



## A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of December 4, 2016

WEPC small groups meet in homes across Richmond every week to participate in Jesus Christ's mission to Richmond, enjoy fellowship, study God's Word, pray together, and explore the fruit of the Gospel on our lives. Simply put, these groups are small enough to be the church to one another, and they serve as bridges between WEPC and the community where God has planted us. It is a place where the church can go deeper in the worship of God and further in Christ's mission.

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a "worship discussion" guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

### Ruth 2:2-3, "Favor"

<sup>2</sup> And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."<sup>3</sup> So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech.

- When we read about "favor" in the Bible, what does it mean?
- In what ways do Ruth and Nomi need favor?
- In what ways do you need favor today?
- Reflecting on this week's sermon: If you remember that you are poor and in need of favor, how does that influence your relationships? Your worship of God? What happens when you forget your poverty and need of favor?
- What does the Old Testament Law and practice of gleaning (Leviticus 19:9-10; Deuteronomy 24:19-22) teach us about the character of God?
- **This is the second Sunday of Advent.** Advent is a time that helps us to remember Christ's first coming and reflect on the mystery of the Incarnation. It also teaches us to look eagerly for His second coming when He will return to redeem His creation and exercise His rule with all power and authority. In what ways do you need to trust that you have God's favor these days?
- Each Sunday in Advent, the congregation joins our voices in a **Declaration of Faith** at the beginning of the worship service. **This week, we read responsively from the [Nicene Creed](#).** This statement is a summary of Christian belief written in 325AD. Read this statement together as a group. What does it say Christians believe about the Incarnation of Jesus Christ?
- Each Sunday in Advent, we read a passage from the Gospel of Luke in anticipation of the coming of Jesus Christ. **This week's Gospel Reading is [Luke 1:67-79](#),** Zechariah's song as she waited for the Savior, known as the *Benedictus*. As you read this text together, what effect does the sure promise of God made man have on Zechariah? What effect will His coming have on all people?
- As a part of worship **[we sing songs and hymns](#)** that further amplify each Sunday's message. **This week, we sang the 7<sup>th</sup> century Latin Advent hymn, "Creator of the Stars of Night".** [Read](#), [listen to](#), or [sing](#) the hymn, and enter into a time of prayer desiring the Lord to come to us, and thanking Jesus as our true Light, Redeemer, and Deliverer.

## Sermon Notes

This week, Steve Shelby preached on Ruth 2:2-3.

### Gleaning

- “Sweet providence as well as bitter comes to Naomi in chapter 1. God lifts the famine and opens a way home for Naomi. He gives her an amazingly devoted and loving daughter-in-law to accompany her. And he preserves a kinsman of Naomi's husband who will some day marry Ruth and preserve Naomi's line. But Naomi sees none of this. At the end of the chapter, she says to the townspeople of Bethlehem, ‘I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the Lord has afflicted me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?’ (v.21). So Ruth and bitter Naomi settle in Bethlehem.” (*John Piper*)
- In verse 2, Ruth takes the initiative in caring for herself and her mother in law.
- “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God.” (*Leviticus 19:9-10*)
- “When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over them again. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not strip it afterward. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this. (*Deuteronomy 24:19-22*)
- Ruth qualifies: She is a widow; She is from Moab (a sojourner); She is poor
- What would it mean for us to remember our own poverty and act in mercy based on that memory?

### What Does this say about the Character of our God?

- “And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech.” (v.3)
- This is hardly an accident; “The author's real meaning in 2:3 is actually the opposite of what he says. The labelling of Ruth's meeting with Boaz as ‘chance’ is nothing more than the author's way of saying that no human intent was involved. For Ruth and Boaz it was an accident, but not for God.” (*Hals*)
- There are no accidents on the way to redemption.
- “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.” (*Genesis 3:15*)
- Ruth and Naomi are on the road to redemption-- but so are we.
- “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham....and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of David the king....” (*Matthew 1:5-6*)
- There is redemption and a Redeemer, even as Ruth, poor and grief-stricken gleans.
- Jesus is King and Redeemer today. He is also King of your future.