

Unimaginable Favour

Ruth 2:1-23

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Naomi and Ruth struggle to start a new life. Yet Ruth 2 is an account of unimaginable favour.

Unimaginable Favour

1) The Shock of favour

This was the day that changed Ruth's life forever—she left home empty handed, and would return with an abundance.

v2-7 Boaz shows Ruth unimaginable favour. She should have only gleaned among the grains, yet she is allowed to glean among the sheaves (v15). As a Moabite woman, she should have been the last in line to glean, yet he allows her to be the first (v10). She should be gleaning in fear of being mocked and abused, yet he guarantees her safety (v9, 15). She should have been pouring water for the hired workers to drink, yet it's the other way around (v9). He even elevates her status by inviting her to share a meal with him and his workers. He also instructs them not to scold her and pull out additional bundles for Ruth to glean (v14-15).

v19b Naomi's amazed at this shock of favour leads her to exclaim, "Blessed be the man who took notice of you."

Favour is being noticed. The heights of the favour that Ruth experienced only came about because the depths of her need had been noticed.

2) The Source of favour

v10b, 20b Boaz shows Ruth favour on account of his relationship with Naomi. He is also grateful for Ruth's care for Naomi.

Relationship is the source of favour. God has designed relationships to be the means by which he shows divine favour. But the reason we do not experience that favour is because we often treat our relationships as commercial (self- benefiting, transactional) not *covenantal* (self-giving, unconditional). We all desire covenantal relationships, but in practice we seem to prefer commercial ones.

What is the secret to being more covenantal, and thus seeing God's divine favour?

3) The Secret to favour

Ruth questions the reason for Boaz's favour (v10b). Boaz responds by saying that the LORD is indebted to her, *to repay her and reward her in full* (v12b). It was as though what Ruth did for Naomi was done directly for God (Mt. 10:40, 42). This is because Naomi belonged to the LORD (Yahweh). The secret to this divine favour was Ruth's covenantal relationship with God (Ru. 1:16, 22).

The secret to favour is covenantal relationship with God. All the unimaginable favour Naomi and Ruth experienced has been God's covenant loyalty towards them (v20a). Without covenantal relationship with God, we cannot experience covenantal relationship with one another and unimaginable favour.

3 applications to make the most of your covenant relationship with God:

#1 Ask – we may not know how deep our relationship with God goes – so ask, and find out!

#2 Reflect – relate to others by reflecting the covenantal relationship you have with God

#3 Treasure – God has bound Himself to you in covenantal relationship through the cross of His Son

We have unimaginable favour with God. Because we are in covenant with Him, we are never beyond hope. Take refuge under His wings!