The Sunday School Lesson — October 18, 2026 • God Our Provider

Word in Rhythm™

Annual Theme: God's Unchanging Hand
Quarterly Theme: The Hand That Establishes
Week 7: God Our Provider
Lesson Scripture: Ruth 2:8–18, KJV

Memory Verse:

"The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." — Ruth 2:12, KJV

Aim for Change: By the end of the lesson, we will understand how Boaz met Ruth and Naomi's need for survival, sympathize with someone we know who is in need, and determine ways to help meet someone's needs.

Lesson Thesis: God makes His provision visible through people whose trust in Him becomes practical care, protection, and generosity toward their neighbors.

The Lesson

Ruth and Naomi arrive in Bethlehem with a family history marked by loss. Naomi has buried her husband and both sons. Ruth has buried her husband and left her homeland to remain with Naomi. Their relationship is strong, but their circumstances are fragile. They need food.

Ruth asks permission to glean, gathering what remains after the harvesters have passed through a field. God's law has provided this opportunity for the poor and the stranger. Ruth steps into that provision with a willingness to work, and she comes to the field of Boaz, a relative of Naomi's late husband.

The reader is allowed to see something Ruth does not yet understand: this field belongs to someone connected to her family. The story presents an ordinary day of work within a larger movement of providence. Ruth does not need to understand the whole future before taking the faithful step available that morning.

Boaz notices her. He learns about her loyalty to Naomi and her decision to leave her homeland. His response shows us how faith can shape the use of property, authority, speech, and opportunity.

I. God's Provision Makes Room for the Vulnerable — Ruth 2:8–9

"Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens:" — Ruth 2:8, KJV

"Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? And when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn." — Ruth 2:9, KJV

Boaz begins by giving Ruth a place to remain. "My daughter" addresses her with familial warmth. He directs her to stay near his female workers, assures her that he has instructed the men not to touch her, and gives her access to their water.

These details show that Ruth's need extends beyond grain. She needs a place where she can work safely. As a foreign widow, she is exposed to mistreatment, and Boaz uses his authority to establish protection.

Generosity includes the conditions under which help is offered. An opportunity loses much of its value when someone must endure intimidation or exploitation to receive it. Boaz takes responsibility for what happens in his field.

This reaches into our households, workplaces, churches, and ministries. Who can participate safely? Who is easily overlooked? Whose vulnerability requires those with authority to act?

Teaching Truth: Faithful care makes room for people to receive help without being exposed to harm.

II. God's Provision Recognizes the Person Behind the Need — Ruth 2:10–13

"Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?" — Ruth 2:10, KJV

"The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." — Ruth 2:12, KJV

Ruth is surprised that Boaz has taken notice of her. Her question reveals how conscious she is of being a stranger. She does not assume she will receive personal attention or welcome.

Boaz answers by acknowledging her story. He knows about her care for Naomi, her bereavement, and the homeland she has left. He sees a person whose faithfulness has carried a cost.

Then he directs her hope toward the Lord. Ruth has come to seek refuge beneath the wings of Israel's God. The image speaks of shelter and protection. Her commitment to Naomi has brought her among God's people, and Boaz recognizes her trust in their God.

His blessing does not establish a formula in which good conduct guarantees material success. Within this story, he asks God to honor Ruth's costly faithfulness. We should receive that prayer without turning it into a promise that every faithful person will quickly escape hardship.

Ruth says his words have comforted her. Before the day's harvest reaches Naomi's home, kindness has already reached Ruth's heart.

Teaching Truth: God's care becomes visible when we attend to someone's story and speak in ways that restore dignity and hope.

III. God's Provision Becomes Deliberate Generosity — Ruth 2:14–16

"And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left." — Ruth 2:14, KJV

"And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not." — Ruth 2:16, KJV

Boaz invites Ruth to eat with the harvesters. She receives roasted grain, eats until satisfied, and has some remaining. The woman who came to gather leftovers is welcomed into a shared meal.

Then Boaz makes further provision intentional. He instructs the workers to let her glean among the sheaves and to leave grain deliberately for her. He also commands them not to reproach or rebuke her.

He goes beyond simply allowing Ruth access to what the law required. He considers what would help her succeed, gives clear instructions, and addresses how the workers must treat her.

