask us – ***WHAT HAS HAPPENED?*** And our lives should be able to reflect the nature of Jesus to them!

And what a blessing God has bestowed upon our lives and that is our last point – ***EXCEEDINGLY ABUNDANTLY BLESSED!***

VERSE 17

Here we see Ruth explain what Boaz had said and done and that he gave her 6 ephahs of barely.

And Naomi knows that Boaz will not rest until the work is completed. For Naomi, she recognized the great love that Boaz had for Ruth, and this woman who had come back home empty, was now full of joy once again as she resided in the House of Bread.

I have called this verse – ***EXCEEDINGLY ABUNDANTLY BLESSED!***

And just as both Ruth and Naomi are blessed by what Boaz is doing, we are blessed by the Lord.

Remember what I said. That Naomi recognized that Boaz was not going to rest until the work is completed.

I like that because our Lord will not rest until His work is completed.

Yes, His work in paying for our sins was completed on the cross of Calvary but now the Lord is working to redeem our bodies, to restore this earth to the way it was when He created it and He will not rest until it is finished!

Not only that, but we see that both Ruth and Naomi are filled with great joy as they see what Boaz is doing.

Make no mistake about it, that is where we will find joy, fulfillment, satisfaction, as we rest in the House of Bread, the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ!

Warren Wiersbe put it like this. He wrote,

During her days as a gleaner, Ruth had received generous treatment from Boaz. His workers had allowed her to follow the harvesters; they protected her from harm; they deliberately dropped sheaves for her to pick up.

Boaz had shared the noon meal with Ruth, even handing her the parched grain with his own hands (2:14).

On that first day of gleaning, Ruth had gone home with a little more than half a bushel of grain; but now Boaz filled her cloak with two bushels of grain, which would be more than two weeks' supply.

Boaz not only calmed Ruth's fears and gave her assurance for the future, but he also met her present needs in a gracious and generous way. She had not asked him for anything, but he gave the grain to her because he loved her. He was about to marry her, and he didn't want his prospective bride gleaning in the fields like a poor laborer.

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – OT, p. 488

Think about all the blessings that God has bestowed upon us. First and really the most important is that He has saved us. We have received the forgiveness of our sins by repenting of our sins and asking Jesus to be Lord and Savior of our lives.

Jesus paid in full, not just part, the penalty for our sins and then we must appropriate that free gift into our lives by faith, by coming to Christ.

It is as Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”**

We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone and thus, good works don't save us, Jesus does!

And God has blessed us with so much. In Philippians 4:19 Paul wrote, **“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”**

The Living Bible puts this verse like this, **“And it is he who will supply all your needs from his riches in glory because of what Christ Jesus has done for us.”**

God will give to each of us exactly what we need for the situations that we face in life. Not necessarily what we want, but what we need, and we can rest in that!

Also, Paul wrote in II Corinthians 9:8, **“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.”**

God not only gives to us what we need for the work He has called us to do, but He gives to us an abundance of blessings to accomplish the work!

In Ephesians 1:3 we see this same truth, as Paul reminds us, **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”**

Again, all that we need, every spiritual blessing God has for us to use for His glory!

And if you are still not certain, Paul tells us in Ephesians 3:20-21, **“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.”**

Listen to what Paul is saying here.

God is able and He is more than able.

He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think!

Don't limit God to what He wants to do in your life or in the life of this church.

God wants to do, and He is looking for people who are willing to walk.

And Paul concludes by saying **“Amen”** or **“Let it be!”** What else can you say?

Look at all that God has for us and how often we live as spiritual beggars. That should not be!

One writer put it like this, “When the Holy Spirit has empowered us, Christ has indwelt us, love has mastered us, and God has filled us with His own fullness, then He **is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think**. Until those conditions are met, God’s working in us is limited. When they are met, His working in us is unlimited.” (Source Unknown)

And Pastor Ray Stedman sums this all up for us like this,

That is the secret, isn’t it? You and I can do nothing - but God, living in us, filling us, working through us, is able to do abundantly more than we can even think to ask Him to do in our prayers!

