

RUTH 2:1-13

As Chance Would Chance

Pause for a minute and consider how unlikely the events and people in your life are. What are the chances you met your spouse the way you did? What are the chances a job opened at just the right time? What are the chances we would meet the people we know and love? It is incredible to contemplate.

When I would visit my grandfather as a child, I noticed that the people of his hometown were careless with their pocket change. I'd look around the ground and find coins everywhere. I discovered later that my grandfather was dropping them for me. What are the chances? Pretty high when we contemplate the God of the universe.

The open chapter of Ruth ended with despair and sorrow. The second chapter begins with hope. We are introduced to Boaz who, as luck would have it, is a relative of Elimelech (Naomi's late husband) who was "a worthy" (vs. 1) and wealthy man. Ruth would regularly "glean among the ears of grain" (vs. 2) as a means of providing for her and her mother-in-law – a common practice for the poor in ancient Israel.

It just so happened (literally, "her chance chanced" in vs. 3) that the day she gleaned in Boaz's field, he showed up. And immediately Boaz is smitten with her (see vs. 5). He visits with her and immediately provides and protects her. He secures a greater harvest for her and her mother-in-law while putting her in a position that would keep her safe. As a young, widowed woman of deep poverty, she was vulnerable. Boaz saw to it she was secure.

Ruth responds with both gratitude and confusion. Why would Boaz, this handsome and wealthy man, take notice of her? He highlights her character and love. Any woman who would sacrifice her well-being for that of her mother-in-law was someone worth honoring (see vs. 11-12).

Ruth is grateful for Boaz's kindness. She rightly understands this is the Lord's provision. No doubt the previous days had been difficult for both her and Naomi. Little does she know, this kind man will provide more than extra wheat, but a home and a family (spoiler alert).

The story of Boaz's arrival directs the reader to contemplate God's invisible hand of providence. The Lord is orchestrating events on earth. He is sovereign over our lives and story. One wonders if Ruth had surrendered herself to despair and hopelessness when, suddenly, her chance chanced. The invisible hand of providence had become visible for both Ruth and Boaz.

It is vital that people of faith hope in the providence of God. We can never know the *Why* but we can place our faith in the *Who*. God is in control even when all we see is chaos. God sovereignly orchestrated events in Ruth's life just as he does in ours.

If ever we forget the Lord's providence, we need to look no farther than the cross. There, as the story of Ruth will illustrate, the providence and grace of God meet. Those at the foot of the cross saw injustice and evil, but "for those of us being saved," (1 Corinthians 1:18) we see grace and love. Tragedy does not mitigate God's power but rather draws us to faith knowing God is in complete control.