

Introduction

1. Did you hear about the Calvinist who was walking down street one winter & slipped on the ice?
 - a. His feet shot out from under him & he came crashing down in a pile on his back.
 - b. Picking himself up & brushing himself off he uttered, ***I'm glad that's over.***
 - c. It's never a good idea to tell a joke you have to explain. But I decided the risk was worth it.
 - d. Calvinists believe that God has foreordained all things whatsoever comes to pass, Eph. 1.
 - e. So slipping and falling on the ice for this man was not an accident but in God's plan for him.
 - f. So when it happened he was glad that part of the plan was over. Now you can laugh.
2. Regardless of what theological persuasion we have, we can all agree w/words from J. Calvin.
 - a. When once the light of Divine Providence has illumined the believer's soul, he is relieved and set free, not only from the extreme fear and anxiety that formerly oppressed him, but from all care. For as he justly shudders at the idea of chance, so he can confidently commit himself to God.¹ (**Show**)
 - b. There is no chance for the child of God is there? I never say ***Good luck*** to anyone, ever.
 - c. ***Best Wishes***, yes. ***Good luck***, never. No such thing as luck for God's people. (**Title/Text**)

I. God's Providence Directs Circumstances, vv. 1-3.

A. Ruth's Happenstance, v. 3

1. ***As it turned out*** = קרה [qarah] = ***to chance***.² **Doubled. Lit. = Her chance chanced.**
 - a. = ***in modern idiom would be rendered "by a stroke of luck."***³ Erupting w/laughter.
 - b. We know the author doesn't believe in luck. Irony = saying opposite of what mean.
 - c. He's pulling our leg. He wants us to say ***Yeah, right. Tell another funny one.***
2. God providentially directed Ruth's steps right to precise field where she'd meet Boaz.
 - a. If think this was easy, fields in Israel were a patchwork like a quilt pattern.⁴ (**Show**)
 - b. A landowner might have several fields disconnected from one another.
 - c. To wander onto the correct field by accident was highly improbable.
 - d. It is very clear God ordered the circumstances so Ruth ended up where He wanted.

B. Ruth's Unaware Of It, v. 3

1. Did you notice that Ruth is totally unaware of what is going on? Can't usually detect.
2. Once-in-a-while we can. Yrs-ago on my way to Elder Meeting at bakery in Harvey, 6AM.
3. Just before Cut Rock a deer flashed in front of me in dark just missing me by seconds.
 - a. Deer was that close I could see him flash by on that pitch black morning.
 - b. Had I left just a few seconds later or the deer jumped few seconds earlier, crashed.
 - c. One of those xs. felt hand of God delayed either me or deer to protect me from harm.
4. Most of time don't know how God is working. That's why never become bitter, lose heart.
5. God may be ordering things in a way that we cannot see right now. But we will.

II. God's Providence Directs People, v. 4.

A. Boaz' Arrival

1. ***Just then*** = הנה [hinneh] = ***a particle of exclamation or surprise***.⁵ ***Look! Behold!***

¹ Ritzema, E. (2013). *300 Quotations for Preachers from the Reformation*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

² Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

³ Block, D. I. (1999). *Judges, Ruth* (Vol. 6, p. 653). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁴ <http://flickrhivemind.net/Tags/patchwork,patterns/Interesting>

⁵ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software. #2009.

- a. Wouldn't you know it, Boaz shows up right on time? Ruth been working few hrs.
- b. Of all fields he owned & could've inspected, Boaz shows up in her field her 1st day.
2. Wealthy landowners w/trusted foreman didn't likely visit every field every day.

B. Proverbs 16:33.

1. We can't even throw the dice w/o Lord having His hand in the outcome.
 - a. God directed circumstances to the right field.
 - b. Now He directs a person on the right day at exactly the right time.
2. Be very careful about giving up on God, He just may be sending someone your way.

III. God's Providence Directs Blessings, v. 12.

A. Repay & Reward

1. Repay & richly reward = repay someone their wages for their work.⁶ Amazing thing.
 - a. God rewards us in this life & in the next life for what we have done for Him.
 - b. By His providence He directs blessings our way because sees who are & what doing.
 - c. Prov. 19:17. God is no man's debtor. He repays people in His time as they deserve.
2. Why is God working for Ruth/Boaz? Kind of people He desires to bless. Am I? Are you?
3. Huge Lesson: Don't ask to be blessed; be the kind of person God can't help but bless.

