

Glorious Gospel Publication



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GRACE AT WORK

Part 1
Jack Davis



“For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

I Cor. 15:9,10

I am impressed that the Apostle Paul placed such great emphasis on “good works,” especially being mindful that the ministry which he received of the Lord Jesus was to testify the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24). Yet when we consider grace as God’s influence upon the heart and its reflection in the life, we realize that “good works” are an outward expression of an inward working, and that the only **good** works are produced by grace. A heart revelation of the grace of God will not make one lax or lazy. God’s grace revealed in Paul was not barren but productive. He could honestly say, “If I **am** anything, if I **do** anything, it is all of the grace of God.” Grace turned Paul about face, from dead works unto good works, making him a pattern for us. “Works” in the New Testament speak of toil (as effort or occupation) implying an act, deed or labor. The word “good” when used with “works” generally speaks of that which is beneficial, beautiful, valuable or virtuous.

“We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation. Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be no blamed” – II Cor. 6:1-3.

This is our time to appreciate and appropriate the grace that brings forth fruit which is not of fear but of faith; not slavish labor, nor of duty, but of loving devotion. Many of God’s people who claim to see the grace of God ignore its stirrings, refusing to let it affect their lives.

PROVISION

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained (or, prepared) that we should walk in them” Eph. 2:10. This describes the way we are made, “created in Christ Jesus.” We are built to walk in His good works.

“And God is able to make all grace **abound** toward you that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may **abound** in every good work” II Cor. 9:8. Let us rest assured that we have full resources to do anything and everything that God asks of us. God intends that we each live useful, fruitful (spiritually productive) lives. He would use us to bless and benefit others. He must enable us to overcome the indifference of those that would defeat and discourage us from spiritual exercise, holy ambition and heavenly zeal. These are not speaking of fleshly fervor or religions zeal, and are quite opposite of floating down stream on a bed of

indifference. We read in scripture of many being transformed and given elevated occupations and doing greater works.

Jesus said, “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. Then said they unto him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” Jn. 6:27-29.

The scriptures make it very clear that all “good works” are carried out by **faith** in God’s marvelous grace. Jn. 14:12-13, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be **glorified** in the Son.”

Jesus, on His way to the cross and to heaven, promised to provide for **greater** works: greater in scope, wider spread, multiplied and by which the Father would be glorified. This would be possible because He was going to send the Holy Spirit, and because He also would be at the right hand of the Father making intercession. As we commit ourselves wholly unto the Lord, to do His will, we find that we have inexhaustible resources. God supplies all our need according to His riches in glory. We can shout with Paul, “I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.” Our Lord desires us to put to wise practical use all that He has

placed at our disposal. God asked Moses, “What is that in thine hand?” The rod that God placed in his hand was found to be that which was useful, helpful; but when Moses cast it down, it became a serpent, and he fled from before it. In other words, it became that which was harmful. Let us heed the admonition, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave...” Ecc. 9:10. Only one life, twill soon be past. Oh, let us occupy with that which will last!

PREPARATION

“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” II Tim. 2:20-21.

Many times we think, how wonderful it would be to be used of God. Yet most of us do not want to go through the expense of preparation. That is never more evident than when we have taken God’s Word to heart and He begins to do a purging and purifying within. Scriptural instruction and spiritual equipment are freely provided, so we won’t waste a lot of fleshly effort in trying to perform God’s will. Effectual use thereof does require some diligence.

II Tim. 2:15, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. II Tim. 3:16-17, “All scripture is given by

inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

Let us never forget that our complete preparation is indeed **His** work. We must present ourselves before Him as clay, available to His hand, and submit to His wisdom and power. “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom to **glory** for ever and ever, Amen” Heb. 13:20-21.

We are taught by Paul that we are to do all things without murmurings and disputings, for it is God that works in us both the will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). He tells us that it is God’s power that is to do the work in us (Eph. 3:20). He also says that His Word works effectually in those that believe (I Thess. 2:13). From these and other scripture, we may clearly understand that the Trinity is involved in making us competent workmen.

