

1. Intro:

- a. Roughly 17 years ago my wife and I began attending marriage counseling because we were struggling as a couple. It was revealed during that time that during those counseling sessions that I had a skewed definition of what it meant to be a good husband. See, I was working really hard to be this “good husband” but the way I defined “good husband” was as a “non-cheater” or “non-adulterer”- physically. As expected, that led to problems in our marriage as I was trying to live up to the wrong definition of what a “real husband” was.
- b. Turns out, through prayer, reading scripture hearing the word of God in church, God convicted me that I had the wrong definition. Turns out there is a more full and complete definition of that term “husband”. It’s not that I only a non-cheater, but that I could be a deep companion to someone through the waves and storms of life and I could receive that in return. Turns out, I could have intimate knowledge of a person and know her deepest fears and deepest regrets, and deepest worries, and be an anchor in life for her, and I would receive that same thing back. Turns out that I could be a parent and hold deep convictions about God and the world and choose to build something as a parent with my wife and she would do the same with me. It was way, way, more than a “non-cheater” but it was at minimum that.

2. Transition

- a. This morning we have a text that speaks to this sense of identity that we strive to have. Who does God say we are when we are married? Who does God say we are when we are parents? Who does God say we are when we are a friend? What’s the working definition that we have as we serve God?
- b. If you would, open your Bible with me to Ruth 2

3. Text:

2 Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. 2 And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor.” And she said to her, “Go, my daughter.” 3 So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech. 4 And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, “The Lord be with you!” And they answered, “The Lord bless you.” 5 Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, “Whose young woman is this?” 6 And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, “She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. 7 She said, ‘Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.’ So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest.”

8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women. 9 Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn.” 10 Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?” 11 But Boaz answered her, “All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know

before. 12 The Lord repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!" 13 Then she said, "I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants."

4. A Few Observations

- a. First, I want to observe Ruth. Ruth is the model exemplary Christian. I'm calling her a Christian because she has faith in God. She not only chooses to follow God in chapter 1, but by the time we get to chapter 2, she already knows her Bible. She's already aware of the gleaning laws and in verse 2, it's Ruth who asks Naomi to go glean. Naomi remember is the Israelite, she's the one that's supposed to know this stuff, but it's Ruth who asks about enjoying the benefits of the laws in Leviticus 19.
- b. Ruth shows the sign of true faith by her asking Naomi and then working hard within the laws of God (v7). Ruth shows no higher aspiration than the hope that she can continue gleaning even as a foreigner v10. As a non-Israelite. As a non-covenant member, non-land owning type of person. She just wants to be blessed through what God says He'll do to all the foreigners. In this text today, Ruth simply refers to herself as "foreigner" in v10 and "servant-not-a-servant" in v13. She doesn't try to earn a reward, she just wants to eat from the "crumbs of the Master's table".

5. Question about Ruth

- a. So is that all there is to who Ruth is? She's a foreigner and a servant? Is that what God says when we show faith and follow Him? Is that the whole picture?
- b. I'm not criticizing Ruth here, I don't think she's saying this at all as I'll get to later, but our passage today ends in verse 13. So we are left with this question. Is having the posture of a servant the same as being in the class of a servant?

6. Then we're introduced to Boaz

- a. Boaz is breath of fresh air! Boaz is unlike almost any of the men we've read about in the book of Judges. Remember that this book takes place during the time of Jephthahs, and Samsons, and the Levite who offered up his concubine. Unlike them, Boaz is the kind of man who protects women!
- b. But Boaz responds in a really interesting way. He offers her protection v9, then he gives her a blessing saying that he hopes YHWH the God of Israel is just in repaying Ruth. That sounds like way more than a mere foreigner gleaning for left overs on the corner of the fields.
- c. Then in v12 we get this huge statement by Boaz. Because Ruth comes to the fields of Bethlehem and seeks obedience to God and trusts in the God of Naomi, she is finding shelter under the wings of YHWH. This statement "under the wing" might seem like a throwaway turn of phrase but it is actually a big biblical theme in the Bible. And, it ties directly into how Jesus Himself responds to our faith.
 - i. To understand this phrase I want to take you through a very shortened tour of this word. The word for **wing**, in Hebrew is C-N-P.
 - ii. First- Being under the wing of YHWH God of Israel means to be a Christian. But that term means a lot of things in the bible so I want to run what all of those things mean.
 - iii. First, being "under the wing" of God represents protection. In **Exodus 19:4** "says You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself".

