



The Sharon Star

Just Like Him

By Andy Snoke

Just like Him. God has purposed to have a creation someday, just like Him. In His image. In His likeness. With His nature. With His Authority. Just like Him. Nothing can prevent this from happening. God has decreed it. It is done. It is finished.

Nothing can or will prevent God's divine will from being fulfilled. The fact that Adam sinned and brought sin, death, and separation from God to the world, will not deter the Lord from having His creation in His image.

Job said (Job 42:2) I know that You can do all, and no purpose is withheld from You.

Isaiah proclaims: Isa 55:10-11. For as the rain and the snow comes down from the heavens and do not return there, except it waters the earth and make it bring forth and bud, and give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My Word be, which goes out of My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in what I sent it to do!

We don't see the fullness of this yet. Many Christians still believe that their only hope is to somehow escape this world, to be with the Lord forever, to be perfected after this early life is over. Yet God has decreed that he would have a Son, then a remnant, and eventually a Creation, completely in His likeness and image.

Truly, this is the very reason that God created mankind in the first place. He did not create us to live out our lives simply consuming resources, making money, paying bills, and raising the next generation that would do the same. He created mankind, to be just like Him.

Gen 1:26-27 And God said, let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all the creepers creeping on the earth. And God created the man in is own image; in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female.

The groaning creation is waiting for the deliverance that can and will only come by the appearing of Christ. But the Word of God tells us that His appearing is in His saints, in a remnant called to be just like Him. A remnant called to be completely identified with Christ.

Just about the time that many are planning on being divinely evacuated, Christ will appear in His saints, in that Glorious Church without spot or wrinkle (no stain of age). All of creation is inwardly crying out for this great event.

Rom 8:19-23 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God. For the creation was not willingly subjected to vanity, but through Him subjecting *it*, on hope; that also the creation will be freed from the slavery of corruption to the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that all the creation groans together and travails together until now. And not only *so*, but also we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly expecting adoption, the redemption of our body;

Jesus the Christ (the anointed) was a human reflection of God the Father. His thoughts, His Words, His actions, His Miracles, His Works were all from the Father. Christ was so swallowed up in

God's divine nature that He could say, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father".

I can believe this. But Jesus went on to pray for the disciples at that time, and for His disciples through out all time that:

John 17:10-11 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

John 17:20-23 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *are* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

You see, Jesus the Son of God prayed that his "called out" would have the same experience, and relationship with the Father and God of the universe, that Jesus the Son of God enjoyed. This is revolutionary thinking!!!

The traditional way of thinking, much preached in the Christian world, is that "I am just an old sinner sold under sin, saved by His grace, who's only hope of full deliverance is to die someday or fly away to Glory!" There are good folks who sing about the glories of "flying away"! If that is the experience that God

has reserved for you then God Bless you.

But listen, God has destined a company of man-kind, a remnant, a called out, a glorious Church to: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them;" that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in us; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." Jn 17:23.

God has an order to His restoration plan. It is Christ, then his remnant, then eventually, His Creation. For truly the day will come when "every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God".

1 Corinth. 15:21-22 "For since death *is* through man, also through a Man *is* a resurrection of *the* dead; for as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

But each in *his* own order: Christ, the first fruits; afterward those of Christ at His coming. Then *is* the end, when He delivers the kingdom of God, even the Father, when He makes to cease all rule and all authority and power."

What method is God using to bring perfection to the Church?

There is much that is not known, but what we do see is this:

To be a mature Son of God we must first receive Him. John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, (*even*) to them that believe on his name:

You must be led by the Spirit (take your direction for Life): Rom 8:14 For as

many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

The Church should be operating according to the pattern of the Holy Spirit as outlined in Ephesians. I have taken the liberty of translating the following scriptures using the International Standard Version to clarify some important words:

Eph 4:11-16 "And it is he who gifted some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, and still others to be pastors and teachers,

To perfect the saints, to do the work of ministry, and to build up the body of Christ until all of us are united in the faith and in the full knowledge of God's Son, and until we attain mature adulthood and the full standard of development in Christ.

Then we will no longer be little children, tossed like waves and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, or by clever strategies that would lead us astray. Instead, by speaking the truth in love, we will grow up completely into the one who is the head, that is, into Christ, in whom the whole body is united and held together by every ligament with which it is supplied. As each individual part does its job, the body's growth is promoted so that it builds itself up in love."

