



Ruth 2

Faith in action

Seeing through women's eyes

Ruth and Naomi...

- concerned for security 3:1; 4:11
- aware of possible dangers
2:9, 22; 3:13-14
- know how the world of men
works 3:18

Seeing through women's eyes

The book of Ruth

- makes women's concerns visible
- shows us the different situation of women in the ancient world
- is not anti-men

The
author is
looking
back

- 'in the days when the judges ruled' 1:1
 - about 1400–1100 BC (Iron Age)
 - 'everyone did what was right in their own eyes' Judges 17:6; 21:25

The
author is
looking
back

- 'Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalising transactions in Israel.' 4:7
- Ruth as David's great-grandmother 4:16

Meet Naomi

- Israelite widow and migrant 1:3
 - migration because of famine 1:1
- Moabites were traditional enemies of Israel
Gen 19:37; Num 21:29; Judg 3:14
- Moabites worshipped Chemosh
1 Kings 11:33

Meet Naomi

- 1:5 triply bereaved
 - head of household of two other widows, Orpah and Ruth 1:4
- feels her experience as bitter
 - tells Orpah and Ruth to return to Moab 1:8-9, 11-13
 - 'Can this be Naomi?' 1:19
 - 'Mara' = 'bitter' 1:20

Ruth replied, 'Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. **Your people will be my people and your God my God.** Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.' 1:16-17

