

# Handfuls On Purpose

## Studies in the Book of Ruth

### Chapter Eleven

## Boaz as a Type of Christ

“<sup>4</sup> And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD *be* with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee. <sup>5</sup> Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel *is* this? <sup>6</sup> And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It *is* the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: <sup>7</sup> And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house. <sup>8</sup> Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: <sup>9</sup> *Let* thine eyes *be* on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of *that* which the young men have drawn” (Ruth 2:4-9).

In this text we see Boaz as a type of Christ. We see him from two different perspectives. We see him as Lord over his servants, but yet in a working relationship with those servants. We see him in the beginnings of his relationship with Ruth. Here we see him as a man of generosity, compassion, tenderness and sacrificial love as he seeks to bring Ruth to spiritual maturity. That is what goes through my mind when I think of Boaz in this text.

Parents, have you ever stopped to ask yourselves what goes through your child’s mind at the mention of your name? Have you ever thought how your child’s perspective of you as a father or mother changes as he grows up and how he begins to see you differently in different stages of his maturing process?

Children begin to formulate opinions of their parents very early in their lives based upon how we interact with them and respond to what they do. Their opinions of their parents develop through their experiences in how we meet their needs, how we discipline them when they disobey and encourage them when they obey. There are a number of stages children go through as they grow to maturity.

1. The stage of infancy and innocence
2. The stage of stumbling (the terrible twos)
3. The stage of bumbling (3-7)
4. The stage of mumbling (8-12)
5. The stage of grumbling (teens)
6. The stage of rambling (young adulthood)
7. The stage of maturity (adulthood; sometimes never achieved)

In the Bible, there are seven distinct periods of time called *Dispensations* in which man is tested by God in respect to obedience to His will. When we take an overall view of these Dispensations of God, it is as if we are watching God’s creation grow from infancy to adulthood in human responsibility and in its relationship to its Creator.

In the Garden of Eden, mankind is like an innocent baby. When they sinned, they had their first taste of both God’s love and grace. Immediately after that they got their first taste of God’s disciplinary action upon their sin. We learn early in the development of mankind that because of sin, man *grows away* from God not towards Him. The disciplinary action is intent on correcting that movement (negative growth) away from God. All of this effected how man viewed God and the continuing development of their perspective of Him over the years of their lives. When discipline failed to correct that perspective, their knowledge of God became more and more distorted and their rebellion became more and more severe.

Therefore, as we move historically through Scripture, we see man's perspective of God being more and more distorted and perverted and we see a loving, compassionate God continuing to do whatever is necessary to move man back to growth towards Him (spiritual maturity). Sometimes this required some very harsh actions (like the flood). Yet, with each new Dispensation, God would begin again with new representative people who had been restored to the place of spiritual maturity with the corrected understanding of Who God is and then they are given the responsibility to go forth and "replenish the earth" (Genesis 1:28) with the responsibility of teaching the next generation about Who God is and about His expectations of them. The history of the world is the history of failure in this simple responsibility.

In the Genesis creation mankind sees God from the perspective of awe, bigger than life, as a child (an infant) must see his parents, yet with little comprehension of what he sees. So, immediately a child begins to take his parents for granted.

A child's perspective of his parents and the opinions he formulates about them are developed from how his parents interact with him and relate to him through love, meeting needs, discipline and character molding. Yet when children become adults, they seldom look back at that whole process to re-evaluate what the process of their childhood development made them. Instead we presuppose our character is what it ought to be because it was learned by experience and because we are what we are.

As a teenager I viewed my father as hard, perhaps even cruel. From my perspective, his whole purpose in life seemed to be intent on eliminating anything I might enjoy. When I became an adult, I understood he was simply trying to protect me from my impulsive, quick tempered self at a time in my life when any one mistake might affect me for the rest of my life.

Today I look back on that same man I once viewed as hard and unloving and I see him as a man of tenderness, genuine love (not the emotional kind) and continuing grace. Why grace? Because even though I was fighting him all the way he never quit being my dad. Even though I resisted him at every turn, he loved me enough to keep at it.

This is what God does in bringing us to spiritual maturity. Yet God goes way beyond that. His love goes to extremes that no man could ever go to or even imagine. That is what grace is all about. That is what the God of grace is all about. Sadly, most Christians do not see the God of grace until they come to spiritual maturity. Until then, our perspective of God is locked into whatever level of spiritual growth we are presently in. We will never really appreciate Who God is until we can understand what we deserve compared to what He has given. Then we will understand what the word grace means and we will understand the God of grace.

How many Christians read John 3:16 and see only the benefits to themselves? How many of us really stop to think about the God Who "so loved the world He gave"? He did not give because we deserved His gift. He gave because He loves us. In the book of Ruth, Boaz typifies the God of love and grace. In the book of Ruth, these aspects of God are separated from every other aspect of His character that we might see them as they stand alone.

**Those who knew Boaz, loved and respected him (Ruth 2:4).** That knowledge and respect of Boaz came from years of working with him and the intimate knowledge of his character that came from that relationship. These reapers represent mature believers. There is mutual respect because of Boaz's consistency in his dealings with these people. There is also a degree of intimacy implied in Ruth 2:4 between these men and Boaz. They not only harvested together. They fought together.

The central reason this kind of relationship existed between Boaz and these men was because Boaz was more than just a Lord over the work. He was a partner with them in the work.

<sup>35</sup> And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. <sup>36</sup> But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few; <sup>38</sup> Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:35-38).

Jesus is the “Lord of the harvest” (v 38). He is also a co-worker in the harvest (v 35). That is the continuing promise in the Great Commission.

“<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. <sup>19</sup> Go ye therefore, and **teach** all nations {or, make disciples, or, Christians of all nations}, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: <sup>20</sup> Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:18-20).

