

EXPECT GOOD THINGS FROM GOD

RUTH 3:1-18

Introduction: 1). Sometimes it is quite a challenge to get a man and a woman together. I recently read about an ad in a local newspaper that read, “Single Blond Female seeks male companionship, ethnicity unimportant. I’m a very good looking girl who LOVES to play. I love long walks in the woods, riding in your pickup truck, hunting, camping and fishing trips, cozy winter nights lying by the fire. Candlelight dinner will have me eating out of your hand. Rub me the right way and watch me respond. I’ll be at the front door when you get home from work, wearing only what nature gave me. Kiss me and I’m yours. Call (404) 875-6420 and ask for Daisy.” Over 15,000 men called and found themselves talking to the Atlanta Humane Society about an 8-week-old blonde Labrador Retriever! The Smart Marriages Newsletter (April 25, 2003) concludes, “Men are so easy...if we pay attention to their wants and needs.”

2). Well, men may be easy, but getting the right man and the right woman together can sometimes be a real challenge. At least that was how it was for Ruth and Boaz. And yet the God who does great things for us also does good things for us when we know His word, obey Him and trust Him for the outcome. We should expect good things from God, but we have a part to play in His plan as well.

3). Ruth 3 provides for us some wise principles and good guidelines as we seek God’s good will for our lives.

I. Be Wise In Your Plan.

3:1-5

- Chapter 2 ends with barley and wheat harvest coming to a close and Ruth at home with Naomi. Our hope and expectation for something good between Boaz and Ruth has been sidelined. Naomi, however, gets moving.

1. Have A Good Reason To Act.

3:1-2

- 2 negative questions
- Ruth needs security (lit. rest), a condition marriage provides.
- Naomi conceives a plan to meet this genuine and real need.

2. Have A Good Strategy To Implement.

3:3-5

- Naomi is concerned with Ruth’s welfare (and possibly an heir for the family line of Elimelech. She is showing *hesed* to Ruth. Boaz is the right man and tonight is the right night.
- She knows God’s word with respect to Levirate marriage (Deut. 25:5-10) and she takes the initiative to obey it.

A. Be Sensitive In Your Approach.

3:3

- A 5 fold strategy is outlined.
- Normal garment indicating mourning is over and I am available and serious in my intention for marriage.

B. Use Surprise When Appropriate.

3:4-5

- Surprise can be risky, but it can also be effective.
- Uncover his feet and lie close beside: apparently a nonverbal custom for requesting marriage. Though it may be nonverbal, it was clear and unambiguous!
- Naomi affirms Boaz will understand her intentions and respond accordingly.

- Ruth pledges full obedience to the instructions of Naomi. It is risky. They are taking a huge chance. But, they will act and trust and expect good things from God.

Transition: Be Wise In Your Plan.

II. **Be Clear In Your Intentions.**

3:6-11

- It's showtime! The moment we have all been waiting for has arrived. The plan has been laid out. The time for action has arrived. However, there is a right way or a wrong way to do even the right thing. We must always pursue right ends and right means unto those ends.

1. **Be A Person Of Transparency.**

3:6-9

- V. 6—She follows Naomi's counsel to the letter (all!)
- V. 7—She watches, waits, then acts. (There is nothing here to imply drunkenness. The harvest is in, the grain is winnowed, my stomach is filled and all is well. Time to sleep!) She quietly comes up, uncovers his feet, and lies down. Uncovering the feet (and lower legs) was probably a symbolic act requesting marriage (v. 4). Ezekiel 16:8 says, "'When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord GOD."
- V. 8—The midnight hour strikes! The man is startled (what a surprise) and turn and there lies a woman! "Looky here, a woman!" What a rude awakening, though this is not the first.
 - Adam went to sleep, woke up to discover he'd had surgery and was now a married man.
 - Jacob went to sleep, woke up to discover he was married to the wrong woman.
- V. 9—Startled, he asks who she is and note her response.
 - Ruth your maidservant
 - Spread the corner of your garment over your maidservant (or under your wing [cf.2:12]).
 - You are a kinsman-redeemer (*goel*)
- This is not an invitation to sleep with her or have sex. Her actions and approach may be unusual and highly irregular, but she is clear, utterly honest and transparent in what she is asking.

Transition: Ruth is a person of transparency. Ruth is a person of integrity.

2. **Be A Person Of Integrity.**

3:10-11

- Both Ruth and Boaz are individuals of unmatched integrity, hesed and faithfulness. Earlier this was said of Boaz. Now it is said of Ruth.

A. **People Should Know Of Your Kindness (*hesed*)**

3:10

- Boaz blesses Ruth for her hesed, first to Naomi and now to him (Lit. "you have mad your last hesed better than the first").
- She is not obligated to help Naomi.
- She is not obligated to Mahlon's posterity.
- She is not obligated to an older man like Boaz.
- But love will conquer all! For Naomi, Ruth and Boaz.

B. **People Should Know Of Your Character**

3:11

- I will do all you ask. Why? All know you are a virtuous (noble character, *NIV*) woman (cf. 2:1; Prov. 31).
- Moabite though you may be, poor and destitute in your circumstances and status, everyone knows what is on the inside. In a matter of weeks, by her attitude and actions, Ruth had

changed the natural prejudice of those in Bethlehem so that everyone looks at her with respect and admiration.

- What a lady! What a woman. This is what they said about Ruth and Boaz. What do people say about you and me?!

III. Be Honest With The Situation. 3:12-13

- Well we are almost home. The girl proposed marriage and the boy said yes. But, just when we are ready to wrap everything up and sing “happily ever after” a snag shows up that has potential to ruin the whole thing.
- What do we do? Ignore it, manipulate the situation, do what we want anyway? No, we’ve obeyed God this far, we will obey Him to the end. Therefore, different steps should be followed.

1. Acknowledge The Problem. 3:12

- There is a fly in the ointment, an obstacle in the road to a happy ending. Boaz respectfully, but honestly acknowledge the problem, he does not ignore the issue and neither should we.

2. Acknowledge Your Position. 3:13

- You rest for now.
- I will do what is right! I swear to it!
- It is in God’s hands but as for me, I give my word before God that I will do the right thing.

IV. Be Hopeful In The Outcome. 3:14-18

- Ruth, Boaz and Naomi have done all that they can. Now it is in God’s hands. Yes, now it is in the hands of a good God. So, what is our response?

1. Continue To Do What You Should. 3:14-15

- V. 14—Ruth obeyed/submitted to what Boaz asked.
- V. 15—Boaz honors and provides for Ruth and Naomi again. The exact amount is unclear; 6 full ephahs would have weighed nearly 200 lbs. Not that ephahs is not in the original text. The point is he is committed to Ruth and Naomi (v. 17).
- Both Ruth and Boaz continue their faithfulness to others waiting to see what God will do.

2. Count On God To Do What He Will. 3:16-18

- V. 16—Naomi’s question means, “How did it go?(NIV) What happened?”
- V. 16-17—Ruth tells her that whole story including Boaz’s concern for Naomi (another reversal for Naomi).
- V. 18—Naomi’s counsel, “Sit tight and wait! It is out of our hands (but not God’s!). We have done all that we can. Now, it’s God’s turn. Let’s see what He does.”

Conclusion: William Carey said, “Attempt great things for God. Expect great things from God.” With that God launched the modern missionary movement through this man. Ruth teaches us, “Attempt great things for God. Expect good things from God.” With that God brought about a marriage that would lead to the birth of a King and the coming of a Saviour. Such a God can be trusted. Such a God should be served.