

Bread in Bethlehem

Scripture Reading — Ruth 3:14-18

Don't go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed. — Ruth 3:17

Naomi and her family had left Bethlehem because of a famine, and she returned years later at the beginning of a harvest. Through Ruth, God had begun to alleviate Naomi's food problems with regular visits to Boaz's fields, but Naomi was still bereft of her husband and sons. Who would fill that emptiness?

When Ruth returned from the threshing floor, she poured out six measures of barley, telling Naomi that Boaz had said, "Don't go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed." Naomi was ecstatic, because she recognized that with this food Boaz had put a down payment on her family's future.

"Silver or gold I do not have," said the apostle Peter. "But what I do have I give you." And in Jesus' name he told a lame man to walk, and the man was able to walk—and to jump and to praise God too (Acts 3:6-10). In a similar way, Naomi was given renewed life. Ruth would bear a son. Naomi would have a family to take care of her—and through that family Israel would receive a king who would bring an end to the emptiness of the time of the judges.

We too have received a down payment: "You were marked in [Christ] with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory" (Ephesians 1:13-14).

Prayer

Help us, Lord, to live faithfully by your Spirit's guidance as we look forward to the time when our redemption will be complete. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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