

Meditations from the Book of Ruth Part 7

We will continue in this message what we had started meditating from the book of Ruth.

“10 Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?” (Ruth 2:10) Ruth with what she did here in response to the good treatment of Boaz towards her, it shows that she was humble, thankful, and grateful. She did not have pride, her head did not become big when she was treated well by Boaz. She was humble not only because she bowed down, although many they don't want to bow down. But she was humble because she accepted that she was a stranger. She accepted that what she was receiving was only a favor because she was not from the people of the land.

Many when they will receive appreciation or praise, or increase in income, or a promotion, then you will see how they will react and have the pride of themselves; don't be among such a kind of people. The book of the Proverbs says that men will be known by the praise that they receive. ***“As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise.” (Proverbs 27:21 KJV)*** The silver will be checked by the fining pot. The gold will be checked and its components verified by the furnace of fire. *But man will be checked and what inside him will be revealed with what he receives from praise and commendation.*

Ruth was curious why she found a favor in the eyes of Boaz. She asked him, why he was so interested in caring for her once he came to know her story, especially that she was a stranger. Why Boaz cared for Ruth? What was in her that moved him to care for her? The Scripture teach us that God had told His people to care for the strangers. Why Boaz was caring for Ruth? It might be because he heard a good report about her, or he was impressed with the good report he received from his servant, but as well as he was now more willing to help her and welcome her because she was a stranger, for God had instructed His people to care for strangers.

“Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Exodus 22:21 KJV) ***“And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him.” (Leviticus 19:33 KJV)*** the Word vex means annoy, displease, irritate, or exasperate. *We should not do such toward the strangers that God would sent to us or when we meet such people, the strangers, in our lives we should not hurt them.*

“Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Exodus 23:9 KJV) To oppress means keep down, tyrannize, dominate, or subjugate. We should not abuse and take advantage of strangers. God told His people ***“ye know the heart of a stranger”***. They are new to the place, they don't know anyone in the place, they are away from their families and relatives, and they are away from their homes, their comfortable places, comfortable foods, drink, bed, and comfortable relationships. He told them, ***“ye were strangers in the land of Egypt”***, which means you were abused, oppressed, worked overtime, and got hurt, and you felt it, so don't do that with the strangers. That is why when such is not observed God will crush the nation that does not observe caring for the strangers. Those

who abuse the people who are under them, will face the same. *Therefore if you had been a strangers, God called you today the more accountable to care for the strangers.*

“Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.” (Exodus 23:12 KJV) The Lord here instructed the Israelites to work six days and on the seventh day they need to rest, as well as their animals, their servants and the strangers with them, so they will be refreshed. Certain times those in power will rest but the strangers and the servants and the weak will be denied their holidays. Companies who will not give their workers one day rest per week will be affected. God will judge them because they are oppressing their staff. *We need to work six days and rest on the seventh day to get refreshment. As well as we need to refresh our animals, our servants and the strangers with us.*

“And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God.” (Leviticus 19:10 KJV) ***“And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the LORD your God.” (Leviticus 23:22 KJV)*** Here the Lord instructed His people when they will harvest their lands, and gather their grapes should not glean after they gather and harvest, but they need to keep it to the poor and the strangers to eat and get supplied; so they can eat something when they pass through the land.

“But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.” (Leviticus 19:34 KJV) Here the Lord asked His people and we today to love the strangers. *How we love them? Not to vex them, not to tease them, not to disturb them, not to oppress them, not to abuse them, nor withholding their rights, but by sharing with them what we had plenty of harvest. To love the strangers is a good way to evangelize and spread God's Word to those whom God send to us, and we should do that well.*

“Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger, as for one of your own country: for I am the LORD your God.” (Leviticus 24:22 KJV) ***“One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.” (Numbers 15:16 KJV)*** *Here the Lord instructing us that we need to have the same rules and laws for the citizens and for the strangers. We should not be bias. Those who will not observe that they will be disciplined by the Lord.*

“Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, nor of the fatherless; nor take a widow's raiment to pledge.” (Deuteronomy 24:17 KJV) Also here the Lord instructed them not to pervert justice and abuse the weak when they will make judgment about the law. God shall deal with those who pervert justice and divert it from the underprivileged. ***“Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen.” (Deuteronomy 27:19 KJV)*** *We should not take advantage of the underprivileged because they have no voice and cannot complain because they are weak and have no power.*

"The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down." (Psalm 146:9 KJV) God care and preserve the strangers and that is how He reveals Himself to them. He preserves them because they are weak. You may remember certain times when you are moving to a new place that you know no one, and you find yourself surrounded by people who are there to help you; that is how God care for the strangers.

God has no favoritism, for he treat everyone the same. He has no regard for a person whether rich or poor, whether from the land or stranger. He protects the strangers (as well as the poor, the orphans and widow); He love them and keep their rights, and He command us to do the same: *"17 For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: 18 He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. 19 Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."* (Deuteronomy 10:17-19 KJV) Here the Lord asked the Israelites to love and care for the strangers because they were strangers in Egypt and they knew what to be a stranger is. See here the Scriptures are repeated in many places, and repetition in the Bible is to teach us by repeating the matter to us.

One way to show love to the strangers is when we treat them like we treat ourselves and our families and those who are near to us by helping them and providing them, and sharing with them food, accommodation and dress. *"11 And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you. 12 When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled; 13 Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them."* (Deuteronomy 26:11-13 KJV) Here we learn when we bring our tithes to the Lord, some part of the tithes will be given to Levites, the workers who are without job, to the widows, to the orphans and to the strangers. So really God wants us to have some budget to the strangers. In our treasury 5% are set aside for the poor and needy.