To be continued

*And shall I use these ransomed powers of mine
For things that only minister to me?
Lord, take my tongue, my hands, my heart, my all,
And let me live and love and give for thee!*

What does the Bible say?

When will the church be called up to heaven, before, during or after tribulation?

The Apostle Paul tells us in I Cor. 15:22-23, “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order (or rank).” According to the book of Revelation, there are three distinct ranks of believers in the Church, which will be translated and resurrected at different times.

The first rank overcomers are promised in chapter 3:10, “Because thou hast kept the Word of My patience, I also will **keep thee from the hour of temptation**, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” They are seen arriving first in heaven and present in the throne room, viewing Christ taking His throne (the elders and the living creatures, redeemed out of every kindred, tongue and people and nation). Their promised reward is also the greatest (chapters 4-5). They are kept out, taken up before tribulation judgment.

The second group are seen in heaven in Rev. 7:9. They “**came out of great tribulation**” V. 14. They are a great multitude which no man could number of all nations, kindreds, and people and tongues. They have no crowns nor seated on thrones like the first group. They have tasted of the judgment of the world because they judged not

themselves by the Word of God (I Cor. 11:31-32). But God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes V. 17.

The third rank is seen in Rev. 7:4-8 being sealed while on the earth. They are the 144,000, a special group all of Israel (12,000 from each tribe). They are seen in heaven in chapter 14:1-5. They sing a new song before the throne, and before the first rank overcomers V. 3.

All the church will be in heaven before the revelation of the Antichrist on earth and the terrible days of Jacob's trouble (the last 3 1/2 years of tribulation). Which will be cut short by God or no flesh would be saved – Mt. 24:22.

E. J. Davis

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***Be an overcomer with the Lord,
Armored for the conflict, by His Word;
Waiting for His orders , yield your hand,
Going on to win at God's command.***

***Be an overcomer in the fight,
Loyal as a witness to the light;
Stand against the foe in Canaan's land,
Faint, yet e'er pursuing with God's band.***

***Be an overcomer, choose to share
Jesus' deep abasement tho' unfair;
Yet with Him in glory, tried and true,
Crowned with honors in the grand review.***

God Knows Best

Our Father knows what's best for us,
So why should we complain -
We always want the sunshine,
But He knows there must be rain -
We love the sound of laughter
And the merriment of cheer,
But our hearts would lose their tenderness
If we never shed a tear . . .
Our Father tests us often
With suffering and with sorrow,
He tests us, not to punish us,
But to help us meet TOMORROW . . .
For growing trees are strengthened
When they withstand the storm,
And the sharp cut of the chisel
Gives the marble grace and form . . .
God never hurts us needlessly,
And He never wastes our pain,
For every loss He sends to us
Is followed by rich gain . . .
And when we count the blessings
That God has so freely sent,
We will find no cause for murmuring
And no time to lament . . .
For our Father loves His children,
And to Him all things are plain,
So He never sends us PLEASURE
When the SOUL'S DEEP NEED IS PAIN . . .
So when ever we are troubled,
And when everything goes wrong,
It is just God working in us
To make OUR SPIRIT STRONG.

— Sent in by Patricia Thompson

THE LAST DAYS

Anita Clark



“And I stood upon the sand of the sea and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And I saw one of the heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.”

Revelation 13:1-5

This is speaking of the man empowered by Satan, we call the Antichrist. We see that he will come up out of the sea (Gentiles), and he will be allowed to continue his infamous reign for forty-two months (3 ½ years). He will be killed by some means that will create a wound that will be healed, thus fooling many people of the world into thinking that he is someone supernatural. They will worship him as a god. He will speak blasphemy against the true God, and persecute the saints (believers in Christ). He will be given power over “... all kindreds, and tongues, and nations (Vs. 7).” The

unbelievers will worship him (Vs.8), sealing their fate to be cast into the Lake of Fire for eternity.

