

- pauper to survive. Again, we see the virtue of humility.
- 3) She was respectful. She asked for permission before entering the farmer's field (v.7).
  - 4) She was dependent on grace or favour (v.2). This too complements her humility. She did not presume that the farmers must let her glean (v.10). She requested their grace or favour that they might allow her to glean. *She did not push herself on others. She did not demand her rights.*
  - 5) She was submissive to Naomi's wishes (v.2). Though she was a grown woman, she so respected Naomi that she sought her permission to go glean. She obeyed Naomi's wishes (v.22). *Submission and obedience are character qualities that are becoming rare yet are extremely important.*
  - 6) She worked until evening without quitting (v.17). She finished the work of beating out the grain. She continued this work until the harvest was ended (v.23). *Quitters lack character! We must not be quitters. If you often quit a game, a task, a project, a ministry, or a job prematurely, you lack character. When the work gets tough, the tough keep going. Learn to persevere.*
  - 7) Ruth generously shared her grain with Naomi (v.18). *Sharing and giving are excellent character qualities. The devil wants us to be selfish. God wants us to be generous.*
    - ✧ *Speaking of his reputation, D. L. Moody said, "If I take care of my character, my reputation will take care of itself."*

**Conclusion:** We have briefly examined the quality character of both Boaz and Ruth. They were not perfect, but they were people with quality character. *If God examined your character this evening, what would he find? Would He be able to complement your character or would He find you lacking?* This evening we each ought to note character qualities that we need to maintain, some that we must improve, and others that we must develop. With God's help, we can be men, women and children of quality character.

**Song:** More Like the Master - 325

# Quality Character

29 November 2020 PM – Ruth 2:1-23 – Ru20 – Scott Childs

**Introduction:** Character is an inner determination to do right.

*"Character is being, doing, and pursuing what is right simply because it is the wise thing to do."*—Unknown Charles Spurgeon once spoke these wise words, *"A good character is the best tombstone. Those who loved you, and were helped by you will remember you. Carve your name on hearts, not marble."*

That is good advice.

**Transition:** This evening I want us to examine the character of the two main actors in the story of Ruth in the hopes that it will stir each of us to develop quality character.

## 1. Examine the Character of Boaz

### a. He was a God-fearing man

- 1) We remember that the story of Ruth took place during the years of the Judges. Many people during those years strayed from the Lord. We find no indication that Boaz was among the spiritually careless of his day.
- 2) Boaz had trusted the Lord during the famine and remained in Bethlehem.
- 3) He spoke openly of the Lord in everyday conversations with his workmen. (v.4)
- 4) He spoke unashamedly of the Lord before Ruth, the Moabite stranger who gleaned in his field. (v.12)
- 5) He blessed Ruth in the name of the Lord. (Ruth 3:10)
- 6) He sealed his promise in the name of the Lord, (Ruth 3:13).

✎ *God wants our character to be such that we will trust Him during difficult times and trials of life. He also wants us to speak of His name fearlessly. How often we shy away from mentioning the Lord's name in public for fear that people will think we are strange. How much better it would be if we always spoke openly of the Lord. That takes good character.*

### b. He was a mighty man of wealth

- 1) We must take a close look at this phrase to gain a full understanding of Boaz' character.

- 2) The word “*mighty*” speaks of one who is of great strength or of great authority. He is powerful. The word often describes a brave and powerful warrior.
- 3) The word translated “*wealth*” has many meanings. The primary meanings include strength, might, efficiency, and wealth. TWOT defines it as “might, strength, power, able, valiant, virtuous, valor, army, host, forces; riches, substance, wealth; etal.”
- 4) Whether Boaz was extremely wealthy as the KJV implies or was simply a man of mighty noble character is difficult to ascertain. He appears to be a prosperous farmer with servants and money with which to redeem land. However, his actions clearly reveal that he was also a man of mighty noble character.
  - a) We have already noted that he had a godly character.
  - b) He treated his reapers with respect (v.4). *The way we treat those under us says much about our character. If we act like we are better or more important than others, that is a crack in our character.*
  - c) He showed grace and kindness toward Ruth when she gleaned in his field (v.8-9). He could have urged her to move on to another field, but instead, he invited her to glean in his fields. He told her to abide close to his maidens. He assured her safety. He offered her water to drink. *Are we that kind to foreigners and new people we meet?*
  - d) He commended Ruth’s commitment (v.11-12). That must have been a great encouragement to Ruth, who felt so strange in this new land! *Being an encourager is a quality character trait.*
  - e) He was hospitable to Ruth (v.14). Boaz thought of the needs this young foreign woman would have and he sought to make her comfortable. He treated her as he would like to be treated if he was in her shoes. *That displays real character.* (Cf., Mt 7:12).
  - f) He was generous to Ruth (v.15-16). To allow her to glean among the standing sheaves was a trusted

privilege. It would be easy to steal from the sheaves. This shows that he believed the testimony of her commitment that he had heard (v.11-12). Here we also find one of the noteworthy phrases of the book. He commanded the reapers to *let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her*. They were intentionally to drop some handfuls of grain for her to pick up. *Generosity is a special character quality, especially when selfishness is much easier.*

- 5) At this point in the story, there is no indication that Boaz treated Ruth special because he was secretly in love with her. That seems unlikely. She was a Moabitess – he was a Jew. She was a poor widow – he was a prosperous farmer. She was young – he was old.

## 2. Examine the Character of Ruth

### a. She had inner strength

- 1) In the previous chapter, we have already noted her loyal commitment to Naomi.
- 2) We learned of her desire to place her trust in the Lord.
- 3) She was humble (v.10). She did not try to lift up herself. She willingly honoured others. She felt undeserving of recognition. *Humility is not easy, but it is a wonderful character quality to acquire.*
- 4) Her good testimony had spread quickly in Bethlehem (v.11-12).
- 5) She was very polite (v.13). She appreciated comforts received and kind words spoken. She admitted that she was not like the Jewish handmaidens. *Politeness is a character quality that should not be lacking in our lives.*

### b. She was a willing worker

- 1) She asked if she could go glean in the fields (v.2).
- 2) She was humble enough to work among the paupers of the land. There was no Centrelink or welfare for the widows, orphans and poor of the land. However, God had ordered that farmers allow the poor to glean produce dropped in their fields, vineyards and orchards. Though this was a humiliating exercise, it was an honest way for a