You will find that what we call the "five fold apostolic" ministry listed in Eph. 4:11 (Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) main purpose is to:

1. *Perfect the saints.*
2. *Do the work of ministry.*
3. *Build up the body of Christ.*

4. *Bring the body of Christ to mature and full development, the measure of the stature of the Fullness in Christ.*

In other words, to bring the Church into Sonship, full maturity in Christ.

The birth of man-made walls of religious separation, denominationalism, the changing attitudes and structure of the local church by the whims of man's organizational skills, cannot change the pattern that God placed within the Church the "gifts" of the five fold apostolic ministry to the Church.

I encourage all the readers of this article, to give thanks for your wonderful salvation. And at the same time, follow the leading of your heart into the unity of the Spirit in Christ. Fellowship often with those local churches that God has called out, that worship Him in the Spirit, that prophesy from the throne of God, that are built on the foundation of Christ and his gifted ministries to the Church. Let us long to be like Him! Let us present our bodies and our wills on His altar as a willing sacrifice, that Christ may all in all in us. Let us become the place where the Spirit of God has taken up complete residency.

Eph 2:19-22 That is why you are no longer strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises into a holy sanctuary in the Lord. You, too, are being built in him along with the others into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

In Adversity God Is There

By Crafton Lewis

A wonderful story is told in the book of Ruth, in which we see adversity and discouragement working hand in hand, as well as God's infinite goodness and purpose at work to bring about His master plan.

In life we are faced with situations, circumstances and conditions which do not always work for us the way we would like them to, but they are at times necessary in the shaping of our lives, especially lives that are yielded to God.

For us human beings the quick fix is what we are more interested in than the

long term or permanent solution. God however, who knows everything, knows the road we must walk, and in His faithfulness, He walks with us despite our ups and downs to safely take us over the desolate lands and troubled waters of life.

We will now focus our attention to the book of Ruth, which I hope will be of some help and even encouragement to you and as a result we will all be better equipped when faced with trying circumstances and what at times looks like the darkest tunnel with no end in sight.

Reading from Ruth chapter 1:1-5. Ruth 1:1 Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.

2 The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion; Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there.

3 Then Elimelech, Naomi's hus-

band, died; and she was left, and her two sons.

4 Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years.

5 Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.

Famine always has its impact. This was a famine for natural food in the land of Bethlehem, in Judah. Of course, food being as important as it is, Elimelech as head of his household with his wife and sons headed to the land of Moab because there was no famine there.

Talking from a spiritual standpoint, we should be as eager and maybe more so, when we begin to feel that famine in our spiritual life to take ourselves up and go into the land of spiritual prosperity where there is no famine or drought. There is where we will be properly fed and nourished with heavenly manna and be able to drink from the well of living water that never shall run dry.

Elimelech did his part by taking his family into a land in which there was food. The time came when he died and Naomi and her two sons now had to make it on their own.

Both sons, Mahlon and Chilion took wives of the Moabites, Orpah and Ruth. Mahlon and Chilion also died now leaving the three women. Life at this point was no bed of roses for Naomi. Adversity became her portion and seemingly, her confidence at that point in time was not really centered on the Lord.

Hearing that Judah was once again prospering, no more famine in the land, Naomi decided it was now time to return. This she wanted to do alone.

Naomi Departs Moab

6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread.

7 Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.

Naomi Pleads With Orpah & Ruth

8 And Naomi said to her two daugh-

ters-in-law, "Go, and return each to her Mother's house. The LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me.

9 "The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband." Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.

10 And they said to her, "Surely we will return with you to your people."

11 But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?"

12 "Turn back, my daughters, go; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons,

13 "would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!"

Naomi's Concern

Let us look at Naomi's state up to this point. We must admit that she was not a selfish woman, but was concerned that her daughters-in-law move on with their lives. She recognized they were still young and could not offer them a future. The best thing, as far as she was concerned, was that they should return to their mother's home where the likelihood of starting life anew seemed a better prospect.

14 Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

15 And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law."

Ruth's Decision & Commitment

16 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.

17 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."

18 When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.

What a wonderful decision and commitment on Ruth's part. Nothing else now mattered but being with her mother-in-law, and to care for her. As

far as Ruth was concerned, Naomi could say what she would but Ruth was not going to leave her. In all the wonderful things Ruth said to Naomi, none stands out more than "AND YOUR GOD, MY GOD." Ruth had a serious heart change. No longer was she willing to serve the god of the Moabites, but a heart conversion had taken place, which would not allow her to walk away from Naomi. Most of all, she could not now walk away from the God of Israel.

Naomi and Ruth in Bethlehem

19 Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, "Is this Naomi?"

