

CALL to PRAYER- Pray for business owners....employees.....work ethic...live out faith at work....homeless

Ruth 2 - Faith at Work and Welfare

Intro - “*You can be so heavenly minded that you are no earthly good*”. That charge shouldn’t stick to a genuine Christian. Our faith promises us *the sweet by and by* but it also equips us for the *nasty now and now*. Our faith is rooted in history, truth, reality and it has practical relevance to everyday life. Our text today deals with: Rich & Poor, Work & Welfare, Male & Female and Foreigner & Citizen. These subjects are as up to date as today’s news. The scripture promise and prepare us to live in heaven but they also instruct us on how to live on earth. *We are to be so heavenly minded that we are earthly good*
 Today I want us to note how our faith should affect our work and to ask some questions: What is the proper attitude toward work? What are the varied responsibilities that both Rich & Poor have in work? Should our faith affect our work environment? Does a 3300 yr. old story say anything to our economy?

- The setting and the characters
 - Famine, family of 4 leave Bethlehem for Moab, 1 funeral, 2 weddings, 2 more funerals
 - Two poor widows come back to Bethlehem. Naomi and Ruth (1:22)
 - Ruth is a foreigner and new convert
 - Boaz is man of great wealth – (2:1) “mighty man of valor”
 - He was a close relative to Naomi – probably her brother-in-law
 - Family connected by marriages that no longer exist (in-laws)
 - opposite ends of economic scale very rich and very poor (doing well/destitute)
- Why are there disparities in life? (even disparities in the same families)
 - Many answers from the human side of the equation; but ultimately the Divine side makes the difference 1 Sam. 2:7 Deut 8:17-18 Prov. 22:2
 - God does not distribute His gifts evenly but each recipient has a certain responsibility
 - Whether you are rich/poor God is testing you by what He has/hasn’t given you
 - The rich have a responsibility in God’s economy. The poor have a responsibility
- The poor younger widow went to work to help provide for herself and her older mother –in-law
 - Ruth 2:2 the new convert put her faith to practice - 1 Tim. 5:8, 16
 - God established a welfare system for His people in His holy law “Gleaning System”
 - Lev. 19:9-10 Deut. 24:19-22
 - This ingenious “gleaning system” incorporates work into welfare and care for the poor
 - The rich have a responsibility to not gather and consume all their substance
 - The poor have a responsibility to work for the welfare they receive
 - God commands that there be opportunity. The rich are to give it & the poor r 2 use it
 - Ruth went to work and “just happened” to wind up in Boaz’s field Ruth 2:3
 - There are no happenstances in life, only providences. God ordained
 - The place where you work is part of God’s plan for you (not an accident)
- Protestant work ethic - our work is our calling. We are called to work and for HIM
 - Col. 3:24-25 “work while you work and play while you play; one thing at a...”

- Notice the work environment Ruth 2:4
 - I've worked jobsites all my life and there was a lot of talk about: God, Jesus, hell and damnation... but I wasn't said in praise or in faith. Eph. 4:29 Col. 4:5-6
 - Our faith should inform how we work and should also change the atmosphere
 - Pressured for separation of: faith & state, faith & school, faith & home....work
 - Ruth's new faith was evident at her new job Ruth 2:12 (separation)
 - Boaz's business provided rest, refreshment and safety
 - Rest – 2:7 “work while you work, play while you play; one thing at a.....”
 - Refreshment – 2:9, 14 (the foreigner was not segregated but was included)
 - Safety - 2:9, 22 (sexual harassment) 2:15 (insults)
 - days of the Judges (1:1) could be dangerous days (not safe for women)
 - male/female & foreigner/citizen interactions need to be managed well
- Ruth was a person of faith, character and diligence
 - She worked from morning to evening 2:7, 17
 - ephah = 30 lbs. she was very productive in her labor
 - Worked until end of barley harvest (March/April) & wheat (June/July) 2:23
 - She had humility and not an entitlement mentality
 - 2:7 politely said “please” and asked if she could work
 - 2:10 – recognized the grace shown to her as a foreigner (Moabites – Deut. 23:3)
 - She spoke well of the rich 2:13, 19-21 (rich are usually cursed) Eccles. 10:20
 - She did not consume all that she was given or worked for
 - 2:14b she didn't waste it, she saved it frugal
 - 2:18 – she gave the leftovers to Naomi eye toward others
 - Eph. 4:28 Rich and poor have responsibility to not use up all they have so they both can have something to share with others Luke 3:1 Acts 20:35
- Does this 3300 year old story have anything to say to our 21st century economy?
 - We live in a time where there are more job openings than people out of a job
 - People want to be paid without being productive
 - Our post-Christian society is losing the Protestant work ethic –
 - work is good there is dignity in work your work is your calling
 - Homelessness is an exploding problem
 - Foreigners overrunning our borders wanting/demanding opportunity
 - God commands that there be opportunity
 - The rich are to give it and the poor are to make use of it
 - Work and welfare are to go together 2 Thess. 3:8-12
 - “will work for food” move big sand pile “nope”
 - God makes the disparities in life/families. We have responsibilities in life
 - The rich are not to gather/consume all the poor are not to be lazy at all
 - Hercules and the Waggoner - “.....heaven helps those who help themselves”
 - That is not in the Bible. Aesop's fable is a myth but Ruth is truth
 - We are to be so heaven minded that we are earthly good...in our work