

Wing Covering
a meditation based on
Ruth 3

What does Ruth mean by asking Boaz to “spread the corner of his garment over her”? What's with this strange ritual? “*Spread the corner of your garment over me.*” What Ruth is asking of Boaz is that he provide for her – and Naomi! -- wing covering. At this point you might ask, “What?” Or say, “Huh?” Or even, “Um, I don't get it!”

Wing covering. I really am impressed with how Ruth is described in this story. She is a Moabitess, a woman from Moab. She who was not a believer somehow, in a secret way, in the privacy of her own heart came to be a believer in Israel's God. She couldn't get enough of what this God was about; how he was all about ensuring, for example, that certain members of society, people who would otherwise be victims of injustice, be treated fairly; be treated with justice. She wanted to participate in this system of justice, so she tells Naomi (we heard last week) that she'll go into the field during the harvest, and grab hold of the *gleanings* made available for the poor. Ruth wanted to participate, she wanted to experience the benefits of belonging to the God who promoted justice like that. God almost seems obsessed with caring for the “sojourner” (we call them “immigrants” or “refugees”), the poor, the slave, the widow, the orphan (Edward F. Campbell).

Ruth desired to come under the protection of this God. She was looking for “salvation” from him because she understood that salvation didn't just mean, “Believe, and when you die you'll go to heaven.” She knew that it meant much more, that it had to do with a kingdom God was establishing here on earth; a kingdom worked first in his own people. Boaz recognizes this in her. So he says to her. “*May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge*” (Ruth 2:12).

When we come to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we come for wing cover. Why wing cover? It's how God himself describes redemption. “*You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself*” (Ex 19:3-4).

When God rescues us, he doesn't just leave us hanging somewhere out in space. **He brings us to himself!** He brings us under the shelter of his wings, under his protection. He does – in a much better fashion than Boaz – what Boaz does: he provides for our every need (spiritually AND physically); he protects us (even when we go through the rough stuff we will go through in this life); and he guides us. How

does he guide us? He does so by describing himself to us so we'll get a little glimpse of what he is all about. What does he say about himself? I just quoted from Exodus 19. Listen to what God says in Exodus 20. "*I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God*" (Ex 20:5).

What does this tell us about God, that he, with no shame, declares that he is jealous for us, his people? He has done everything to bring us to himself; into his presence; close to him, not far away from him. What have we done with what he has done for us?