It looked like there was a welcoming party to welcome Naomi back home, but she didn't seem too appreciative of their gesture.

Naomi's State

20 But she said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.

21 "I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?"

22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

It is quite clear the frame of mind Naomi was in. Bitterness at that point in time had taken hold of her. No longer was she holding on to her name, NAOMI, which means "pleasant," but instead she adopted another name "mara" which means "bitter". That was the way she felt. It seemed like she felt bitter against God.

Like Naomi, we too can become very bitter, being faced with situations and circumstances that are not pleasant and feel that God has been unfair to us. We become angry with Him and question Him for which, often times, we do not receive an answer. For some, their reaction is, God does not care about me, and God does not love me so they walk away from Him. Their situation however, does not improve; more and more bitterness takes hold of them and, things, behaviour, their health and just about everything begin to deteriorate.

rate. That peace that was once experienced is no longer there but anxiety has taken its place. Yes, the enemy has taken hold so all that is left is turmoil, bitterness, hopelessness; there is no longer faith in God.

God was still on the side of Naomi and thank God she returned to her homeland. In verse 22, So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

God had already made provision, there was food provided in the land. Naomi and Ruth would not go hungry, for it was "the beginning of barley harvest."

You may have left the spiritual homeland too, and gone out to what you thought was greener pasture; but it has not worked for you. Instead, it has brought, maybe, some material benefits at the expense of your spiritual life. Is paying such a high price worth the material gains? Those are only temporal things which sometimes, because of our greed, we allow the enemy to lure us into becoming his bedfellows.

Ruth Chapter 2

As we began our study into this wonderful book of Ruth, we saw some negatives as well as positives. As we continue further in Chapter 2 we will see God showing Himself in a wonderful way, proving to all His awareness of every situation facing Naomi and Ruth. Similiar to the case of Naomi, we are faced with adversity, and we may think or even say, "God has forsaken me," or "God doesn't love me. He works for others, but He cares nothing for me". May I say to you, there is not one of us who has a fraction of God's knowledge. He has a purpose and knows the reason why He allows us to go through some of the things we do. At times we may think Him to be unfair. But because He sees the end from the beginning, He knows just what it takes to make us that precious pearl He wants us to be. As proclaimed in Rom. 8: 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

There is no way Naomi could have thought that God would have brought her to the glorious end to which He did. We are about to see a progressive and

positive turn around as circumstances begin to change and Ruth's role becomes more prominent.

Chapter 2:1 There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz.

2 So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."

3 Then she left, 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 family of Elimelech.

Isn't this a wonderful unfolding of God's hands at work in the lives of Naomi and Ruth without their knowledge? We are told, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way. Ps. 37:23.

Here is a man tremendously wealthy who was related to Elimelech, Naomi's dead husband. At that point, neither Naomi or Boaz are aware of each other, but God certainly was and He was orchestrating things, as He alone can, to make sure that these two faithful women would be well cared for.

I trust we can see the way God was working things out. He did not just drop things in the laps of Naomi and Ruth; Ruth realized food was needed and felt her part was to go in search of it. Not to be a beggar, not to use the circumstances that befell them to play on the emotions of the public to get some hand outs. But she purposed she would earn their keeps and did set out to do so. I dare say the spirit of God was with her in no uncertain way even though she may not have been conscious of this.

As so often is the case with us and just as we too are sometimes not aware of His leading, so it was in Ruth's case as we see in verse 3..."And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech." Again, I quote that scripture from Ps. 37:23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD...it was God who directed Ruth's feet to the field of Boaz. It was God who put in the heart of Boaz the favour she found with him.

Boaz Meets Ruth

4 Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they

answered him, "The LORD bless you!"

How nice, with such salutations, Boaz and his workers were demonstrating their consciousness and awareness of the Lord being with them and the blessings that come from Him.

5 Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?"

6 So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, "It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab.

7 "And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house."

8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women.

9 "Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn."

What immediate favour Ruth found with Boaz. Ruth from this point on had no need to worry. The God whom she had taken to be her God was making the way for her and just as we read in Phil. 4:19 and my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

We can see way back there, God demonstrating His faithfulness to those who will trust in Him. He has not changed; to us He has promised to supply all of our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

I would like to make an observation; for some of us, our needs being supplied is someone else doing all the work and they bring all we want to us without us having to move one stroke.

Ruth was willing to toil as God opened the way to her needs being met. Boaz provided the opportunity for her to be a partaker of the substance with which God had blessed him. Yes, God provides manna, but some of us are too lazy to go and gather it. Ruth was so grateful to Boaz; here is what she did.