Although we live in the Age of Grace, we are not on vacation. The believer’s partnership with Christ is a working partnership. The work of the ministry is most effectively done by spiritually mature believers who have a relationship with God based upon knowledge and experience. That is the pattern established in Scripture.

“<sup>11</sup> And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; <sup>12</sup> For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: <sup>13</sup> Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the **stature** {or, age; refers to spiritual maturity} of the fulness of Christ: <sup>14</sup> That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; <sup>15</sup> But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: <sup>16</sup> From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:11-16).

For over 100 years now, the focus of evangelism has been almost exclusively *production centered* (soul winning, we call this evangelism). This has resulted in many professions of faith, but very few laborers for the harvest, because of the failure to disciple people in the model of ministry (work). Although this type of evangelism seems noble, it has actually proven to be detrimental to the advancement of Christianity.

The context of Ephesians 4:11-16 flows from the truth of Ephesians 4:1. Every believer has a “vocation” in Christ that he is being prepared to fulfill through his local church.

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,” (Ephesians 4:1).

Yet, only mature believers are prepared to be effective ministers (workers) for Christ. Soul winning is only the first step in the “work of the ministry.” The new believer must be brought to understand his need to die to self and live in the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. That is why water baptism is the next step in the Great Commission. Baptized believers are then united to a local church where they will be taught the Word of God, how to live and how to be effective in reaching their world for Christ.

Today’s Christianity has become so enamored with large crowds of people as a measurement of success, we seem grateful for people who are willing to take a few hours out of their busy schedules to come to Sunday service. Sunday services are about equipping, training and preaching to prepare and motivate believers to do the “work of the ministry.” The vast majority of the “work of the ministry” is done outside the church assembly in the world. The greatest spiritual growth is accomplished through doing the work of the ministry along with someone who is spiritually mature.

**God expects mature believers to be involved in doing the “work of the ministry.”** That is defined as preaching the gospel, winning souls, getting them baptized and into a local church where they can be taught the truths of God, how to live for Christ and how to continue the cycle of reproducing disciples for Jesus Christ.

“<sup>28</sup> Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

This verse is not a salvation invitation. The invitation of Matthew 11:28-30 is an invitation to all believers to join Christ in a partnership in the work of the ministry. The “yoke” metaphor is about a working relationship/partnership with Christ. Matthew 11:29 is a description of the Lord Jesus Christ Who is the “Lord of the harvest.”

This working relationship of Christ with believers is in harvesting souls and warring against satanic forces of evil, deception and distortions of God’s character. Notice that Jesus is not a hard taskmaster Who drives His partners beyond their capabilities. He joins Himself with us in the work He has called us to do. If you are suffering from spiritual *burnout*, it is because you have been pulling in your own power. Every time the thought, “I am doing more than my share” springs into your mind, understand that you are either:

1. Getting ahead of Christ (yokefellows must pull together)
2. Working in the flesh (you are not in fellowship with Christ; your not yoked with Christ)

When we become a “yoke” fellow with Christ, then the yoke is easy and the burden light (learn that truth). Yes, the work requires *time* and *effort* on our part or it is not work.

The camaraderie that existed between Boaz (a type of Christ) and his laborers was not by accident. It existed because they worked and fought together. These workers were much more than mere acquaintances or employees of Boaz. They had an intimacy that came from a working relationship. That is the relationship available to all Christians if they are willing to join in the work with Christ.

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**Boaz as a Type of Christ**

1. What visual image do you get of God when you think of Him as He is portrayed in the Garden of Eden? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. What visual image do you get of God when you think of Him as He is portrayed at Mt. Sinai after Israel crossed the Red Sea? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. What visual image do you get of God at the mention of the Cross of Calvary and the crucifixion of the *carpenter's son*? \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. What visual image do you get when you think of Christ and the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20:11-15? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. Which of the above is the correct image of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How does spiritual maturity impact your understanding of the above questions and the progressive development of a Biblical perspective of Who God is and what He is like? \_\_\_\_\_  
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7. Describe your present perspective of Who God is and what He is like? \_\_\_\_\_  
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8. Discuss the difference from your present perspective of God and what it was a number of years ago. \_\_\_\_\_  
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9. When you read John 3:16, what do you see as the focus of the verse? \_\_\_\_\_  
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10. Boaz typifies Christ as a God of love and grace in the book of Ruth. From Ruth 2:4 we can see Boaz was not just Lord over the work, but a \_\_\_\_\_ with his servants in the work.
11. Read Matthew 9:35-38. Jesus is the "Lord of the harvest." According to verse 35, what else is He? \_\_\_\_\_  
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12. What is the practical value to you of your answer to the above question? \_\_\_\_\_  
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13. Explain *Production Centered Evangelism* and why it has proven to be a failure in reaching the world for Christ. \_\_\_\_\_  
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14. Read Matthew 28:18-20. Define *Perfection Centered Evangelism* as you explain the three phases of evangelism from these verses. \_\_\_\_\_

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15. Read Ephesians 4:1 and 11-16. Discuss God's ordained method for Perfection Centered Evangelism to be accomplished. \_\_\_\_\_

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16. What must be accomplished in the life of a believer before he is prepared to effectively "do the work of the ministry"? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. Discuss the difference between worship and the "work of the ministry" and how misunderstanding these two things keep many people from being used of God. \_\_\_\_\_

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18. What is the fastest road to spiritual maturity? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. Read Matthew 11:28-30. Discuss how this statement by Christ is similar to the type of Christ we see in Boaz in Ruth 2:4. \_\_\_\_\_

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20. Define "the work of the ministry" in tangible terms. \_\_\_\_\_

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21. According to Matthew 11:30, what is the qualification before the "yoke is easy and the burden light"?

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22. What two things does all work require?

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