"Handfuls of purpose" is a memorable expression of deliberate kindness. Boaz does not leave the matter at a sympathetic feeling. He arranges a practical response.

We can do the same within our means. We can set aside time, make a useful introduction, share food, help someone navigate a process, or create an opportunity. Generosity becomes concrete when we decide what we can give and follow through.

Teaching Truth: Compassion matures into generosity when we intentionally use what we have to help meet another person's need.

IV. God's Provision Reaches Beyond the First Recipient — Ruth 2:17–18

"So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley." — Ruth 2:17, KJV

“And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed.” — Ruth 2:18, KJV

Ruth continues working until evening. She threshes what she has gathered and carries a substantial amount of barley home. She also shares the food remaining from her meal.

Boaz’s generosity and Ruth’s labor work together in this scene. She receives an opportunity, protection, food, and deliberate assistance. Her effort operates within that provision.

Naomi benefits even though she has not been present in the field. Ruth carries the day’s kindness into their household. A woman who returned to Bethlehem speaking of emptiness begins to see tangible evidence of care.

One person’s generosity can reach people the giver never sees. Help offered to a caregiver may strengthen an entire household. Support given to a parent may reach a child. An opportunity offered to one person may make life more bearable for several others.

Teaching Truth: Provision received with gratitude can become care shared with others.

Prayer

Father, thank You for seeing us in our need. Give us humility to receive help and courage to take the faithful steps available to us. Teach us to notice the people within our reach, listen to their stories, and use our resources with wisdom and generosity. Let our words offer comfort and our actions make that comfort tangible. Form us through the grace we have received in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reflection Questions

1. **Biblical Understanding:** What did Boaz provide for Ruth besides permission to gather grain?
2. **Theological Insight:** How do Boaz’s actions help us understand his prayer about refuge beneath God’s wings?
3. **Community Reflection:** What would need to change for vulnerable people to receive help safely and with dignity in our community?
4. **Personal Application:** What practical act of generosity can I intentionally carry out this week?
5. **Spiritual Formation:** Where is God teaching me to receive help humbly or share what I have more freely?

Cathedral Notes

Foundation

God's provision becomes visible in Ruth's life through the faithful use of resources, authority, and relationships. Boaz offers safety, welcome, nourishment, and opportunity; Ruth receives his kindness, works within the provision available to her, and carries its benefits home to Naomi.

Pillars

- **Protection belongs to provision.** Boaz establishes conditions in which Ruth can glean safely, using his authority to prevent mistreatment.
- **Attention honors the person.** Boaz recognizes Ruth's grief, loyalty, and costly commitment, responding to her as someone whose story matters.
- **Kind words can carry comfort.** Ruth explicitly identifies Boaz's speech as a source of consolation, showing that care reaches both material and emotional needs.
- **Generosity can be deliberate.** Boaz directs his workers to leave grain for Ruth, turning compassion into a specific practice.
- **Receiving and responsibility can work together.** Ruth accepts assistance and continues laboring faithfully within the opportunity she has been given.
- **Care can reach an entire household.** Ruth shares both her harvest and her remaining food with Naomi, extending the kindness she received.

Roof

The field of Boaz becomes a place where refuge beneath God's wings takes practical form. As we trust the Lord's care, we learn to receive help without shame and offer it with dignity, allowing His generosity toward us to shape our treatment of our neighbors.

Expanded Exegesis

1. Historical Setting

Ruth 1:1 places the story in the days when the judges ruled. A famine prompted Elimelech's household to leave Bethlehem for Moab. Following the deaths of Elimelech and his sons, Naomi returned with Ruth when she heard that the Lord had given His people bread.

Their arrival coincided with the beginning of barley harvest (Ruth 1:22). This detail establishes the opportunity through which their immediate need could be met. The book does not identify which judge was serving during these events or provide a precise date.

2. Prophet

No named prophet appears in this passage. God's previously given instruction about gleaning provides the covenant background for the scene. Boaz acts within a responsibility already established in the law given through Moses; Moses was not a contemporary of Ruth.

3. King

Israel had no reigning human king during the period in which Ruth's story takes place. David appears at the end of the book's genealogy as a future descendant of Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 4:17–22). His later kingship belongs to the story's outcome, rather than its immediate setting.