10 So she fell on her face, bowed down 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 And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before.

12 "The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."

Ruth recognized that what was happening to her was something out of the ordinary, and as a foreigner, certainly that made it worse; she was not at all entitled to any of this, so why are you being so kind to me Boaz?

Word gets around my child, I can hear Boaz saying. Yes friends, word does get around. Above all, the all seeing God, the all knowing and all wise God, the compassionate God, the God who is no man's debtor is never in debt to any one and will use whosoever He wills to fulfill His promise.

Boaz also was aware of God's hands of blessings upon Ruth. He recognized that the Lord, who had become her refuge, was the one showering blessings upon her. At the same time, he was allowing himself to be used of God to be that blessing.

Ruth, I am sure never thought the things she had done, all of her kindnesses shown to Naomi and no doubt to the rest of the family, would have had such a spinoff. The positive effects of her kindness and faithfulness was now beginning to reap dividends.

Let us be ever mindful, let us be a caring, loving and a giving people, not because of what benefits we may hope to reap in the natural. Rather let the Holy Spirit burn these things into our heart so that we can make a difference wherever we may be and not looking back for what we may get out of our being nice or helpful. Let it be the work of the Spirit of God in our lives. He is the rewarder.

13 Then she said, "Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants."

14 Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, "Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar." So she sat beside the reapers,

and he passed parched grain to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back.

15 And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her.

16 "Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."

God's measure is so different to man's. Boaz was, (I hope we can see), the instrument in God's hand. He was not withholding any of the blessings which God wanted Ruth to be the recipient of. You see, she gave her all. We are seeing the principles of Luke 6:38 played out. "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

17 So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

18 Then she took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied.

More and more the qualities of this young woman are seen. She demonstrates her thoughtfulness and care for her mother-in-law by reserving some of the very food shared with her at meal time. Yes, indeed, she must have been a real jewel.

19 And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz."

20 Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed be he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!" And Naomi said to her, "This man is a relation of ours, one of our close relatives."

21 Ruth the Moabitess said, "He also said to me, 'You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'"

22 And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet

you in any other field."

23 So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

Ruth's return home after her day's work was the source of very important information to Naomi and also to Ruth. Naomi was aware of the customs of her people and the responsibility that went with it, as well as recognizing God's part in bringing Boaz and Ruth together.

I believe there is much we can all learn from this wonderful story, and may I add, a real life story of how God can change circumstances and situations to work out in us His perfect and divine will.

Recap

In the two previous chapters of this inspiring book, one could not help but notice how much adversity both Naomi and Ruth faced, as well as evidence that God was working behind the scenes, little by little, providing for them and preparing the way for the greater blessings ahead.

We continue in chapter 3:1-2.

Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you?"

2 "Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.

Naomi's concern and interest in Ruth was such that she wanted her to have a good, secure and comfortable life. You would notice, Ruth was looked upon by Naomi as a daughter. Every good mother wants the best for her daughter. Because of the law of kinsman redemption, Naomi was doing her part by instructing and guiding Ruth.

Kinsman Redemption

Let us first see what is said about kinsman redemption. For that I refer to Deut. 25: 5-6 (-10) "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.

6 "And it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel." This was the law of kinsman redemption.

Let us return to the book of Ruth 3:3-4. Naomi is now giving Ruth ten steps of guidance and directions to follow.

3 "Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.

4 "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's Response

The following response from Ruth is so wonderful. In her humility, in her submissiveness, in her obedience, this was her response:

5 "...All that you say to me I will do."

6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her.

This is what many of us lack in our lives; failure to listen to good council and follow instructions. Some of us have a tendency to think, I don't want you to tell me what I should or should not do; I will do what I want, how I want, and when I please.

God did not make us to be independent, but dependent. God saw Adam was alone and he needed help, so He gave him a helper in the person of Eve.

We need each other and believe it or not, we really can't get by without each other. Some of us just need to get down from our lofty perch, get pride out of the way and take the humble path, for God resists the proud but to the humble He gives grace. 1 Pet. 5:5.

Boaz's Merriment

7 And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.

8 Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet.

9 And he said, "Who are you?" So she answered, "I am Ruth, your maid-servant. Take your maid-servant under your wing, for you are a close relative."

Proposal

This was Ruth's proposal of marriage to Boaz, seeing he was a near kinsman. Both Ruth and Boaz were

good moral people, this is evident. It is said that women in the east, when going to be with their lawful wedded husbands would through modesty and as a token, showing their subjection to them, would go to the foot of the bed, gently raise the covers, and creep under them up to their place.

