

## Real Ones: Real Love in Real Relationships, Chapter 2

### Introduction:

- Have you ever felt unseen or unnoticed?
- I once saw a video of a prank where a child's family all agreed to pretend that the child was invisible. At first, it was funny, but as the child realized that no one could see or hear them, they began to cry. Imagine how terrifying that would be—wondering if you would always be invisible to the people around you. **Would it always be this way?**
- The prank is a little funny to think about, but maybe you've felt that way too. Even if you don't, there are many people walking through life around us who feel that way every day. In today's message, we'll see that (Big Idea) **Real Love is kind enough to see.**

### Review the series

- We've been in a series talking about relationships and how we can reflect God's character in each of our relationships.
- **Our character choices can reflect God's character. Therefore, God can show up in everything we do and in every relationship we have.**

Review last week's message: We've been looking at the story of Ruth. Last week we saw how Ruth displays God's faithfulness (Commitment) to Naomi who is questioning God's faithfulness in her present trouble.

This week we'll see that real love is kind enough to see.

### I. Ruth sees a need and fulfills it (vv. 1-3)

→ We get to see a little bit more of Ruth's character here.

1. We already saw Ruth's faithfulness and commitment to Naomi last week when Ruth left her family and life behind to be with Naomi. We see it again here as Ruth decides she will roll up her sleeves and find some food for Naomi.
2. This is important because in those days, to be a widow like Ruth and Naomi meant that they had no one to provide for them *or* to protect them. Ruth and Naomi's situation was unstable and uncertain.
3. Ruth **sees** this need and then decides to do something about it. Ruth is hard-working, committed, and humble enough to think of Naomi, even though she didn't have much power, money, or opportunities. She was thoughtful about what she *could* do to help.

4. This is our first example of love in today's part of the story. Someone with real love sees a need and asks "What can I do to help?" They are willing to show love, even if it means getting uncomfortable and doing hard work

→ **ILL:** Leader Note: You might share a time someone took care of a need for you. Maybe a parent, friend, or even a stranger stepped in when you needed it. Acts of service is one of the five love languages, and for many, being cared for in practical ways means a lot. You can also give space for students to share or talk with a neighbor.

→ **App:** What needs do you see around you? Are there ways you can show love by stepping in and helping, even if it's inconvenient or uncomfortable?

**Transition: As we move into the next scene of the story, we get to meet a new and very important character: Boaz. What kind of person will Boaz be?**

## II. Boaz sees Ruth and shows kindness (vv. 4-16)

→ Verse 1 introduces Boaz, a relative of Naomi. This connection will be important later, but for now, we see his kindness.

→ Boaz sees Ruth—not just physically, but he notices her situation. Instead of ignoring her, he steps in to help. Boaz isn't just kind; he's *generous*. In the Old Testament, God had created a law that allowed the poor in Israel to glean all the leftovers of the fields that were harvested. As a good Israelite, Boaz would at least allow Ruth to gather some grain—but he does much more than that.

→ He protects Ruth and provides for her.

1. He gives her a safe place to work (v. 8-9). She would have been vulnerable in other fields where men could take advantage of the poor women who would work there.

2. He ensures she has water and food (v. 9, 14). (Usually foreigners and women would have to go get water for the men, but Boaz gives Ruth access to the water that's already been prepared). He gives her extra grain—enough for her to eat and have some leftover (v. 14)

3. He tells his workers to leave extra grain for her (v. 15-16). Boaz makes the hard work much easier for Ruth.

→ As a widow and as a foreigner (an immigrant) in that time, Ruth was an outsider. Someone who was unseen, forgotten, and neglected. Imagine how refreshing it would be for someone to **see** her—and to have kindness in their eyes.

→ **APP/Discussion Question:** Have you ever felt like an outsider? What has made you feel that way? When was a time you truly felt seen and cared for? How great would it be if we did that for other people?

### III. Naomi sees God's kindness through Boaz. (vv. 17-23)

- When Ruth comes home with an abundance of food, Naomi is shocked. She asks where Ruth worked and when she hears Boaz's name, she recognizes God's provision. How?
  1. Naomi realizes that Boaz is one of her relatives, which means that he could marry Ruth and rescue them from their unstable situation (remember, widows in that time were extremely vulnerable and had no one to protect or provide for them). **Leader note: It's important to stress this point without giving the impression that women inherently need a husband to have a fulfilling life. This point is the way society functioned at that time. It's not a statement about the fundamental nature of men and women.**
  2. Naomi blesses Boaz, saying, "*He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead*" (v. 20).
  3. The wording is ambiguous—it's unclear to whom Naomi is referring. Is she talking about Boaz or God showing kindness? I think it's unclear for a reason, and that's because the answer is both. **God's kindness is being shown *through* Boaz's kindness.**
- Naomi, who in chapter 1 was bitter and doubting God's faithfulness, now begins to see *hope* again. And this is all because Boaz *saw Ruth* and reflected God's kindness through his actions.
- Remember, **our character choices can reflect God's character. Therefore, God can show up in everything we do and in every relationship we have.**

#### Conclusion:

In this story we see that **real love is kind enough to see**. So a good question to ask is, who in your life needs to be *seen* right now? How can you take action to show them love? Are your relationships reflecting the kindness that truly sees someone and cares about them? Or are your relationships all about you?

God sees the outsider—do you?

#### Discussion Questions

1. What resonated with you from the message?
2. Have you ever felt unseen or unnoticed, like an outsider? What has made you feel that way?
3. Why do you think feeling invisible can be so painful?
4. Who in your life do you think might feel unseen? What could you do to change that?