

Ruth 3:15f-18

Boaz returns to Bethlehem—3:15f *Then he* (some texts say “she”) *went into the town.*

- 1) Probably to begin preparations for fulfilling Ruth’s proposal

Ruth returns to Bethlehem and Naomi—3:16-18

- 1) Ruth speaks—3:16-17
 - a) Naomi asks about Ruth’s current status—3:16 *“Who are you, my daughter?”*
 - i) The question is not to be taken literally. It is a figure of speech.
 - (1) Naomi calls Ruth “my daughter,” so she obviously knows who she is.
 - (2) Ruth’s answer has nothing to do with her name.
 - ii) What Naomi wants to know is, “What was Boaz’s response to your actions? Did Boaz accept the proposal? Who are you now in relationship to Boaz? Are you still a Moabite widow, or do you belong to Boaz?”
 - b) Ruth gives a **general** answer—*Then she told her all that the man had done for her.*
 - c) Ruth **specifically** explains the generosity of Boaz—3:17 *“These six measures (probably seahs, cf. 3:15) of barley he gave to me, for he said, ‘Do not go back empty [cf. 1:21] to your mother-in-law.’”*
 - Obviously the narrator did not record this statement by Boaz back in 3:15.
 - i) The emptiness of **provisions** is now resolved.
 - ii) The emptiness of a loving **provider** is about to be resolved.
- 2) Naomi advises cautious optimism based on Boaz’s well-known character—3:18
 - a) What is Ruth to do? *“Stay, my daughter,*
 - i) There is a time for action and a time for waiting. Sometimes it’s hard to know which we are to do. Cf. Proverbs 16:1, 9; Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
 - b) For how long? *until you learn how the matter will turn out;*
 - c) Why? *because the man will not rest until he has completed the matter today.”*
 - i) Was his extremely generous gift of grain a sign of future commitment?
- 3) These are the last recorded words of both Naomi and Ruth in the book. They step aside as Boaz now takes center stage.

Questions:

- Do you find it hard to wait patiently while God works through others in answer to our prayers? (cf. 1:8-9)
- Is God’s providence ever in a predicament?
- Do people have confidence in you that you will complete the task you willingly accepted?
- Do our plans and proposals reflect Biblical faith and love?

Take-home truths:

- God’s providential work uses the initiative of human instruments.
- As we show sacrificial loyal-mercy to others, God providentially uses us to restore hope in others and help secure their future.