A Sermon preached by Martin Tanner in St Mary's, Market Drayton on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2016 at 10.00am

SS5 RUTH: RUTH CHAPTER 3 v11 Matthew 5 v16 "Let your light..."

WHY was Boaz attracted to Ruth?

# Boaz said to Ruth, "ALL the people of my town KNOW that you are a woman of NOBLE CHARACTER" (3 v11)

### HOW did Ruth show that her character was a noble one?

- -She puts her Mother-in-Law before herself and leaves her own country and own people of Moab and accompanies the widowed Naomi back to her own home Town of Bethlehem
- -She is loving, wanting the best for Naomi
- -She works hard in the fields in the heat of the day and doesn't complain
- -She doesn't go after the younger men
- -She is restrained and waits for Boaz
- -She is pure and doesn't jump into bed with Boaz
- -She wants to do things right, she wants to do things properly.

In hard circumstances Ruth takes care to build a godly character. Remember the Bible in Romans 5 teaches that 'suffering produces character' (v4).

"Character" is defined as "distinctive mental and moral qualities" and so a "noble character" is one characterised by "godly moral qualities". One that is loving and kind, reliable and truthful, dependable, faithful, full of goodness. For us living in the time after Christ it is simply "Christ-like".

And Boaz notices such character in Ruth and is impressed by it. It is her CHARACTER, and <u>not her looks</u>, that makes Boaz want to marry her.

What a lesson for today! Inner beauty is more important and more attractive than outer beauty.

(2)

It is important that we **let our difficulties BUILD our CHARACTER** into something that is noticeable and attractive, something Christ-like.

At all times, and especially when times may be difficult for us, **building character is FAR MORE IMPORTANT** than solving problems.

This is what Ruth did and by doing so set us all a good example to follow.

First, build character and then it's important not to be over anxious over any difficulties but let God's will emerge out of the circumstances of our life, rather than try to MANUFACTURE IT!

## I have come across this good illustration:

If you want to learn HOW TO SURF you can go on a course and be instructed about the best equipment, about how to paddle out, about how to catch a wave and how to ride it for as long as possible. We can be instructed in all these things.

There are many such courses BUT you will NEVER be able to go on a course called: "How to build a WAVE!" Surfing is the art of surfing on the waves GOD GIVES US.

## If there are NO waves there is NO surfing!

A surfer CANNOT build waves, ONLY RIDE WHAT IS GIVEN.

**Likewise with our lives**. We have to look at the situation and circumstances of our life that God gives us **and expect God to work IN THEM.** 

We can NEVER build waves.

Instead, we should try to discover the waves <u>GOD</u> has created for us.

Then the ride can be exhilarating!

But NEVER at the expense of trying to build a NOBLE CHARACTER.

### On that, RUTH is our good guide.