

THE LOVINGKINDNESS OF GOD: Ruth 2:1-23

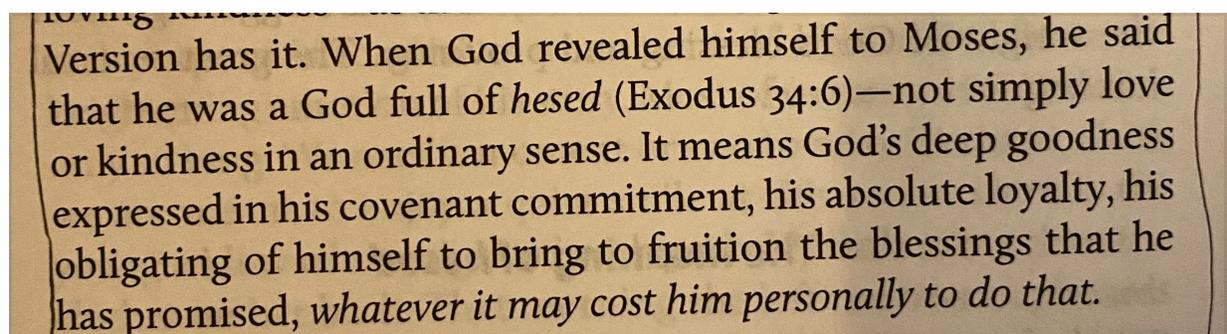
Q. What do you do when feel like you are in the dark concerning what God is doing? What do you do when it seems like there is no light and God has dropped the ball?

A. You can read and meditate what God reveals to you in Ruth chapter 2.

Ruth 2, from the vantage of what God is doing, is all about His loving-kindness. God's loving-kindness is really the hook of the chapter when we ask *What is the LORD doing here?* Look at verse 20!

Ruth 2:20 "And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, 'May he (Boaz) be blessed by the LORD, whose kindness (*Hesed*) has not forsaken the living or the dead!' Naomi also said to her, 'The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers.'"

- **This word *Kindness* is the Hebrew word *Hesed*.** It is a dominant theme in the Old Testament, being used 248 times!
- ***Hesed* is mentioned three times explicitly in Ruth.** Ruth 1:8, Ruth 2:20, Ruth 3:10.
- ***Hesed* means** "constant favor; abiding mercies; securely provided kindness." In short, *Hesed* means "God's covenant love."
- **Sinclair Ferguson**, that great modern day Puritan from Scotland, says concerning this:



Version has it. When God revealed himself to Moses, he said that he was a God full of *hesed* (Exodus 34:6)—not simply love or kindness in an ordinary sense. It means God's deep goodness expressed in his covenant commitment, his absolute loyalty, his obligating of himself to bring to fruition the blessings that he has promised, *whatever it may cost him personally to do that.*

Q. What should you do when you feel like you are in the dark concerning what God is doing in your life or the lives of others?

A1. Look to God's loving-kindness that He has promised to give you for Christ's sake.

A2. You must fight your unbelief or bitterness with the loving-kindness of God.

As an introduction to Ruth chapter 2, listen to **Psalm 136**, where David sings 26 times, "God's loving-kindness endures forever!" Twenty SIX TIMES!

I. THE LOVING-KINDNESS OF GOD

I) The LORD guided Ruth to the field of Boaz, for His lovingkindness endures forever (v. 1-3)

Ruth 2:1-3 "1 Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. 2 And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, 'Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor.' And she said to her, 'Go, my daughter.' 3 So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech."

- **There is no such thing as happenstance or chance or coincidences!**
- **Proverbs 16:33** "The lot is cast into the lap but it's every decision if from the LORD."

II) The LORD granted repentance and brought revival to Bethlehem, for His lovingkindness endures forever (v. 4)

Ruth 2:4 "And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, 'The Lord be with you!' And they answered, 'The Lord bless you.'"

III) The LORD blessed Ruth, for His lovingkindness endures forever (v. 11-12)

Ruth 2:11-12 "11 But Boaz answered her, 'All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. 12 The Lord repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!'"