What are your goals for this day, for this year, for this lifetime? God can exceed your wildest dreams - if you stop trying to manipulate, scheme, and bring it to pass in your own strength. Allow Him to live in you and through you, and the wildly unthinkable will become commonplace in your life, day after thrilling day, year after astonishing year.

We each have only one lifetime to live - so we dare not blow it. Instead of trying to run our own lives according to our own finite plans, let’s turn our lives over to the One whose plan is infinite and eternal.

When we are secure within His loving heart, we can never lose heart. Who could think of turning back, of giving up, when He has shown us a glimpse of the glory that lies before us? So don’t lose heart! The race is nearly won! Come on! Keep going! Don’t look back - look ahead! His love carries us forward - and His glory is almost within our reach!

- Ray Stedman

Then why don't we have that joy in all that God is doing in us and through us?

Because we, like Naomi, have lost sight of what God is doing because the situation before her was overwhelming and blocking out God!

Remember when she came back to Bethlehem and the women were wondering if this is Naomi and she told them not to call her Naomi or pleasant, but to call her Mara or bitter. Why? Because that is the way she felt. She was bitter towards God and all that He had brought upon her life!

And yet, look at what God was doing, and she did not see it, not until now!

I wonder how often that happens in our own lives?

Let me share this with you and you will see how easy we can let the smallest dot in our life cause us to lose focus of the bigger picture!

We are told,

As a minister was addressing a group of men, he took a large piece of paper and made a black dot in the center of it with a marking pen.

Then he held the paper up before the group and asked them what they saw.

One person quickly replied, "I see a black mark." "Right," the preacher replied. "What else do you see?"

Complete silence prevailed.

"Don't you see anything other than the dot?" he asked.

A chorus of noes came from the audience. "I'm really surprised," the speaker commented. "You have completely overlooked the most important thing of all - the sheet of paper."

Then he made the application.

He said that in life we are often distracted by small, dot-like disappointments or painful experiences, and we are prone to forget the innumerable blessings we receive from the hand of the Lord. But like the sheet of paper, the good things are far more important than the adversities that monopolize our attention.

This reminds me of a bit of verse which, though I admit is somewhat trite, does express good practical advice.

Someone has written: “As you travel down life’s pathway, may this ever be your goal: Keep your eye upon the doughnut, and not upon the hole!”

Yes, rather than concentrating on the trials of life, we should fix our attention upon His blessings. Let us say with the psalmist, “Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits” (Psalm 68:19).

- R. W. D., Our Daily Bread, March 10

May we get our eyes off the dot, whatever that may be in our life, and focus back on the Lord and all that He has for us, all that He is doing in our life. Let us not be bitter but let us be better by laying all that troubles us before the Lord and learn how to be thankful for all that the Lord has done, is doing and will do in our lives.

As Job said after he saw his life come tumbling down before him, “**... ‘Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord.’**” Job 1:19.

As I bring this study to a close, look at what we have seen.

THE INTENTIONS OF BOAZ!

We saw that Boaz was going to marry Ruth just as our Lord and Savior has given to us the Holy Spirit as a down payment or engagement ring of His intentions. He is coming back to marry us and take us home!

WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

When people look at our lives, they should see that change that the Lord has done. We were dead in our trespasses and sins and now we are alive in Christ! Let other see that in us, that joy!

EXCEEDINGLY ABUNDANTLY BLESSED!

Make no mistake about it, like Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:20-21, **“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.”**

We are so blessed and thus, why are we down? Why are we gloomy? We should be filled with joy and thankfulness for all the Lord has done and is doing and will do in our lives!

And I will close with this. We are told,

One morning R. C. Chapman, a devout Christian, was asked how he was feeling.

“I’m burdened this morning!” was his reply.

But his happy countenance contradicted his words.

So the questioner exclaimed in surprise, “Are you really burdened, Mr. Chapman?”

“Yes, but it’s a wonderful burden - it’s an overabundance of blessings for which I cannot find enough time or words to express my gratitude!”

Seeing the puzzled look on the face of his friend, Chapman added with a smile, “I am referring to Psalm 68:19, which fully describes my condition. In that verse the Father in heaven reminds us that He ‘daily loads us with benefits.’”

- Source Unknown