

## Note from Kathy

*I received a call today from a young woman who had been going through a very dark season. I have prayed for her and with her, but try as she might she could not seem to pull herself out of this season of gloom. About a week ago she was reading an article that mentioned a daily devotional called Jolt of Joy. She committed to read it over the next 30 days. She is on day 10 and is seeing the dark clouds lift. Hope is a fragile thing. Without it we feel we have nothing and with it we can get through anything. What a difference a day can make. In this chapter, we will see a similar transformation in Naomi as her hope is restored.*

## Observation

Please read the chapter at least twice before starting to answer the questions. Pray, inviting the Holy Spirit to teach you all things.

1. The chapter started off with a quick introduction of a new character, Boaz. His name means "strength" or "fleetness." What else did you learn about this man in verse 1?
2. The scene switched, and we were back with Naomi and Ruth. These women were in need of food. Ruth was not afraid of hard work. What did she decide to do to help them meet their need?
3. The practice of "gleaning" is not something we hear much about today, but it was God's system to care for the poor and the needy. They were able to work which gave them dignity, and they were able to gather grain that otherwise would have been wasted. In the verses below, circle whose idea gleaning was, and underline those who were to benefit from gleaning. Notice, it was not open to just anyone.

Leviticus 19:9-10 "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest.<sup>10</sup> Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD your God."

Deuteronomy 24:19-20 "When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.<sup>20</sup> When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow."

**Psalm 32:8**

*"God will instruct me and teach me in the way I should go. He will guide me with His eye."*

**Psalm 37:23**

*"My steps are ordered by the Lord."*

**Proverbs 3:5-6**

*"I trust in the Lord with all my heart and lean not on my own understanding. In all ways I acknowledge Him and He directs my paths."*

4. I love verse 7, it starts off with "As it turned out,..." that makes me smile every time I read it. Do you believe it coincidence or providence where Ruth found herself gleaning? Ruth had no idea whose field she was gleaning from. Even if she had known who owned the field, she did not know their relatives. Ruth had accepted Naomi's God as her God. Do you see God moving in the life of this precious new believer?

5. Once again, we saw God's perfect timing. Who arrived? How would you describe his attitude as he met those overseeing his harvest?

6. Without much time passing Boaz noticed a woman in his field that he did not recognize and inquired about her. What was he told about her?

7. Boaz realized that Ruth was a relative of his, and so he went over to talk to her. What did he tell her?

- a. c.
- b. d.

And as if he had not been kind enough, what did Boaz do to ensure Ruth's safety and enable her to make it through the long, hot day?

8. Notice verse 10, what was Ruth's response to Boaz's kindness? Her humility adorns her like a beautiful necklace.

9. How important is a good reputation? What had Boaz heard about Ruth?

10. It is obvious that Boaz was a man of great faith and character. Where did Boaz turn to seek a reward for Ruth's care of Naomi (Ruth 2:12)?

11. When it got later in the day and it was time to stop, rest, and eat, what highly unusual invitation did Boaz extend? This was not a part of the law of gleaning. How does the Lord view kindness extended to the poor and the hungry (Matthew 25:35, 40)?

**Matthew 25:35, 40**

*"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ... <sup>40</sup> Truly I tell you whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."*

12. In verse 15 and 16 we saw Boaz again go past the concept of gleaning. What special instructions did he give his paid workers?
13. The text tells us she worked all day and in the evening she threshed the barley to get the grain out before returning to Naomi's house. How much had she gathered?
14. Not only did Ruth come home with more grain than was possible for a gleaner to gather, but what had she kept for Naomi to eat? Naomi had probably been all day with no food.
15. Naomi had many questions for Ruth, but, first things first, where did she glean today? When Ruth answered, what change did we see in Naomi's countenance? She had previously suffered from feelings of rejection and bitterness, now how would you describe her?
16. In verse 20 Naomi says, "He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead." Who was she speaking about: Boaz, the Lord, or both?
17. Look at verse 20, once again, what good news did Naomi share with Ruth? What is a kinsman-redeemer or ga'al?
18. How long did Ruth stay with the harvesters gleaning? Barley harvest usually began about mid-April, and wheat harvest extended to mid-June. This was a period of intense labor for about two months.



### Ga'al

Ga'al is the Hebrew word for guardian-redeemer or kinsman redeemer. There was a law in Israel, when someone was widowed it was the responsibility of the nearest unmarried man in the family to take her as his bride so that she was not left destitute. But if he did not want to marry her or possibly jeopardize his own inheritance it went to the next in line. Sadly Naomi had no more sons. So in this case another relative of the deceased husband could become a kinsman-redeemer and marry the widow. The word redeemer is such a beautiful word. It is one who pays the price for another. Jesus is our redeemer. We could do nothing to redeem ourselves; Jesus did it all. Jesus paid it all; all to Him I owe.

