

TFTD R6 13th July 2020

Ruth 2 verses 1-7 – A LESSON FOR OUR TIME

What can we learn from Boaz? Do his attitudes have anything to teach us today?

Boaz was a prominent figure in his society, and a wealthy man at that.

Nothing different in that — except that today there are many prominent and wealthy men and women in our British society and across the world.

The greeting Boaz gave to his reapers ‘The Lord be with you’ and their response ‘The Lord bless you’ suggests they had a mutual respect and concern for each other’s welfare, perhaps recognising their responsibility to each other under God.

It made me ponder for a while what sort of agony and heart ache employers might feel today, when as a result of the Covid Pandemic, they may have to cease to employ certain members of their work force. There is such a thing as false guilt where we hold ourselves responsible for things beyond our control. These feelings come when we know and care about people as individuals.

Boaz’s care extended beyond his work force making sure that he fulfilled the expectation that gleanings were left for the poor.

He also comes across as someone who did not sit aloof from those around him. He noticed that there was a young woman, Ruth, gleaning in his fields and he enquired after her and made sure provision was made for her needs and those of Naomi.

There is something to be said today about the sharing of the pain of this pandemic. There is the all-too-obvious and all-too-often pain of the loss of loved ones.

There is the pain and sheer exhaustion of witnessing so much suffering. There is the pain of isolation especially of those told to shield themselves at home. There is the pain of the loss of our ability to provide for the needs of those we love.

Our systems may be different to those operating in the time of Boaz, but the principle is the same: we must not close our eyes to the pain and needs of others. It is our God-given responsibility in New Testament terms to Love our neighbour as ourselves.

It has been heartening to see the bags of food and other essentials donated to help everyone to have enough to eat.

But there is another lesson to learn from Boaz and that is to keep our eyes and hearts open. We need to be alert to the fact this virus is indiscriminate. Many of the families that are in need today may go unnoticed. They are people we might never imagine would struggle. Many of them feel too ashamed to admit they are struggling even though it is no fault of their own. These are people who could be living next door to you and me. Somehow we need to convey that we are all in this together. We should understand their needs as though they are our needs. There has been so much mutual love, care and sacrifice shown over the last few months. I believe it has awakened a more caring and compassionate society and I pray that is something that will continue to grow and thrive.

Shalom, Pam