God wants us to do all the above so that we can reach out the strangers with God's Word. *"Gather the people together, men and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law."* (Deuteronomy 31:12 KJV) God wants us not only to give the strangers all what we mentioned of privileges; food, shelter, raiment, favor, justice, but in addition to that we need to give the Word of God so that they will observe to do all the Word of God in the Law so the more they will be blessed.

"34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye

visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matthew 25:34-40 KJV) In this parable of Jesus about His second coming, he spoke about His disciples who suppose to care for those who are believers and underprivileged. The stranger here are the believers in Christ (because Jesus said about them *"of the least of these my brethren"*), who are coming from other places and they are our faithful brethren who are the brethren of Jesus, who live their lives for Him and love to serve Him, but they got afflicted and got in need and we are called to care for them and relieve them; giving them food, drink, shelter them and take them to our homes, care for them in their sicknesses, and visit them while they are sick and reach them in prisons and relief them when they are persecuted for the sake of Christ. If we do that gladly and willingly the Lord shall bless us and reward us, not only on earth, but the more in Heaven when He will come back and take us with Him to be with Him forever. Boaz was seeking the approval and the reward of the Lord in caring for the strangers.

But if we fail and refuse to sacrifice and do our work to the brethren who are in troubles then we will be judged by the Lord, *"41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."* (Matthew 25:41-45 KJV) Our duties to our brethren and the strangers among them who come from other places are food, drink, raiment, comfort, visitation, assurance and help them with their basic needs.

Apostle John emphasized the same in His letter: *"5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; 6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: 7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. 8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth."* (3 John 1:5-8 KJV) Apostle John commended the brethren who received and supported those brethren, and the strangers among them who were bearing witness for Christ, and he recommended the church to continue to show them love and care. Now we need also to discern whom we need to help. We need to find out who are the genuine among them because many now they use the Word of God to take advantage of the church and the brethren who love God, or they use the ministry to make living, or to enjoy life, or to travel to nice places for tourism. So we need to find out to whom we need to give help and support. John said in this passage, *"Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. 8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth."* (3 John 1:7-8 KJV) Those were eligible for help because they had not received from the Gentiles that they are reaching out but persecution and troubles. So we need to find out the real situation of the brethren and those who are strangers and pick up whom God is calling us to help.

Apostle John further spoke about two Brothers, the first one Diotrefes, who was bad in not receiving the Brethren who were sent to the church and not allowing other brethren to receive them. John said to them don't follow such evil. Those who do such have not seen God, because they refuse to do what is good. But John recommended Demetrius who was doing good things toward the brethren and the strangers among them who were sent to the church. ***"9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrefes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. 10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. 11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God. 12 Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true."*** (3 John 1:9-12 KJV)

Paul wrote to Timothy the criteria to help widows. One of the points that a widow is recommended for help is that she had received and lodged strangers, ***"Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work."*** (1 Timothy 5:10 KJV) *Those who receive strangers and care for them, protect them and supply their immediate needs, they are receiving God.* Rahab received the spies, who were strangers, who were sent to her to spy the land, and she was saved, justified and rewarded for that deed, ***"By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace."*** (Hebrews 11:31 KJV) ***"24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. 25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?"*** (James 2:24-25 KJV) Rahab was rewarded for this work. She got saved and her family, and God built her a family among God's people.

That is why Apostle Paul said, ***"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."*** (Hebrews 13:2 KJV) Lot entertained strangers who were the angels of God whom He sent to destroy Sodom and the cities around it. They were the one who saved Lot and his family. They were the same two angels that were with God and received by Abraham. God would reward us as we entertain and care for strangers.

Ruth was astonished when Boaz treated her well, because she was not aware that this is the instruction of God to His people, and they will be blessed when they will do such.

The two disciples on the road of Emmaus entertained Jesus as stranger and constrained him to stay overnight with them, ***"28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. 29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. 30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight."*** (Luke 24:28-31 KJV) Jesus did not reveal Himself to them, as if He was testing them if they will care for him. When they received Him they were blessed to receive God in their home.

My dear and beloved: Let us commit ourselves on what we heard from God's Word, and start to implement in our lives with a discernment of how and to whom we will implement in giving care to the strangers or any of those who are underprivileged whom God shall send across our lives.

My Prayer: Father God, I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord I thank you for your Word and your teaching that I received in this message.

Ask God forgiveness for all your sins, pride, and especially if you were careless about caring for the strangers and those who are in troubles and in need. Lord forgive me and I repent from the following sins _____.

Lord I commit myself to the teaching that I had received from your Word in this message to do and to act upon it in my life. Lord I commit myself to care for the strangers that you will send across my life, as well as the brethren who are serving you and who are travelling because they were persecuted and ill treated, and the rest of the underprivileged that you are allow to come into my life from sick people, prisoners, orphans and widows. Lord I commit myself to show the fruit of the Holy Spirit, love peace, joy, patience, self-control, perseverance, gentleness, kindness, long-suffering, and the rest of the fruit so others will see Jesus in my life.

Lord I pray for my brothers and sisters who committed themselves to the principles of the message Lord give them discernment of how to implement that in their lives. Lord reward them for every act of kindness that you are recommending them to do.

Lord I pray that you will help us as a church to implement your Word in reaching and helping the strangers, the sick, the poor, the orphans, the widows, the prisoners and the rest of those who are underprivileged. Lord refills us once again with the Holy Spirit so that we can go and evangelize and make new disciples and complete the work that you ordained for us to do. Lord fulfill your vision to the church, 'Multiplication in peace with implementing the whole will of God'. Lord helps us to plant new Bible studies and new congregations for the church. Lord blesses us and enlarges our territory, let your hands be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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