In Ruth's case, her part was to uncover the feet of Boaz and lie down until he would discover there is someone there, then she would be told what to do.

Redemption

10 Then he said, "Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich.

11 "And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman.

Testimony

What a wonderful testimony of Ruth. She was truly a virtuous woman and this was known by all. God delights and takes pleasure not only in women of virtue, but also in men bearing the same standards.

It was not a difficult thing for Boaz to go before the elders and the people and declare his intention.

O yes, living holy before the Lord will bring great benefits. God sees to it that faithfulness is always rewarded. There was however, what seemed to be one hurdle to cross over; there was one other kinsman who had the right of redemption before Boaz.

12 "Now it is true that I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I.

13 "Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be that if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you; good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the LORD lives! Lie down until morning."

Redemption of Property

Leviticus 25: 23-34 tells how this is done. I will read verses 23-25. "The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me.

24 "And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land.

25 "If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what

his brother sold.

Let us return once again to Ruth 3: 16-18. So when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "Is that you, my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her.

17 And she said, "These six ephahs of barley he gave me; for he said to me, 'Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'"

18 Then she said, "Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day."

Ruth returns home after what appears to be a fruitful encounter with Boaz and reports to Naomi what transpired. With assurance, Naomi encouraged Ruth that the day would not go by, without there being an outcome to the matter.

Boaz Negotiates

Chapter 4:1-4 Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, "Come aside, friend, sit down here." So he came aside and sat down.

2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down.

3 Then he said to the close relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech.

4 "And I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy it back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am next after you.'" And he said, "I will redeem it."

5 Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance."

6 And the close relative said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem it."

Things were beginning to fall in place as Boaz, the next kinsman and the ten elders sat together to discuss the redemption of the property of Elimelech, and Ruth's future which also involved Naomi's future.

For a moment it looked like Boaz would have lost out, as the near kinsman seemed ready to conclude the business at

hand. But on the point of taking Ruth to be his wife, he was unable to do so, thus making the way clear for Boaz to purchase the property and at the same time, take Ruth to be his wife.

Boaz, it seemed, was an older man and an honourable man at that. With agreement now reached, we continue reading;

7 Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was a confirmation in Israel.

8 Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself." So he took off his sandal.

Agreement

9 And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi.

10 "Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day."

With the transaction finished, the way was clear for Boaz and Ruth to be married. It was done properly and thus had the blessings of all of the people.

Blessings

11 And all the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. The LORD make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem.

12 "May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the LORD will give you from this young woman."

What a wonderful way to start a life together, without dissent, Boaz and Ruth had the blessings of the people upon them. A wonderful prophecy was given which indicated the birth of a son. Truly God was showing Himself mighty as things continued to happen in the lives of these three characters which brought honour and glory to God.

Boaz and Ruth

13 So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son.

14 Then the women said to Naomi,

"Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel!

15 "And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him."

Naomi's Blessing

What more can one ask for? Naomi was now blessed beyond her wildest dreams. She seemed to have lost all, but God remembered her. In her old age, God gave her a tremendous gift of a grandson that the name of her son would live on.

Looking Back

Can we look back a moment? Remember Naomi in her bitterness, when everything seemed to have gone wrong for her? Do you remember her in her anguish, her time of famine, yes, in her adversity? Remember when Ruth was the only bright spot in her life? Everything that could have gone wrong went wrong, but God was still there.

What About You?

How about you folks? Are you facing circumstances that may seem similar? Are you feeling weary and wanting to give up? God has not given up on you. He is closer to you than you can ever imagine. This is not the time to give up. God will not give you more than you can bear. Be confident in this knowledge; God is working something out in your life that is for your good. Naomi's hard trials have now turned into joy.

Naomi's Joy

16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him.

Can you imagine how soothing, how comforting, how wonderful, how joyful she must have felt? I can hear her saying, Lord, it was worth it all. All of the trials and hardships, thank you; it was worth it.

17 Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "There is a son born to Naomi." And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Could Naomi in her wildest dreams thought that she would have such a tremendous role in the coming forth of the king of Israel and much more than that, the messiah?

Ruth, a gentile, a Moabite, who turned to the Lord and was so faithful; God honoured her faithfulness. Her good deeds did not go unnoticed. Her

simplicity, her submission, her heeding to council and her obedience were all taken into account and God rewarded her richly.

