

Boaz

Boaz is the “hero” of the Book of Ruth, a wealthy landowner of Bethlehem, a benevolent farmer who had concern for his workers’ welfare and a sense of family responsibility.

True heroes are easier to admire than to define.

True heroes are seldom conscious of their moments of heroism, and others may not recognise their acts as heroic.

“Hero” is today wrongly applied in many cases when used to define some great singer or actor with a certain amount of attractive looks or talent.

True heroes simply do the right thing at the right time, whether or not they realise the impact their action will have.

One quality a true hero has is to think of others before they think of themselves.

Boaz was a true hero.

In his dealings with other people, Boaz was always sensitive to their needs and the effect that his words and decisions would have on their lives.

All Boaz’s words and actions were coloured with kindness, offering help openly, not grudgingly, [Ruth 2:14-17].

Ruth 2:1-7 [New King James] *“There was a relative of Naomi’s husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz. 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 favour.’ And she said to her, ‘Go, my daughter.’ 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.** Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, ‘The LORD be with you!’ And they answered him, ‘The LORD bless you!’ Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, ‘Whose young woman is this?’ 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. 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.’”*

This choice of where Ruth worked to glean the spilt grain was not chance, “**she happened**” indicates that God had a hand in directing her choice, **for she was part of His plan for eventual salvation of all humanity through Jesus Christ, [Matthew 1:5].**

When Boaz discovered who Ruth was [Ruth 2:8] he took several steps to help her because she had been faithful to his relative Naomi.

Ruth 3:1-14 [New King James] *“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? Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. 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. 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.’ And she said to her, ‘All that you say to me I will do.’ So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. 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. Now it*

happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. And he said, 'Who are you?' So she answered, 'I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative.' 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. 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. Now it is true that I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. 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.' So she lay at his feet until morning, and she arose before one could recognize another. Then he said, 'Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.'"

Naomi's advice seems strange to us and also to Ruth a foreigner but she went ahead because she trusted Naomi.

What Naomi was telling Ruth was not suggesting a seductive act, but to enact an Israelite custom and law.

By observing this custom, Ruth would be informing Boaz that he could be her kinsman-redeemer, this was family business, nothing romantic. But it later did become beautifully romantic as Ruth and Boaz developed an unselfish love and deep respect for each other.

Boaz must have considered marrying Ruth because of his response, [verse 10].

Boaz not only did what was right but he did it right away, [Ruth 3:16-18].

Boaz could not foresee all that his actions would accomplish. He could not have known that the child that he and Ruth had would be an ancestor of both King David and Jesus Christ. He only met the challenge of taking the right action in the situation facing him.

We are faced with challenges daily, but like Naomi's nearest relative, we are often more concerned with making the easy choice than with making the right choice, [Ruth 4:1-16].

Boaz cleverly presented his case to the relative. First he brought in new information not yet mentioned in the recorded account. Elimelech, Naomi's former husband, still had some property in the area that was now for sale. As the nearest relative, this man had first right to buy the land, which he agreed to do, [Leviticus 25:25]. But then Boaz said that according to law, if the relative bought the property he also had to marry the widow, [probably because Mahlon, Ruth's former husband and Elimelech's son had inherited the property.] At this stipulation, the relative backed down. He did not want to complicate his inheritance. He may have feared that if he had a son through Ruth, some of his estate would transfer away from the family of Elimelech. Whatever his reason, the way was now clear for Boaz to marry Ruth.

Boaz, as we see, was a man who kept his promises.

Boaz was also sensitive to those in need and caring for his workers.

Boaz had a keen sense of responsibility and integrity.

Boaz was also a successful and shrewd businessman and negotiator.

It is these qualities that make Boaz a true hero.

We can also learn that God often uses small decisions to carry out His Big Plan for humanity.

Ruth 4:9-10 [New King James] *"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. 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.’”

This wise and generous action shows us clearly the character of this great man who will always be a fine example for us to follow when we are making choices in life.

The account of this part of the life of Naomi, Ruth and Boaz can help us to make right choices in our lives that will reflect the very character of our Creator God.