

Love Is Externalized In Giving.

Ruth 3:1-5 NRSV

Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, I need to seek some security for you, so that it may be well with you. 2 Now here is our kinsman Boaz, with whose young women you have been working. See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. 3 Now wash and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 When he lies down, observe the place where he lies; then, go and uncover his feet and lie down; and he will tell you what to do.” 5 She said to her, “All that you tell me I will do.”

Ruth 4:13–17 NRSV

13 So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When they came together, the Lord made her conceive, and she bore a son. 14 Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without next-of-kin; and may his name be renowned in Israel! 15 He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him.” 16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her bosom, and became his nurse. 17 The women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi.” They named him Obed; he became the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Notes:

v. 1 should I not seek for you security In 1:9, Naomi wished that Yahweh would grant “rest” to Ruth and Orpah. Now that Ruth has stayed with her, Naomi hopes to secure rest for Ruth. Rest here refers to the safety and security that marriage would provide Ruth.

v. 3 wash anoint yourself Ruth was likely just removing her widow’s garments to mark the end of her mourning (Gen 38:14; 2 Sam 14:2).

v. 4 uncover his feet and lie down The purpose of this is unclear, but the other sexual innuendos in this passage may suggest that this is also one. Nonetheless, it seems unlikely that Naomi would put Ruth in a compromising position or endanger her reputation (v. 11)—especially considering Naomi’s intent to find “rest” for Ruth (v. 1). The uncovering of Boaz’s feet may have been merely to wake him by making his feet cold (see note on v. 8).

Boaz and Ruth would marry after Boaz made sure that a closer kinsman was not wanting to have her first. He took up his responsibility to honor and marry her. God blest their marriage and she had a son whom would be the one whose bloodline would lead to be of the household of David. Previously she had never had a child in her previous marriage. It was considered a miracle of God. God’s love for Boaz and Ruth produced a supernatural blessing for them, and generations to come.

v.9 Ruth identifies herself as a servant using the term 'amah rather than shiphchah (2:13). A shiphchah was used of the lowest social class, while an 'amah was used for someone eligible for marriage.

Mark 12:38–44 NRSV

38 As he taught, he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, 39 and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! 40 They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.” 41 He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. 42 A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. 43 Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. 44 For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

Notes:

Loves Extravagant Behaviour

Exaggerated, excessive or immoderate behaviour often linked with wastefulness which may result in personal harm. God’s people are called to be wise stewards of what has been entrusted to them. However, Scripture also points to a right kind of open-handedness and generosity of spirit which reflects love and worship towards God and concern for others.

Love sacrifices without anything expected in return. Yet, true love is reciprocal in so many ways. It brought blessing for Ruth through Naomi’s faith. It brought honor for eternity for the poor widow of Mark 12. It brought forth a miracle child for Ruth. God’s love gave His only begotten son and many sons and daughters of faith have been birthed through that seed of love. We could go on and on meditating on so many examples in the Word of God.

The Blessing Of Giving, From Our Daily Bread

It is more blessed to give than to receive. —Acts 20:35

It made no sense for a widow to donate her last few coins to a corrupt institution in Jerusalem, where scribes who were dependent on those gifts “devour[ed] widows’ houses” (Mark 12:40). But in that woman’s act, Jesus saw a moving display of the proper attitude toward money (vv.41-44).

Gordon Cosby, while serving as pastor of the Church of the Saviour in Washington, DC, tells of a widow whose income was barely adequate to feed and clothe her six children. Yet every week she faithfully placed \$4 in the offering plate. A deacon suggested that Cosby go to her and assure her that she could use the money instead for her family’s benefit.

Cosby followed the deacon’s advice—to his regret. “You are trying to take away the last thing that gives me dignity and meaning,” she said. She had learned a key to giving: It can benefit the giver more than the receiver. Yes, those in poverty need financial help. But the need to give may be as important as the need to receive. The act of giving reminds us that we live by the grace of God—like the birds and the flowers. Those creations don’t worry about their future; neither should we. Giving offers us a way to express our confidence that God will care for us just as He cares for the sparrow and lily (Matt. 6:25-34).

Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee,
Repaid a thousand-fold will be;
Then gladly will we give to Thee,

Who givest all—who givest all. —Wordsworth

We disarm the power of money by giving it away.