HIS COUNTERPART will be the man called the False Prophet of Revelation 13:11-17. He will come up from “the earth,” which some believe means he will be of Jewish descent. As we read in Revelation 13:11, “...and he had two horns like a lamb.” He will be a religious leader. In many ways he will mimic Christ, but in make-believe meekness as a lamb, but his speech will betray him, for he will be very forceful and have extraordinary powers given him by Satan (Vs. 13-15.) Unbelieving people will be taken in by him, and will go along with his demands and worship of the Antichrist as God. He will initiate the “mark of the beast” (Vs 16) which will be the only way anyone can buy or sell. He will somehow give life to the image of the beast that he will set up in the Holy Place of the Temple (Vs.15). II Thessalonians 2:3-12 speaks of the Antichrist “...exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

ABILITY TO ENFORCE THE MARK – As we look around at the world today, we see signs that this world is moving to one world government. Recently, we hear news of nations turning to “Cashless societies.” This would be very instrumental in promoting the control of buying and selling by the Antichrist and False Prophet. Several countries of the world are now pushing for cash free purchasing power. Sweden is close to becoming a Cashless Society, while Israel is striving for it and the drive for this is gaining

momentum in Rwanda. The UN World Food program is pushing Smart Cards and digital Payments for purchasing food. The world has the technology now. You can see how this would be a tool to bring about the control of buying and selling during the reign of the Antichrist.

CHRIST JESUS WILL REIGN IN HEAVEN – Before AntiChrist can reign on earth as a counterfeit of Jesus Christ. Jesus will take His throne in the heavens at the beginning of the seven years of tribulation, from which He will orchestrate the judgment He will pour out upon the earth. The overcoming believers will be in heaven helping Him call forth the judgments on the earth during the seven years (Rev. 6:1, 5:8). Then, Revelation 19:11-20 shows Jesus coming back with His mighty army of believers who are already in heaven with Him. He will put down the Antichrist and False Prophet (Vs.20). And then will establish His Kingdom on the earth for one thousand years.

Be ready to go when He calls his overcomers, His Bride to come up to meet Him in the air! (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

***Onward to the Prize before us!
Soon His beauty we'll behold;
Soon the pearly gates will open,
We shall tread the streets of gold.***

Freedom Of Speech

“Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.” Colossians 4:6

We hear people use the phrase “freedom of speech” a lot in our country, because it is part of our bill of rights. We apparently have the right to say anything we want and no one can stop us. Unfortunately, this means that people often say things that should go unsaid. Just because we have the right to do something does not mean that we should do it.

It is very clear from the third chapter of James that what we say can affect other people; both for good and for bad. With our words we can build people up or we can tear them down. We can bring comfort or we can bring destruction.

Paul encourages us to “let” (allow) our speech to be with grace. Graceful speech comes from the life of Christ in us. The Holy Spirit enables us to speak words of encouragement and edification. James tells us the tongue is an unruly member that we cannot control. This is true, as it can only be controlled by the power of the Holy Spirit. We must allow Him to have control.

Nothing is more defining about a person than to listen to their speech. Not just the use of vulgarity, but the way one

speaks about others; the way one speaks to others. Some people are always negative in their speech. Some people are always condemning in their speech. Some people are condescending in their speech. And this goes on.

As God's people, we should be positive in our speech. We don't have condemnation to share, but grace. All of this comes as a result of what is in our heart. We claim to have Christ in us, and we claim to believe what God's Word says, but does our speech agree with that? When people hear us, do they know what we believe? Do they see Christ in us?

Speech that is seasoned with salt has a good flavor. Salt is used to enhance the flavor of the food. Speech seasoned with salt is something that people want to listen to. I'm not suggesting that people will always want to hear what we say, but they certainly should not be turned away by our speech because it is lacking in grace.

When people ask us about our faith or our relationship with Jesus, we should be able to answer them in a way that brings honor and glory to our Lord, and attracts them to Jesus.