- iv. Second, it means entering into a covenant. **Ezekiel 16:8** “When I passed by you again and saw you, behold, you were at the age for love, and I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness; I made my vow to you and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord God, and you became mine.” The word for “corner” here is “wing” C-N-P.
- 7. You are more than a servant in God’s eyes. What can Ruth call herself? What should the Christian know when he/she is striving to serve God as a husband/wife, as a parent, and a friend, as a co-worker, as a caretaker, as a friend?
 - a. When you have faith, when you seek the shelter of God, God says that you are way, way, more than a servant. Again, the posture of a servant is correct, but the class of servant is not.
 - b. First, let us acknowledge that God calls Ruth to Boaz, and it is no accident that they meet in the field and the “it just so happens” is a sign of God’s call.
 - c. After calling you and drawing you like God does Ruth and Naomi; First, God renames you. Look at what Boaz calls Ruth in **v8**. He calls her “daughter” not servant. Yes, a term of endearment, but it points to what Jesus does and what Jesus says in that Luke 8 passage. What does he call the woman with the issue of blood? He calls her Daughter! That woman too touched the “corner/wing” of Jesus. More than just a servant, you are a daughter of our Heavenly Father!
 - i. Daughters get to sit down at the table and have a family meal!
 - ii. Daughters get to enjoy the food that The Father provides!
 - iii. Daughters get an inheritance! Own land!
 - iv. Daughters, never stop being daughters just because they might decide to stop serving like a servant.
 - v. The first response God gives you after calling you over, is what Boaz and what Jesus do, they justify you and give you a new identity.
 - vi. A son/daughter is seen by God not just evaluated like a servant. Boaz sees “all that you have done...” in **v11** – we are not evaluated as servants, we are seen as sons and daughters.
 - vii. God see you striving in your role as a father/mother/husband/wife/friend/neighbor, and he sees your faith, and not your checklist.
 - viii. Paul says it like this in **Galatians 4:7** “So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God!”
 - d. The second thing God does is glorify you. Glorify means to upgrade or improve and to make more beautiful. You are more than a servant and more than a daughter, you are a bride! This is an ongoing reality for the Christian.
 - e. Where does the idea of bride come from in this text? It comes from being under the wing meaning being covenanted to God. **Ezekiel 16:8** “When I passed by you again and saw you, behold, you were at the age for love, and I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness; I made my vow to you and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord God, and you became mine.”
 - f. The bride is a glorified daughter! A Bride is still a daughter, plus she has God as her Husband!
 - i. A bride is a daughter that gets adorned and dressed up in ceremony.
 - ii. A Bride is a daughter who can be fruitful and multiply.
 - iii. A Bride does more than inherit like a daughter, she shares all the wealth now.

- iv. The Bride has intimate knowledge of her groom that the daughter does not have.
 - v. The Bride sits next to the throne of God.
- g. All of us here today, regardless of our marital status are Jesus's bride if we have faith in Him. Whatever our difficulty might be if we're not married here on earth right now, does not change the fact that Jesus calls you His bride!
- h. If we seek shelter under His wings we are more than mere servants, we are more than sons and daughters, we are being shaped into the holy bride of Christ.
- i. When you approach God with faith, You are shaped as a Christian husband, to be a better husband than you thought. You are shaped as a wife to be better than the definition you thought you had as a wife. You are being shaped to have a better working definition of a student, an employee, a friend, a neighbor. God matures us to a more complete and full definition of those terms.
- 8. Please hear what I'm not saying to you today.
 - a. I am not at all criticizing Ruth's attitude and posture to Boaz. Ruth is the exemplary Christian as I've stated. And time and again in the NT both Jesus and Paul refer to us as servants and slaves. Yes, we are servants and we are to take that role for we are not greater than our Master as Jesus has said. Ruth calls herself a servant in **v13** and that's a very good posture to have towards God because it's a posture of humility.
 - i. But posture is not the same as standing. Attitude is not the same as class.
 - b. And yes, absolutely, it would have been enough if God only had us as servants. Yes, it would still be infinite love if God had only ever made us to be servants of His Holy awesomeness.
 - c. But! If God had done that, we would have been like the winged cherubim and the seraphim. We would be assigned to guard and protect and serve God in this way, but only ever that. We wouldn't be maturing!
 - d. And that's just it. God went way beyond that by making us in His image and making us sons of God, daughters of God, and making us all His bride. Here's the thing I don't want to leave you with- I don't want to leave you here thinking you are just a heavenly spiritual being. A mere servant. You are way, way, more than that. God has adopted you into His Family as an heir, and He has covenanted Himself to you through your faith in Him.
- 9. So HTSWL?
 - a. First if you are not a Christian and you are listening to this, or if you are not committed to Jesus, if you are on the fence listening to this, please hear the invitation God is giving you today. Simply stop fighting what God is already been doing. God got you here to church or to this sermon like how he got Ruth in the same field as Boaz. Simply give your heart to Jesus in faith, find your identity and your rest in Jesus.
 - b. If you are a Christian, then the application is simple. Be like Ruth in your posture, which is, to act as a thankful servant, but also know that you are of a different class. A loved son or daughter. And know that you are loved as a bride.
 - i. Why does knowing all of this help? Because God loves us more than we can imagine, and He helps us imagine something bigger here.