---

## Application

1. Ruth and Naomi have made it back to Bethlehem. I'm sure Naomi's friends and relatives were glad to see her back. They probably shared their food for a couple of days, but Naomi and Ruth have needs that cannot be met by the occasional generosity of friends and family. Gleaning grain would be hard work, but Ruth was ready. Ruth got up before light to walk to the field in order to get a good place with the gleaners. She gleaned from sun up, throughout the heat of the day and then at sunset she went to the threshing floor to beat out the grain and then walked home for the night. How hard are you willing to work to meet the needs of your family? Are you willing to get up early, work a long day, and come home tired, without complaining?

2. Of all the fields being harvested at this time isn't it amazing that Ruth would choose Boaz's field. Do you believe this was merely random chance or divine providence? How do you view the leading of God in your life? Do you think, wow, that was lucky, or do you thank God for his leading and his goodness to you?
  
3. Ruth came to the fields and had been working hard all morning when Boaz arrived and inquired about her. The overseers told him how she had asked permission to glean and how hard she had worked all morning. They told him about her care for Naomi and the sacrifices she had made to stay with her and care for her. What an amazing reputation she has in such a relatively short time. Character builds reputation. If someone inquired about you what do you believe others would say?
  
4. God has led her to a place of safety and provision. Spend a few minutes thinking back over your past experiences. Can you see a time when God led you to just the right place at just the right time? Briefly write the details. If given an opportunity, share this example of God loving and leading you with someone else this week.
  
5. Boaz was a man of great wealth and good standing in this community. But he did not lord it over those who worked under him. His greetings were kind and genuine as he met with those he employed. He even extended kindness to the poorest of the poor gleaning there that day. What impression does it make when those in power show kindness and care to their employees and extend compassion to those who could never pay them back?

If you are in a position of authority where you work, think about how you greet the people you work with each morning. Are you genuine and kind? Do you greet them like Boaz greeted his workers?

When you're at home watching television and you get up, do you check to see if anyone needs something while you're up? Even an act as small as offering to take an empty shopping cart for a mother who has finished loading her groceries in the car can be a tremendous help to her so she does not have to leave her children unattended. Let's look for ways this week to help others.

## Psalms 30

I will exalt you, LORD,  
for you lifted me out of the depths  
and did not let my enemies gloat  
over me.

<sup>2</sup>LORD my God, I called to you for  
help, and you healed me.

<sup>3</sup>You, LORD, brought me up from the  
realm of the dead; you spared me  
from going down to the pit.

<sup>4</sup>Sing the praises of the LORD, you his  
faithful people; praise his holy name.

<sup>5</sup>For his anger lasts only a moment,  
but his favor lasts a lifetime;  
weeping may stay for the night, but  
rejoicing comes in the morning.

<sup>6</sup>When I felt secure, I said, "I will never  
be shaken."

<sup>7</sup>LORD, when you favored me, you  
made my royal mountain stand firm;  
but when you hid your face, I was  
dismayed.

<sup>8</sup>To you, LORD, I called; to the Lord I  
cried for mercy:

<sup>9</sup>"What is gained if I am silenced, if I  
go down to the pit?

Will the dust praise you?

Will it proclaim your faithfulness?

<sup>10</sup>Hear, LORD, and be merciful to me;  
LORD, be my help."

<sup>11</sup>You turned my wailing into dancing;  
you removed my sackcloth and  
clothed me with joy,

<sup>12</sup>that my heart may sing your praises  
and not be silent.

LORD my God, I will praise you forever.

6. What a difference a day makes. Only a few days before Naomi was downcast and ready to change her name to match her view of her situation. But one day later she is praising the Lord and encouraging Ruth to stay close to the women working in Boaz's field. This turnaround from grief to joy reminded me of Psalms 30. You might take a moment to read through it if you are struggling in grief or loss. There are all kinds of loss, the loss of a loved one, the loss of a dream, the loss of a job you loved, the loss of a home you thought you would live in forever, the loss of a friendship, and on and on. The pain is real, and the healing will take time. It may feel as though it will last forever. Give yourself time, and do not lose your focus. Stay in God's word, it is the lighthouse that will guide you safely home. Try to write down one thing you are thankful for each day this week.

7. List as many of Ruth's character qualities as you can see from Ruth 1 and 2. Do you share any of these character qualities with her? Choose one or two you would like to magnify this week. Don't say anything to others, just see if they notice a difference.

Ruth	You
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

## Colossians 3:23-24

*"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters,  
<sup>24</sup>since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."*

8. As a Moabite, Ruth was an enemy of Israel, a foreigner in their land and unwelcome in their worship. But God had a beautiful plan for Ruth's life. Chapters 3 and 4 tell the rest of the story of Ruth being grafted into the family tree of our precious Lord Jesus. She is even mentioned in Matthew 1; the genealogy of Christ. Do you think Ruth ever would have imagined her life turning out like this? We have no idea what God has planned for us, or our descendants. Each of us must get up and do what God has called us to do that day. What has God called you to do today? Have you asked Him what he wants you to do today? If not, why not stop for a few moments and ask Him.

