



The UNLIMITED People

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DIVINE ASSISTANCE BY GRACE

Exercising Faith. Enjoying Favour, Embracing God's Faithfulness

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.... 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?" Ruth 2: 1-3 & 10.

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Our theme for this month is Divine Assistance by Grace. The character of focus is Ruth. On how God assisted her to become relevant despite a sorrowful and pitiable beginning. She exercised faith in believing in the God of Naomi. That faith released favour into her life, resulting in her enjoyment of the faithfulness of God.

The truth is that everyone needs help. You must however seek for the help from the right source. Ruth did and we are reading about her today. If you and I follow the same steps like Ruth, we shall be celebrated too and our story shall end in celebration and joy. The underlisted are the lessons that be learnt from the narrative on Ruth.

EXERCISING FAITH

To exercise faith, you need to understand what faith is. Firstly, faith is how you have a relationship with God (Eph 2: 8-9). This relationship is based on the believe of what God did through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection for you. It is not having an intellectual fact about God and his promises. Note that the devil (demons) believes and tremble too (James 2: 19). Faith therefore is receiving Jesus Christ as he is (John 1: 12). Secondly, the popular biblical scripture defining faith declares that is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Heb. 11: 1-2). This statement is a paradox. How do have an assurance of what you hope for? How do you have evidence of things not seen? Afterall, evidence must be physical, tangible and/or provable. How then did Ruth exercise faith and what can be learnt from her?

Faith is Personal and Purposeful

Ruth demonstrated faith that is personal and purposeful. When her colleague left back to Moab, Ruth pleaded with Naomi not to tell her to go back to Moab. Why did Ruth say this?

And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." ¹⁶ But Ruth said: "Entreat[e] 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 [f]was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her Ruth 1:15-18 NKJV

Her declaration was that the God of Naomi (who is the God of the

Israelites) would be her God (Ruth 1: 15-17). Only death would separate Ruth from the God of Naomi whom she is now believing in. The scripture recorded that when Naomi saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking to her (Ruth 1: 18). Ruth did not go back with her colleague.

Faith is Proactive and Practical

The statement of Ruth in Ruth 1: 15-18 indicated that she is prepared for whatever may happen in the future. She was resolute in her decision to follow God. Such is expected of you as a child of God. Notice that Ruth and Naomi returned to Jerusalem in the beginning of the Barley Harvest. However, in Chapter two, she made a move to glean after the harvesters. She was not idle or slothful. Her movement was divinely directed such that she found herself in the field belonging to Boaz (Ruth 2: 2-4). My prayer for you is that as you act by faith, God will direct your path in Jesus name. For Ruth, after the famine, then came the feasting. Such shall be your testimony as you walk with God by faith in Jesus name.

The faith demonstrated by Ruth can be likened to that of the three Hebrew men (Dan. 3: 16-27). They knew of the consequence of their refusal to bow down to the golden image of the king. Yet, they stood firm with their faith in God who would deliver them. Peradventure, if God did not, they would not deny their faith in God. What a proactive and practical way to demonstrate faith. Notice that for Ruth, she moved from famine to feasting and for the three Hebrew men, they moved unto promotions and prominence from persecution.

ENJOYING FAVOUR

Favour can be described as gaining approval, acceptance, special benefits, or blessings! There is also a close connection between the word favour and grace/ mercy. Psalm 84:11 (NIV) says, For the Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.

Favour of Supernatural

Notice that by divine approval, Ruth moved to the field of Boaz to glean. Gleaning is the act of collecting leftover crops from farmers' fields after they have been commercially harvested or on fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest. It is a practice described in the Hebrew Bible that became a legally enforced entitlement of the poor. The biblical reference is this: *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. 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” (Leviticus 19:9-10)

It is this divine provision that Ruth acted upon which made her to move out to glean and incidentally she found herself in the field belonging to Boaz, a relation of Naomi's late husband. People may call it coincidence, but I see it as divine arrangement. This is affirmed by the remark of Naomi to Ruth when she asked in whose field Ruth gleaned. *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 [d]our close relatives.” Ruth 2: 20.* It is therefore not a coincidence; it is divinely orchestrated.