Yes, we have the right to freedom of speech, but with every right comes a responsibility, and our responsibility is to allow the Holy Spirit to control our speech. This is true freedom of speech.

Gordon Crook

A Touching Poem

**Another day is dawning
another day's begun
another day to turn to God
and pray, "Thy will be done."
A day to slay doubt's dragon,
to know within your soul
that as you give yourself to Him
He'll bless and make you whole.**

**A day to live with purpose
a day to show you care
when others turn to you distraught
confused or in despair.**

**A day to share God's blessings
in quiet countless ways
that touch the heart with hope and joy
and brighten cloudy days.**

**A day for sweet rejoicing
for gratitude and praise
because His love enfolds you
both now, and all your days.**

**Sent in by Suresh Manoharan
Hyderabad-India**

HE GIVETH MORE GRACE

When our burdens grow great and we feel we have exhausted our strength, in His mercy **He gives us His strength and peace.** We can draw on God's back account of His infinite riches of grace and keep on drawing for there is no limit. That is what the Apostle Paul did. He had an objective, Phil. 3:7-11 – "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may **win Christ**, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead (out from among the dead ones)."

He let that objective control his whole life. The Lord told him when He called him – "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." And Paul certainly did suffer many things – privation, poverty, persecution and imprisonment, but they were only steps toward his objective.

Verses 12-16, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I **follow after**, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ

Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, **forgetting** those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I **press** toward the mark for **the prize** of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.”

Regardless of everything against him, Paul pursued, he pressed on. Acts 26:19, he was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision and hope. His words to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:22-24 are an example to us, “And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me (or, wait for me). But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so **that I might finish my course with joy**, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”

May we have the same objective controlling our lives and ever pressing on to that end. Phil. 3:17, Paul admonishes us, “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample (or example).” When he met Christ on the road to Damascus, he turned from all the attractions of the religious world and **followed Jesus**. Its fame and honors were as nothing after one glimpse of the Man in glory. Nothing ever moved him to

turn from his objective to win Christ. He had objectives before, but they were all wrong. He had a boast and confidence in himself. He excelled in the Jews religion, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, a keeper of the law he thought and a zealous Pharisee. So zealous he persecuted the church of God, going after them, even to strange cities. He was moving up the ladder in His religion. Then he met the Lord and those things that had been gain to him, he counted **loss for Christ**.

The Lord graciously let Paul know before he departed this life that he had obtained his objective. II Tim. 4:6-8, “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have **fought** a good fight, I have **finished** my course, I have **kept** the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me **a crown** of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” The crowns are “**laid up**” for the victors who have reached their objective and have won Christ.

In Revelation 4:3-4 we read of a heavenly scene when Christ takes His throne. “...he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders ((overcoming saints) sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads **crowns of gold**.” Verse 10 and 11 tells us what they did with their crowns. “The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that

liveth for ever and ever, and **cast their crowns before the throne**, saying, **Thou art worthy**, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

We read of the time that Jesus Christ will come to earth to judge the world in Revelation 19:11-16, “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were **many crowns**; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies (all the saints) which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Are not the many crowns, the crowns cast at His feet in chapter 4:10. HE IS THE WORTHY ONE. All glory, honor and power be unto HIM. Amen.

E. J. Davis

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***He's wonderful, He's marvelous,
God's own son;
He loves you true, and he wants to do,
A new work in you.***

RUTH

Debra Isenbletter

Ruth 3:9 – “And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.”

