



feeding . . . gathering . . . carrying . . . leading. (Isaiah 40:11)

July 25, 2013

Dearest family,

First of all, thank you to those who communicated with me after the message on Sunday, and by email, the deep responses of heart to the Word. It is always encouraging when we find together that the same deep is calling out to deep, that the depth of the riches of God's grace displace such deep responses in us. It is almost impossible for me to effectively convey in précis form what I shared on Sunday, but I will give you this. One of the intimate intimations of grace in Ruth's story is when Boaz invites her into the inner circle, even though she is a foreigner, a stranger, a Moabitess no less, excluded from the assembly of the Lord's people. Boaz says to her, "Come over here and eat. Have some bread and dip it onto the wine vinegar." If that is not a foreshadowing of the one who is to come, full of grace and truth, who would take the bread and take the cup and say to us, "Come over here, sit and eat." Would this passage have been in the back of George Herbert's mind, my very favorite poet, when he wrote the following? Read and meditate.

*LOVE bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lack'd anything.*

*'A guest,' I answer'd, 'worthy to be here:'
Love said, 'You shall be he.'
'I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on Thee.'
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
'Who made the eyes but I?'*

*'Truth, Lord; but I have marr'd them: let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.'
'And know you not,' says Love, 'Who bore the blame?'
'My dear, then I will serve.'
'You must sit down,' says Love, 'and taste my meat.'
So I did sit and eat.*

Pastorally yours,
Stuart

<http://www.christoursshepherd.org/pastlet.htm> (and follow links to download MP3 audio of sermon)