

LESSON 6: MAKING A MOVE

Intro:

BIG IDEA: God, who uses _____, uses others to _____ us to action.

Recap: The harvests are almost over. Ruth has faithfully gleaned in Boaz' fields. He has extended great favor to her, welcoming her into the tribal unit. But his favor has stopped there. There was another way he could help, but it doesn't seem to have dawned upon him yet.

Naomi's "Bright" Idea

Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? ²Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. ³Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴But 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." ⁵And she replied, "All that you say I will do." **Ruth 3**

- The _____ harvest is now being threshed & winnowed. Probably after the _____ was harvested.
- Naomi expresses _____ for Ruth's long-term _____. Finally!
- She seeks a "resting place" or "rest" for Ruth. She means a _____.
- She reminds Ruth that Boaz is "our" relative. She implicitly reminds her that he is a _____.
- Naomi knows that Boaz will be spending the night at the _____ floor.
- They are _____ the barley now which involves long hours and makes the grain easier to steal.
- Her advice is to make herself _____: wash and anoint yourself- shower & perfume.
- She is to go to the threshing floor and _____ until he has gone to sleep.
- Then she is to _____ him and _____ his feet.
- In the _____ form (Piel) "uncover" can mean to uncover one's _____ (genitals) or lay bare.
- "Feet" can be used as a euphemism for _____. "The tension of the story lies in the fact that the words are open to more than one interpretation."⁴¹
- "To lie" is often used to indicate _____; "he lay with her" so that we use it as slang.

⁴¹ Ferguson, pp. 97.

- She ends her questionable counsel with “follow his lead.” She must be certain of his

“Likewise, in the Piel it always denotes “to uncover” something which otherwise is normally concealed. . . . But it is used most frequently in this stem for designating proscribed sexual activity. It occurs twenty-four times in Lev 18 and 20 in the expression “to uncover the shame” which denotes sexual intercourse in proscribed situations, usually incest, also Deut 22:30. It is also used of uncovering or removing that which covers: the woman’s skirt (Is 47:3; Nam 3:5), of Judah’s protective covering (Is 22:8), and Leviathan’s outer armor.”⁴²

“Some of the most interesting usages are in euphemistic expressions for bodily excretions (Judges 3:24; 1 Sam. 24:3), In a rare usage (Is. 7:20) it is used of the pubic hair (i.e. hair of the legs).⁴³

“As is well known, the term ‘feet’ could be used as a euphemism for sexual organs (male: Ex. 4:25; Judges 3:24; 1 Sam. 24:4; female: Deut. 28:57; Ezekiel 16:25; etc.) though not demonstrable as a euphemism here, it may have been chosen to add to the scene’s sexual overtones.” **Robert Hubbard**⁴⁴

Problem: Is Naomi suggesting Ruth act indecently as some people suggest?

Providence: God makes use of means to accomplish His purposes.

“In ancient Israel, a threshing-floor setting suggested sexual compromise, and the author packs his prose with erotic double entendres.” **Robert Hubbard**⁴⁵

“In the unsavory day of the judges, prostitutes would offer their services at such places.” **Dean Ulrich**⁴⁶

“But do these final words express a deep confidence in the moral and spiritual integrity of Boaz? Or do they suggest that even if moral compromise is involved, the end will justify the means, and Boaz’s help will be secured, but fair means or foul?” **Sinclair Ferguson**⁴⁷

A Mighty Bold Move

⁶So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her.

⁷And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of

⁴² Harris, Archer & Waltke editors. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago, Moody Press. 1980. pp. 160-1.

⁴³ Harris, Archer & Waltke. pp 832.

⁴⁴ Hubbard, pp. 203.

⁴⁵ Hubbard, pp. 196.

⁴⁶ Ulrich, pp. 89.

⁴⁷ Ferguson, pp. 95.

the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. ⁸At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! **Ruth 3**

- After _____ and _____ with oil she went to the threshing floor.
- The threshing floor was _____ from the city. You wanted a steady _____ but not _____ to blow away the chaff.
- Ruth is acting in _____ to Naomi. The idea is of a command or _____ that has been placed upon her.
- After eating and drinking, Boaz' heart was _____. He was not _____.
- The threshing floor may have been _____ to all the farmers with the winnowing in the center and piles of grain on the sides.
- Ruth _____ up to him and lays down at his _____ feet.
- Does the author want us to think of _____ who awoke from his sleep to find the wife God provided?
- Often we discover our spouses at unexpected _____ and _____.
- It is hard to picture how this could happen if "feet" was being used as a euphemism.
- Literally it would mean she was laying _____ to Boaz.

"Perfume, night-time, good food and wine, the warm physical closeness of an attractive woman ... what man could miss the apparent message? **Sinclair Ferguson**⁴⁸

"Ruth was putting both her reputation and personal safety in grave danger. Boaz had earlier warned Ruth of the risks that a foreign woman might encounter even gleaning in the fields by day. How much greater would the danger of harm be if she were to present herself alone to a man in the middle of the night! **Iain Duguid**⁴⁹

This text should remind us of another "forward" woman who was tired of waiting for the levirate laws to be fulfilled by the men who were responsible: Tamar.

Read Genesis 38

How were Ruth & Tamar alike?

How were their solutions different?

Let's put ourselves in their shoes for a moment. What would go thru your mind as you contemplated your circumstances and possible solutions?

Both stories point us to the ways we try to save ourselves instead of trusting God to provide a Redeemer. They point to Christ, as well as our schemes of self-salvation.

⁴⁸ Ferguson, pp. 96.

⁴⁹ Duguid, pp. 171.

“If God does not do things speedily enough for us in our way, then we will take matters into our own hands. We devise our own ways of bringing to pass what God has promised to give to us. We refuse to wait for him to bring his own purposes to fruition.” **Sinclair Ferguson**⁵⁰

Will Boaz be like Judah, or will he be righteous? Will he reject her for such a risky and forward move?

⁵⁰ Ferguson, pp. 98.