

Ruth 3:1-5

Introduction: Various changes take place: change in **time** (harvesting is over, winnowing has begun), **topic** (food has been secured, now perhaps a husband for Ruth?), and **location** (from the fields to the town's threshing floor)

Naomi's plan for Ruth's future—3:1-4

- Tension and suspense are introduced at this point of the story
- 1) She lovingly asks rhetorical questions—3:1-2a (assumes a positive answer)
 - a) The problem—*“My daughter, should I not seek a resting place (cf. 1:9; 2:12) for you,*
 - i) *Why? so that it may be well with you?”*
 - b) The proposed solution—² *And now is not Boaz our relative [moda`ath] (cf. 2:1),*
 - i) *with whose female workers you were with?*
- 2) She has acquired some knowledge—3:2b *Behold, he is winnowing the barley at the threshing floor tonight.*
 - a) When the breezes were normally appropriate for such a task.
 - b) To protect the grain he has just finished winnowing
- 3) She has a detailed plan—3:3-4
 - a) Make appropriate preparation—3:3a ³ *So bathe, and rub on (perfumed) oil and get dressed, and go down to the threshing floor;*
 - i) Perhaps the idea is to exchange her mourning attire for regular attire worn at night out of doors
 - ii) Cf. a similar concept in Genesis 38:14, 19; 2nd Samuel 12:20; 14:2
 - b) Use appropriate timing—*but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.*
 - i) I.e. wait until he is as receptive as possible, in a good mood
 - c) Be observant of the appropriate location—3:4a ⁴ *And it shall be when he lies down, that you shall observe the place where he lies down.*
 - d) Follow appropriate procedures—3:4b
 - i) What symbolic activities Ruth should do—*Then go, and uncover his feet (legs?), and lie down;*
 - (1) Implying her availability and willingness to be married without being sexually provocative.
 - (2) She wants to do nothing that will harm her reputation (cf. 3:11, 14)
 - ii) Anticipating Boaz's response—*and he will tell you what you should do.”*

Ruth's submissive response—3:5

- 1) Complete obedience—*“All that you have told me*
- 2) Determined obedience—*I will do.”* But couldn't Boaz possibly ...
 - reject her, accusing her of impropriety as Mahlon's widow?
 - take advantage of her in the night, and then blame her?
 - scoff at the thought of this lowly Moabitess presuming to be acceptable to a wealthy landowner?

Take-home truth: God graciously and providentially provides through our wise choices.