Favour with Sons of Men

Just as favour with the Supernatural God is necessary, favour with the sons of men is also essential. In the narrative of Ruth, God divinely directed her steps to the field of Boaz. Thereafter, there was contact between Ruth and Boaz.

The favour that Ruth enjoyed is described in her words in the scripture under review. *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?” Ruth 2: 10 NKJV*

Notice that Ruth never expected that she could enjoy this type of treatment being a stranger. This is what God can do to anyone who exhibits faith in Him. God makes favour to abound to such persons.

Favour brings Protection and Provision

Notice how the scripture described the provision and protection that Ruth enjoyed.

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 [b]glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not [c]reproach her. 16 Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her.” Ruth 2: 14-16 NKJV

Favour provided food for Ruth and the bible recorded that she ate and was satisfied. She even kept some back (v.14). This is favour indeed for a stranger coming to this field to glean for the first time. Notice the instruction of Boaz to the reapers to allow grains to fall purposely for her (v.16). This will make her get more grains than what is usual. It is my prayer for everyone reading this bulletin that you shall be adequately supplied in Jesus name. Favour shall release to you much more than the usual in Jesus name.

Favour also gave Ruth protection. As it has been said earlier, Ruth was a stranger in Bethlehem. She is a Moabite and hence is open to molestation. However, the instruction of Boaz to the reapers was that she should not be molested or reproached (v.15). My understanding of reproach is that whatever will make you unapproachable is a reproach. I therefore, decree into your life that you shall not be reproached in Jesus name.

EMBRACING GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

The faithful hand of God was noticed in the narrative of Ruth. Aside the provision and protection experienced by Ruth mentioned above, God's faithfulness was noticed in the entrenching of Ruth into the Davidic lineage, which eventually is

the Messianic lineage (Ruth 4: 17-22 & Mat. 1: 5ff).

Restoration of 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. Ruth 4: 13 NKJV

In Chapter One of the book of Ruth, Ruth became a widow when her husband died in Moab. She came into Bethlehem, believing in the God of Naomi but with no iota of what will become of her. However, by divine favour she found herself in the field of Boaz, a near kinsman to her late husband. In Chapter four, Ruth became married to Boaz. What a restoration!

God is still in the business of restoration in various spheres of life. Limiting our discussion to family life, the Bible recorded the story of the restoration of

Rejoicing of Naomi

14 Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a [f]close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel! 15 And may he be to you a restorer of life and a [g]nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him.” 16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him. 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 Ruth 4: 14-16

The story ended in rejoicing for Naomi. The women who rejoiced with Naomi described her situation as a restoration of life to her in her old age. There was no iota of hope that what happened could happen. Recall the hopeless situation of Naomi in chapter one.

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!” Ruth 1: 11-13

At the end of the story, Naomi is regarded as the mother of Obed in this text. What a change that only God can make to happen. This is to make every reader know that no situation is too pathetic that God cannot revive, revisit and restore. Your story will end in rejoicing in Jesus name.

Conclusion

It is no secret what God can do is a song rendered many years ago by an artist. What God has done for others, He can and do for you if you are a genuine believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Today, we have examined the life of Ruth. You can be the next to have a testimony as you grow in your faith in the Lord and favour is deployed to you. Do not lose hope.

Prayer Points

1. My faith in God shall continue to grow in Jesus name. It shall not weather.
2. Direct my path, Lord as I walk by faith with you.
3. My faith in God shall move me from famine to feasting, from being despised to dignity.
4. Favour of adequate supply is my portion in Jesus name.
5. No situation will molest me in Jesus name.
6. Through faith and favour, I shall be fully restored in Jesus name.
7. Lord Jesus, restore life unto my life in Jesus name.