

## 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—<sup>2</sup> *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 <sup>3</sup> *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; 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 <sup>4</sup> *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.