Boaz, as wealthy as he was, did not frown upon Ruth and Naomi, but opened his heart to them and blessed them with material things God provided him as well as fulfilling his role as a near kinsman. Yes, the blessings of the Lord makes rich and there is no sorrow added to it. Prov. 10:22.

Genealogy

18 Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron;

19 Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab;

20 Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon;

21 Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed;

22 Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.

Mat 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

2 Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.

3 Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram.

4 Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon.

5 Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse,

6 and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.

Conclusion

You can of course read the rest of the genealogy, but the point I am making is, amid all of the turmoil and hardships, yes, through adversity if you will, from a most unlikely source, through that genealogy, God's only begotten Son came into the world.

Thank God for His tremendous plan which was not thwarted, but was fulfilled and today, we are made partakers of His divine nature.

Do not take lightly the things which may be happening in our life. Do not become discouraged when things don't seem to be going right. Turn your eyes upon Jesus; behold His beauty and His glory; let the things of earth become strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace. His grace is all sufficient regardless the adversity. God will see you through.

DATES OF IMPORTANCE

Indiana Young People's Meeting Dec. 27 - 30, 2004
 North Battleford New Year's
 Young People's Gathering .. Dec. 29, 2004 - Jan. 2, 2005
 Big Spring, Texas Jan. 28 - 30, 2005
 North Carolina Winter Camp Feb. 25-27, 2005
 Feast North Battleford March 24-27, 2005
 Illinois Gathering (King's House) May 6-8, 2005
 Camp North Battleford July 2-10, 2005

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CALLED HOME

Ivan Bahsler
 September 3, 2004
 Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

James (Jim) Doerksen
 September 16, 2004
 Winkler, Manitoba

Earl Erb
 October 13, 2004
 Stratford, Ontario

Richard Thomas
 October 19, 2004
 Mabaruma, Northwest Region,
 Guyana, South America

INDIANA YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEETING December 2004

Mon. evening, Dec. 27 thru Fri., noon, Dec. 31, 2004.
 Mt. St. Francis Retreat Center, St. Francis, Indiana, 47146, phone (812) 923-8817.
 Location just 10 miles from downtown Louisville, KY. All under one roof, gym,
 recreation rooms, hundreds of acres of woods and hills to hike and sled on. 53
 private rooms w/bath and air conditioning. **How to Get There.** From West (St.
 Louis, etc.) I 64 to U.S. I 50 West, go 2 miles on US I 50 to 2nd set of flashing
 lights, the center is on the left. From North: I 65 South to I 265 West 10 miles to
 U.S. I 50 exit, go 2 miles on I 50 to 2nd set of flashing lights, center on left. From
 South and East:
 I 64 West thru Louisville across Ohio River then 4 miles to U.S. I 50 East highway.
 Go 2 miles on I 50 to 2nd set of flashing lights. Center is on left. **Come one and
 all, bring your friends and let's have a great time learning and sharing
 together.**

Bring: Bibles, notebooks, pens and pencils, personals, extra towels and
 washcloths if desired,
 snacks for after service.

Contact Ken Jones, 190 Grove Ave., Hampshire, IL 60140
 Phone: 847-683-3448 or email: KenBrenJones@juno.com
 Costs: Adults \$65, Teens \$54 (11-17) Children \$32 (2-10)

NORTH BATTLEFORD NEW YEAR'S YOUTH RETREAT Dec. 29, 2004 - Jan. 2, 2005

As part of Sharon Schools Educational Program the North Battleford Young
 Peoples' Gathering will begin with the supper meal Wednesday, Dec. 29, 2004
 and will run through until after the noon meal Sunday, Jan. 2, 2005.

Bring your usual things: bedding, towel, toilet articles, warm clothing,
 musical instrument, Bible, notebooks, skates and broomball brooms
 and hockey gear, gym clothes and footwear.

We thank the Mothers for their past contributions of baking and suggest
 that similar offerings
 would be gratefully received again this year.

(If the Elders feel to send any financial help from the churches,
 it will be greatly appreciated).

This invitation is extended to teenagers and older singles and young married
 couples. We would like to encourage older singles to attend with a focus on their
 ministry and issues. We also would like to encourage young married couples to
 come for fellowship and to assist with the ministry.

Please have one of your young people write at an early date stating
 approximately the number of boys and girls hoping to attend.

Send to Sharon Schools,
 Box 878, North Battleford, Sask. S9A 2Z3.
 Registration Fee: \$25.00 on arrival.

Sharon Children's Homes and Schools
 Box 878, North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada, S9A 2Z3

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