B. Love God & Love People

1. What was it about these two that caused God to want to bless them both?
2. Remember what Jesus said are the 2 greatest commandments: Matthew 22:36-40?
 - a. When examine Ruth & Boaz discover 2 people loving God & people.
 - b. Time of the Judges = Everyone did what was right in their own eyes, 17:6; 21:25.
 - c. Now we find two people who are loving God and loving people. God takes notice.
3. It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus.⁷ (Show)
4. Ruth & Boaz were very much like Jesus tho He was yet to come. Let's look at it:

C. Love God

1. Ruth was united to the Lord by faith, v. 12.
 - a. Wings = skirt, 3:9. Here an affirmation of faith; later request for marriage.
 - b. As a man is united to a woman, so Ruth was united to the Lord by her faith.
2. Boaz was a virtuous man with the Lord at the center, vv. 1, 4.
 - a. Man of standing = noble character. Prov. 31:10 = a virtuous woman. Why?
 - b. V. 4 = 1st words out of his mouth. 1st impressions are lasting impressions.
 - c. He's a believer, but more than believer; Lord = center of His life.

D. Ruth Loves People

1. She's industrious, v. 7.

- a. After a wk-long trip of 70-100 mi. on foot she wastes no time in getting to work.
- b. Aliens, widows, poor allowed to pick up leftovers & corners at harvest time.
- c. The famous painting THE GLEANERS visualizes Ruth's work.⁸ (Show)

⁶ Biblical Studies Press. (2006). *The NET Bible*. Ruth 2:12, notes 51 & 52.

⁷ Robert Murray McCheyne quote in John R. W. Stott, *The Preacher's Portrait, Some New Testament Word Studies* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1961), p. 120.

⁸ Les Glaneuses, a painting by Jean-François Millet; http://elconquistador.org/?page_id=6692.

- d. This is backbreaking, weary work in heat & she's not complaining but doing it.
- e. This was like trying to eke out a living by picking up aluminum cans to recycle.⁹

2. She's courageous, v. 3.

- a. Judges ends w/gang rape where woman was murdered. How low morals were.
- b. Ruth's a woman w/no protector, yet she courageously goes to work.

3. She's respectful, v. 2.

- a. Very polite request. Grown woman, yet she respects mother-in-law's position.
- b. Ruth believes in 5th Commandment: Honor your father and mother.

4. She's unselfish, v. 11.

- a. She left her own parents to take care of her deceased husband's mother.
- b. 1st time we learn her father/mother still alive. Naomi needed her more than them.

5. She's thankful, v. 10.

- a. For someone still in difficult straights, she's thankful for generosity to her.
- b. We've seen no trace of bitterness tho she had every reason to be.

6. She's meek, v. 13.

- a. Servant girls = female servant of the lowest rank.¹⁰ This is what we call modesty.
- b. She's self-effacing in a good way. Her inner spirit is meek, not demanding.

E. Boaz Loves People

1. He's unpretentious, v. 4.

- a. Notice how well he's greeted by his hired hands. They love this man.
- b. Later he even eats lunch w/harvesters, v. 14. He's not full of himself.

2. He's kind, v. 8.

- a. My daughter = kind address to young woman both respectful & gracious.
- b. Later she is so impressed with his kind speech, v. 13.

3. He's generous, vv. 8-9.

- a. He delivers her from picking up the scraps and puts her right in w/gleaners.
- b. He lets her drink from the water for his paid employees.

4. He's protective, v. 9.

- a. He gives strict orders for his men not to harass her or become harsh.
- b. He knows she's vulnerable w/no husband or father to watch over her.

5. He's unprejudiced, v. 10.

- a. He transcends both race and class and gender to treat her with dignity.
- b. Did you notice not one word said about her appearance; all her character.

Conclusion

1. You will never go wrong by loving God with all your being & your neighbor as yourself.
2. Take care of your character and God will take care of your reputation.
3. God sees how we treat others and He will treat us the same way giving or w/holding blessing.
4. The beauty of Christ-like character will never go unrewarded. Count on it.

⁹ Hubbard, Robert L., Jr. *The Book of Ruth*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament series. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988.

¹⁰ Block, D. I. (1999). *Judges, Ruth* (Vol. 6, pp. 665–666). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.