

THE STORY OF PETER

And

THE STORY OF RUTH

Aunt Hattie's Bible Stories

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by

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

RUTH GOES TO WORK

LET US take up our story again. Ruth, going with Naomi, took Naomi's God to be her God.

Naomi lived a different life from those with whom Ruth had been brought up; doubtless God's Spirit worked in her life and led Ruth to accept Him as her God.

When Naomi and Ruth came to Bethlehem it was just at the beginning of barley harvest, a busy time of year. They found a place where they could live together, perhaps in Naomi's old home.

They were poor and Ruth felt she must go out and earn a living for both of them.

Naomi had a relative by the name of Boaz, a man prominent in the community and wealthy. He was the owner of some of the fields where grain was to be gathered and harvested. Ruth asked her mother-in-law to let her go and glean in those fields. She hoped to find a place where they would be kind to her.

In those days the gleaners were poor, so they were allowed to follow after the reapers and gather whatever stray stalks of grain might be left in the field.

Naomi was agreeable so Ruth went. She happened to glean in the field of Boaz, a relative of Naomi.

Boaz, who lived in Bethlehem, came out to see how things were going with his harvest. The greeting he gave to his men was: "The Lord be with you," and their response was no less sincere, "The Lord bless you." What a fine, loyal God-fearing man he was, loving and being loved by all who served or worked for him.

There would be fewer strikes and strifes among men today, if they followed the example of Boaz and his help, don't you think?

Boaz walked out into the fields looking at the grain and noticing the workers. After a time his attention was attracted to a young woman who was dressed differently from the others. Indeed, she was very beautiful in simple harvest attire.

Boaz called his foreman and asked who she was. "Oh, Master Boaz," the servant said, "that is the Moabitess who came back with Naomi from Moab. She asked me if she could glean after the reapers among the sheaves, and she has kept on all day. Just now she has gone into the house."

With Boaz, I think it was a case of love at first sight. I imagine I see him, a fine type of Israelitish manhood, losing no time in getting over to the house where Ruth was.

He advised her with kindly words: "Listen to me, daughter," he said, "do not go into any other field to glean, but stay right here with my maidens, follow them, and do not look on the field of any other. I have already told my young men not to trouble you in any way. When you are thirsty, go over to the water-vessels and drink."

Ruth fell upon her face and bowed to the ground, as she asked, "Why have I found grace or favor in your eyes, that you would take knowledge of me? I am a stranger."

Boaz answered, "Oh, I know all about you and your goodness to Naomi, your mother-in-law, and how you left your father and mother and native land to come and live among a people you do not know. The Lord repay your work and a full reward be given you of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to trust."

That was the secret. Ruth had put her trust in the only true and living God, the God of Israel.

Boaz' words greatly comforted her, especially as she was not one of his regular workers. She modestly asked that she might find favor in his sight.

The more Boaz talked to her, the more he loved her and desired to help her in every way. He told her to come up with the reapers at mealtime and have bread and salad with them. When she did, Boaz was right there to sit beside her and serve her. She ate and was refreshed, then went again into the field.

When she had gone, Boaz commanded the young men to let her help herself to grain right out of the sheaves. As they went along they were to drop handfuls on purpose for her, and never to reprove her.

Ruth had a great time gleaning!

When night came she beat out the grain from the sheaves she had gathered, and she had more than a bushel to take home with her.

Naomi had dinner ready, and after her long day in the field Ruth was hungry. I think it was while they were eating that Naomi said, “Ruth, where have you gleaned today?” And Ruth could keep the secret no longer and said, “Oh, Mother, come and see what I brought home.”

Of course Naomi was greatly surprised to see so much grain and asked God’s blessing upon the one who had been so good to them.

Ruth, evidently not knowing the relationship of Boaz to Naomi and her family said, “I gleaned in the field of a man by the name of Boaz.”

“Why, Ruth, that man is our relative and not only that, but our nearest relative. The Lord bless him, for he has not forgotten his kindness to the living and to the dead.”

Ruth told Naomi all of the happenings of the day and that Boaz told her to come to his field every day until the end of harvest.

Naomi suggested that Ruth stay with Boaz’ servants and not go into any other field. Ruth did glean in the field of Boaz all through the barley harvest and the wheat harvest, while she lived with Naomi her mother-in-law.

~ end of chapter 17 ~

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