4. Concurrent Prophets

The book does not identify prophets ministering concurrently with Ruth and Boaz. Because its events cannot be securely assigned to a particular judge's tenure, naming a specific contemporary prophet would go beyond the evidence.

5. Literary Context

Chapter 1 establishes bereavement, Ruth's commitment, and Naomi's sense of emptiness. Chapter 2 introduces provision and renewed possibility. Chapters 3–4 develop the matter of family redemption.

Boaz is identified as a relative before Ruth understands the significance of his identity. Her arrival at his field in Ruth 2:3 appears incidental from her perspective, while the narrative invites the reader to recognize providence unfolding through ordinary circumstances.

6. Cultural Background

Gleaning was grounded in commands to leave portions of the harvest for the poor and the stranger (Leviticus 19:9–10; 23:22). Deuteronomy 24:19–22 specifically includes the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, grounding this practice in Israel's memory of slavery in Egypt.

Ruth belongs to more than one of these vulnerable categories. Boaz honors the law's provision and extends additional care through his invitation to eat and his instructions concerning the sheaves.

The KJV's "parched corn" refers here to roasted grain, rather than modern maize. An ephah is a dry measure; its precise modern equivalent is uncertain, but the narrative presents Ruth's harvest as substantial.

7. Passage Structure

Verses 8–9 establish protection and access. Verses 10–13 interpret Boaz's kindness through Ruth's response and his blessing. Verses 14–16 move from welcome at the meal to deliberate assistance in the field. Verses 17–18 show the resulting provision reaching Naomi.

This progression moves from conditions for receiving help to the household's experience of its benefits. The details of safety, speech, food, labor, and sharing all contribute to the passage's picture of care.

8. Theological Significance

God's providence works through means: covenant instruction, harvest, human decisions, labor, and generosity. The narrative does not describe Boaz receiving a new revelation commanding each action. His conduct demonstrates how existing knowledge of God can shape practical judgment.

Ruth's faithfulness matters, but the passage should not become a prosperity formula. Boaz prays for God to reward her; the story describes a particular expression of divine care within the larger purposes of the book.

9. Christological Connection

Boaz's later role as a family redeemer provides a meaningful correspondence to Christ's redemption, while the differences remain significant. Boaz acts within Israel's family and property arrangements. Christ delivers His people from sin through His death and resurrection.

The book also makes a direct genealogical contribution: Ruth and Boaz stand in the family line leading to David, and Matthew 1:5–6 includes them in Jesus' genealogy. God's care for these widows participates in a redemptive history extending beyond what they could see.

10. Kingdom Insights

Boaz asks that Ruth receive refuge under God's wings. Later, Ruth asks Boaz to spread his "skirt" over her because he is a near kinsman (Ruth 3:9). The Hebrew word translated "skirt" can also mean "wing." This verbal connection brings the prayer for divine shelter into relationship with Boaz's responsibility to act.

The connection does not equate Boaz with God. It shows how a person may participate in the shelter for which he has prayed.

The gleaning commands also connect worship and economic conduct. Israel's remembrance of deliverance was meant to shape its treatment of vulnerable neighbors. Boaz's field illustrates a community practice through which dependence on God becomes visible in generosity.

11. Word Study

Grace/Favor: Ruth's question about finding "grace" concerns favor or acceptance. In this setting, the term describes Boaz's favorable regard toward her; its immediate meaning should be established before drawing broader connections to the biblical theology of grace.

Trust/Refuge: The word translated "trust" in verse 12 carries the sense of seeking refuge. Ruth's trust is pictured as finding shelter beneath God's wings.

Wings: The image communicates protection. Its recurrence in Ruth 3:9 helps connect divine refuge with the concrete responsibilities of family redemption.

12. Formation and Teaching Application

Teach the passage from the position of both giver and receiver. Some listeners have resources or authority they can use to help. Others need assistance and may struggle to acknowledge it. Ruth and Boaz provide room for both experiences.

Avoid implying that hardship proves a failure of faith or that sufficient effort always resolves need. Ruth's labor is important, and so are the protections, opportunities, and generosity that make her work fruitful.

A useful response is to identify one need, one available resource, and one practical action. The passage invites care thoughtful enough to notice the person and concrete enough to reach the household.