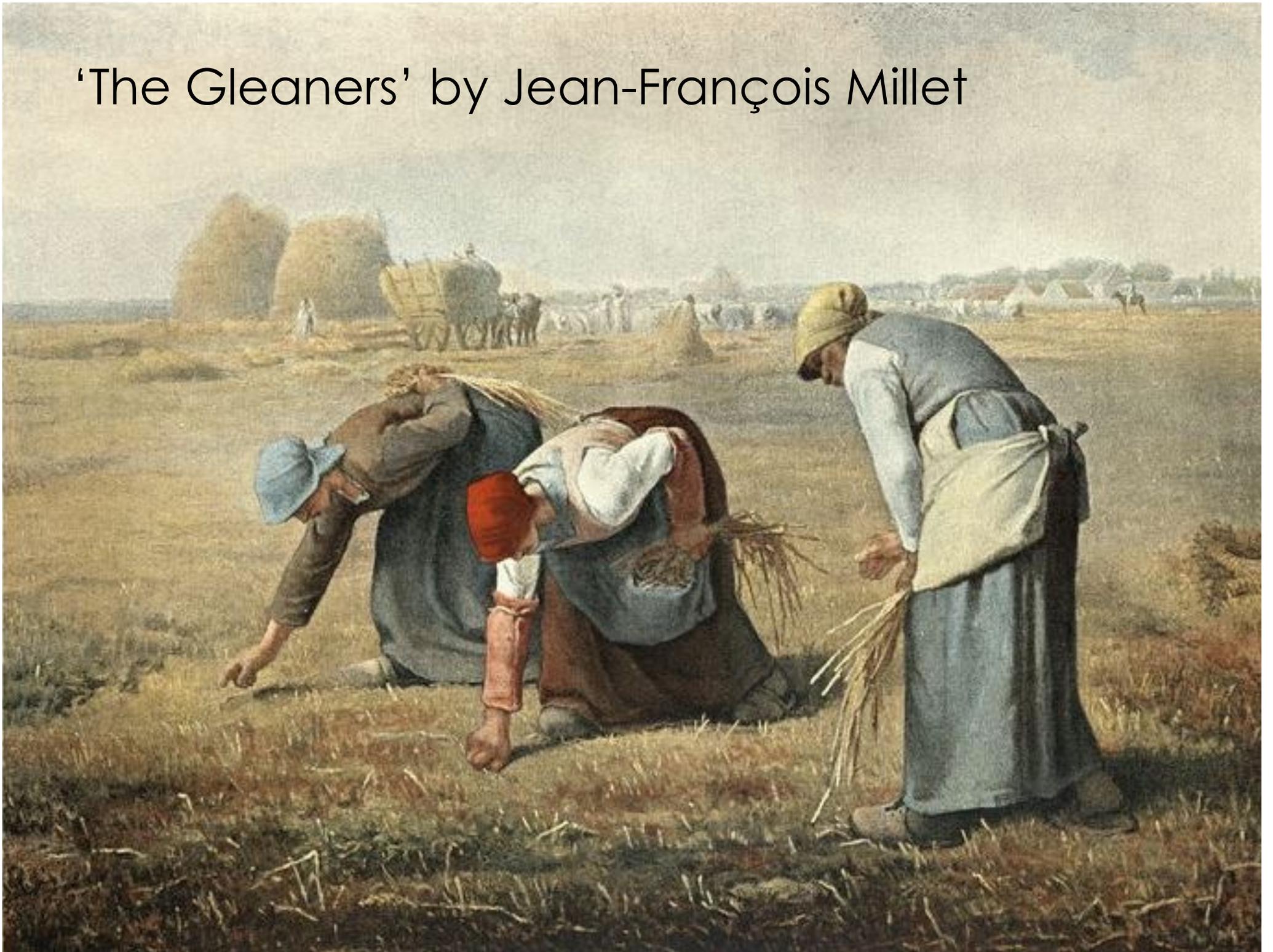
Ruth meets Boaz

- 'a man of standing' 2:1
- 'my daughter' 2:8; 3:10
- farmer with workers 2:4, 9
- close relative of Naomi 2:1, 20
- not the initiator of events—that's Ruth

Ruth meets Boaz

- gleaning 12x in story

'The Gleaners' by Jean-François Millet



Ruth meets Boaz

- gleaning 12x in story
- ‘When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. **Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow**, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.’ Deut 24:19

Ruth meets Boaz

- gleaning 12x in story
- ‘When you reap the harvest of your land, **do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you.** I am the LORD your God.’ Lev 23:22

Ruth meets Boaz

- helpful foreman vv 6-7
- Boaz knows about Ruth v 11
 - her commitment to Israel's God v 12
- Boaz supports and protects her vv 8, 9, 14
- Boaz is generous beyond the law vv 15-16

Ruth meets Boaz

- an ephah of grain v 17a
= 12–13 kg/26–28 lbs
 - plus lunch leftovers v 17b
- Naomi's mood is changing v 19
 - and Boaz is a family guardian v 20

Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, ‘Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favour.’ v 1

‘May you be richly rewarded by **the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.**’ v 12

Where is God in the story?

- rarely mentioned explicitly
 - ‘Naomi heard in Moab that **the LORD had come to the aid of his people** by providing food for them’ 1:6
 - ‘**the offspring the LORD gives you** by this young woman’ 4:13
 - Boaz prays for Ruth 2:12

How God works

- through people in tune with God
 - Ruth's courage vv 2, 6-7
 - 'As it turned out...' v 3
 - Boaz's generosity and kindness vv 8-9, 14-16
 - Naomi's prompting 3:1-4
 - Ruth's further courage 3:5

God
plays a
'long
game'

'The women living there said, "Naomi has a son!" And they named him **Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.**' 4:17

God
plays a
'long
game'

'Boaz the father of
Obed, **whose mother
was Ruth**, Obed the
father of Jesse, and
Jesse the father of
King David.'

Matthew 1:5-6

God
plays a
'long
game'

'This is **the
genealogy of Jesus
the Messiah** the son of
David, the son of
Abraham...

...Boaz the father of
Obed, whose mother
was Ruth, Obed the
father of Jesse, and
Jesse the father of
King David.'

Matthew 1:1, 5-6

Be like Ruth!

- glad for those from whom we learned the ways of faith
- ready to take risks for God
 - ‘Your word is **a lamp to my feet** and a light for my path’ Ps 119:105
- ready to be faithful in our time and place—and leave the outcome to God