- **Titus 3:3-7** "For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope

of eternal life."

IV) The LORD healed Naomi of her bitterness, for His lovingkindness endures forever (v. 20)

Ruth 2:20 "And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, 'May he be blessed by the Lord, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!' Naomi also said to her, 'The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers.'"

II. HOW YOU CAN TRUST IN GOD'S LOVINGKINDNESS EVEN WHEN YOU ARE IN THE DARK

I. Because of God's loving-kindness, when you do not understand what He is doing, you can trust in the Lord and rely on your God (Isaiah 50:10)

- **Isaiah 50:10** "Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God."

Q. Why can I trust God even when I have no idea what He is doing? When I am in the dark and have no light why can I trust in the Lord and rely on my God?

I) I can trust God even when I am in the dark because, if I am in Christ, God has blotted out my transgressions according to His loving-kindness (Psalm 51:1-2)

- **Psalm 51:1-2** "1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your [loving-kindness]; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!"
 - **By God's loving-kindness, through faith in Jesus Christ and what He has done, God has put my sins as far as the East is from the West!**
 - **Psalm 103:11-12** "11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his [loving-kindness] toward those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us."

II) I can trust God even when I am in the dark because He has written in His book every single day of my life! (Psalm 136:16)

- **Psalm 139:16** "Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them." ***And so can you!

– CHILDREN:

III) I can trust God even when I am in the dark because not even a sparrow falls to the ground apart from my Father's providential work, and, in Christ, I am of more value than many sparrows! (Matthew 10:29-31)

– **Matthew 10:29-31** "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows." ***And so can you!

– **Charles Spurgeon, in a sermon titled, "Neither Forsaken Nor Forgotten," reminds us vividly of God's eternal loving-kindness toward those that belong to Him in Christ. He said, "God has loved us more than husbands love their wives, or fathers love their children, or brothers love their brothers. His love is like a great ocean of which all human love is but a drop of spray; and he has loved us so long, so well, so deeply, so unreservedly, that he cannot forget us."**

– CHILDREN:

IV) I can trust God even when I am in the dark because He has promised, in Christ, to work all things together for good! (Romans 8:28)

– **Romans 8:28** "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

***And so can you!

V) I can trust God even when I am in the dark because, in Christ, I know His loving-kindness will follow me all the days of my life (AND SO CAN YOU!)

– **Psalms 23** "1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. 3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and [loving-kindness] shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

VI) I can trust God even when I am in the dark because I know as my substitute Jesus Christ experienced a far greater darkness than I ever will!

– On the cross (for my sin!), Jesus experienced the darkness of God's

wrathful-justice so that I could forever experience the light of God's loving-kindness!

- **There was a twofold eclipse while Jesus hung on Calvary's tree—** the sun was eclipsed as well as His Father's loving smile. (*My God, My God, why...?*)

THAT IS DARKNESS YOU WILL NEVER KNOW IF YOU BELONG TO JESUS!

- **Isaiah 53:5** "[Christ] was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed."
- **Q1.** How can I doubt the King who bled in my place to rescue me?
- **Q2.** How can I fear that He will drop the ball or let me be destroyed?
- **Q3.** How can I worry that goodness and mercy will not follow me all the days of my life when I consider Christ and Him crucified?
A. I can only distrust God's providence when I forget that He has given me His loving-kindness at the cost of Christ's agony!
- **In Isaiah 49:16, the Lord comforts His people with these words:** "Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands." It is as if God is saying, "I cannot look my hands without being reminded of you and my love for you."
- **And don't you see how this points to the Lord Jesus Christ?** He, right now in Heaven, still bears the marks of His crucifixion which He underwent to save your once damned soul!

Can Christ look at His nail-scarred hands without remembering His love for you and the cost at which He bought you? No! He says to you, precious saint, "Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands."

You need to know this: God's loving-kindness can be yours in Jesus Christ.

- **Psalms 86:5** "For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in [loving-kindness] to all who call upon you."