The first thing Boaz does is ask: “Who art thou?” – He asks Ruth to identify herself. Boaz may not have known who she was in the dark and before he does or says anything else he asks her to identify herself and in doing this she will also tell him why she is there and what she wants. Boaz is a type of Jesus but unlike Boaz knows who we are! When He asks us this question, it is because He wants to be sure we know who we are and who He is! He is waiting for us to declare ourselves. He is waiting for us to acknowledge He is our Master and our Lord. He is waiting for us to acknowledge we are His servants. Ruth does all this when she gives her answer. Do we know who we are in Christ? Ruth could tell Boaz who she was; can we do the same when our Boaz asks us this question? We are so many things and He is so many things to us! We are a **new creation** (2 Cor 5:17); and a **new man** created in righteousness and holiness (Eph 4:24). We are a **holy temple** belonging to God (1 Cor 3:16-17) a place where He dwells and we are sons (1 John 3:1-2) **born of God** through the new birth. But we began first and continue always to be servants and as His servants we show forth that holiness (Ro 6:16). This is how Ruth answers, she begins by declaring this, she never let go of this attitude of

serving and belonging to Boaz. Later she will enjoy all the blessings from her relationship with him and be seen as more than a servant. So too will we, but knowing who we are and what we are to Christ enables us to come to Him and lay hold of Him in a greater way. By learning to serve we learn to rule and reign!

Ruth's answer is a beautiful one. She gives her name: "I am Ruth" and by this name she is identifying who she is, Boaz will recognize her by her name. She is Naomi's daughter in law. She gives another description of herself that shows another relationship. She says: "I am ... thine handmaid." She is the woman who has labored in his fields. The word "handmaid" means "bond-servant." She describes her place and her service. She shows her humility and respect.

"The word handmaid was a term of humility or obeisance; it was a token of respect or submission used by the speaker before a great man or God." (Bible Encyclopedia).

This isn't the first time she has told Boaz this, that she was his "handmaid." When she first met him she said, "I am a stranger" (2:10). When she thanked him for his gracious words and his grace she was utterly his, she called herself "thine handmaid" (2:13), she was no longer a stranger, she had found a place and purpose. Ruth is emphasizing two things. First that she is his "thine handmaid" "I am thine" and second she is his servant, Ruth identifies herself as his handmaid twice in this verse, she sees its importance and it is her link to him. She has deliberately left out the word Moabite and emphasized instead her service and

submission to him. She has forgotten and been forgiven her past. She has let go of her past so that she can embrace her future. The name of Ruth is mentioned 12 times in this book. The words “the Moabitess” is used five times with that name to describe her (1:22; 2:2;2:21; 4:5; 4:10) and in the other seven references to Ruth it is not mentioned, she is described in other ways. She is Ruth, the woman who married Naomi’s son (1:4); who would not let go of Naomi (1:14); who accepted Naomi’s God and people (1:16). She is Ruth, the young woman that Boaz called “my daughter” (2:8) and who Naomi advised (2:22). Here she is Ruth the servant who will later be known as Ruth his wife (4:13).

Ruth’s words tell Boaz of her present relationship, and it is from this relationship that she begins her request. She does not want to let go of that relationship and yet she wants more. As “his handmaid” she reminds him of her service and her faithfulness and also of his present protection. This is how her relationship began; it is the foundation for what she is about to claim. This is how we begin our relationship with our Boaz, with Jesus. We begin as His servants, as there we prove ourselves as we prove Him. The Apostle Paul emphasized the importance of faithful service, of doing it “**heartily**” or from the heart and knowing that there was a **reward** for that service because of the One we serve. He said “ye serve the Lord Christ” (Col 3:23-24), we should never forget that and because it is Christ we serve there is that promised reward. Ruth saw by faith the reward promised through the Word, so should we. She comes wanting more and our Boaz is waiting for us to do the same.

So what does Ruth request? She says: “spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid.” It seems an unusual request by our customs or standards but it is a wonderful request. Ruth is requesting both protection and marriage. The word “spread” means “stretch out; stretch forth” and this shows that the action is on the part of Boaz, it is something he must do. Ruth must wait and see how he reacts. The word “skirt” means “a corner,” “a wing, and feathers.” This is how she sees his garment; it is not just any covering, but a special covering, a tender covering, a protective covering. This same word “skirt” is translated as “wings” in Ruth 2:12. Boaz had said to her: “The Lord recompense thy work and a full reward be given thee” for what she had done and given up in following Naomi, loving her and loving God. Boaz saw that she had already trusted in the Lord, he described her trust in this way: “under whose wings thou art come to trust.” Ruth had already trusted in the covering and protection of the Lord God of Israel but now it is Boaz that she has come to. Boaz is the **“full reward”** promised her! Now she is laying claim to the “wings” of Boaz (3:9).

