

Holiday Journey

- Where are you going on your holidays?
 - what will you take with you?
 - how long will you stay?
 - when will you come back?
 - how will you travel?
- Refugees
 - current situation
 - churches that support and help - eg St Rollox in Glasgow

Introduction

- In some ways we don't hear much from Boaz in this story:
 - its told very much from Ruth and Naomi's perspective
 - but he did say and commit to some bold and significant things...

Boaz's question (2:1-5)

- He was a wealthy landowner who was involved in the hugely important process of harvesting his crops
 - he notices a foreign woman who "happens" to be working in his field and asks "Who is that young woman?"
 - is this mere coincidence? Or is there the first sign of God's gentle intervention in the lives of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz.... with long term effects on future generations
- Are we alert to God's gentle interventions?

Boaz's commendation (2:11,12)

- He has heard about Ruth's arrival:
 - and Boaz is impressed by this woman who has left her family and homeland to care for her mother-in-law
 - he commends her behaviour and asks God's blessing upon her
 - as landowner, he guarantees that she can collect grain safely; she is brought within the orb of his protection
 - this is not a protection he has to offer, but he sees that this is a woman who has chosen to align herself with the people of the Lord God of Israel - and he offers her protections as if she were a member of that people
 - there doesn't seem to be more motive than that at this stage - he is not looking for something for himself, a wife or anything like that
 - he is mirroring the protective care of the God under whose wings she has sought protection
- Do we offer care and protection to those who are in need - practical help?

Boaz's promise (3:1-13)

- Culturally, kinship responsibilities were very important:
 - Naomi is delighted that Ruth has found herself in the field of someone who is a close relative
 - this gives Naomi confidence to suggest that Ruth should bring up the kinship responsibilities, inviting / forcing a relative to act responsibly
 - Boaz is impressed by Ruth's behaviour - once he has got over the shock of finding her asleep at his feet!!
 - he doesn't want to embarrass her, so he insists she leaves before the others wake up

- but he makes a **promise** that he will sort things out
- by such responsible behaviour, God is able to use Boaz
- Do we take our Christian responsibilities seriously?
 - when we know we should speak up, at work, writing a letter to a politician, standing up for someone...

Boaz's pledge (4:9,10)

- The closer relative wants to buy Naomi and Elimelech's land
 - but he does not want or is not able to marry Ruth and carry the family name on
 - Boaz, therefore, steps in
 - the other relative is shamed by Boaz's behaviour...
 - Boaz **pledges** to buy the land and, in effect, provide off-spring for Elimelech by marrying Ruth and opening the door to children...
 - through all this God brings blessing and happiness to Naomi, Ruth, Boaz and indeed the whole community (**judging by the comments of the neighbourhood women!**)
 - (**careful not to project our "romantic love story" assumptions onto what caused them happiness - that may have been there, but its not the main thrust!**)
 - **this is God at work in the lives of many people**, bringing safety, security, provision, a future, hope, family, inheritance, a place in the community...
 - Boaz and the rest needed to behave responsibly, compassionately, with integrity
 - but God's hand is clearly at work!!
- Will we **pledge** / set our hand to what God has called us to?
 - not give up, soft-pedal, do the minimum...