“She had already drawn part of the mantle over her; and she asked him now to do it, that the act might become his own. To spread a skirt over one is, in the East, a symbolical action denoting protection. To this day in many parts of the East to say of any one that he put his skirt over a woman is synonymous with saying that he married her; and at all the marriages of the modern Jews one part of the ceremony is for the bridegroom to put a silken or cotton cloak around his bride” (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown).

I had never thought of that before, that Ruth had already drawn a part of his mantle over her and now she is asking Boaz to do it, not just a corner but the whole garment. She is asking him to show his acceptance of her, to complete the promise she is laying claim to. Ruth wants to enter into a deeper relationship. She is asking for **marriage**, the greatest union and protection that Boaz can give.

Looking back again at that “skirt” or “wings,” we see a wonderful provision set before us. Elsewhere in the Word of God when that word “wings” is used, we see that they cast a great shadow; a wonderful shadow and those that rest under these wings have a great assurance. David found under the shadow of those wings the “loving kindness” of God (Ps 36:7) and a “refuge” from calamities (Ps 57:1) and while resting there he could “rejoice” (Ps 63:7). The Psalmist says that the shadow of the wings of the Almighty is a “secret place” (Ps 91:1). How wonderful when we come to the Lord, and we ask Him to spread his skirt or wings over us! He can do this now and while we wait for Him to claim us as His Bride we find that same refuge and experience that same joy!

We see this protection, this claiming by spreading the skirt over someone picture marriage in Ezekiel. There he tells us God spread His skirt over His people in the same way. It was a love relationship and a covenant relationship. “Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee ... and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.” (Ezek 16:8). When God cast His garment over His people and they were married. (Isa 54:5).

We come to the feet of our Boaz, the Lord Jesus Christ, and we make this request. Today is a time of preparation and a time of waiting and a time of serving, but it is also a time when we come to Jesus and **lay claim to Him**. There are a lot of distractions in the world, think about Ruth. She could have sought out and married a younger man; Boaz mentioned they were younger men she could have gone after (3:10). They could have been interested in her, they could have provided for her, she could have had some security, some provision, some blessing. But she wanted more. We can go after lesser things or we can go after Boaz, we can obtain partial blessings or we can obtain a full reward, a full blessing. Ruth did this, she chose Boaz who could give her the greatest blessing of all. Her choice shows a desire for a **deeper relationship**. Her choice shows the accepting of the espousal that Paul tells us of (2 Cor 11:2). Her choice is saying as Rebecca, “I will go” (Gen 24:58). Her choice shows a greater commitment, and a greater love. Ruth ends her request with her justification, she says: “for thou art a near kinsman” or a “redeeming kinsman.” Her choice rests upon Redemption.

“And now, for the first time we hear Ruth claiming. She **claims** Boaz as a kinsman-redeemer and insists upon her rights. This puts him under obligation and he does not shift the responsibility. He appears to appreciate the confidence she shows in him.” (Mary M. Bodie)

To be continued

I WANT TO BE A LIVING TESTIMONY

***Help me to walk so close to Thee
That those who know me best can see
I live as godly as I pray
And Christ is real from day to day.***

***I see some once a day, or year,
To them I blameless might appear;
'Tis easy to be kind and sweet
To people whom we seldom meet,***

***But in my home are those who see
Too many times the worst of me.
My hymns of praise were best unsung
If He does not control my tongue.***

***When I am vexed and sorely tried
And my impatience cannot hide,
May no one stumble over me
Because Thy love they failed to see.***

***But give me, Lord, through calm and
strife***

***A gracious and unselfish life:
Help me with those who know me best
For Jesus sake, to stand the test.***

– B. C. R.