

J - Hello and welcome to thought for the day.

We continue around the theme of harvest.

What was your first experience of harvesting or growing something for the very first time? For some of us it could have been something really easy like cress in a container on blotting paper, can you still get such a thing? It is often the case that there are no weeds in cress, occasionally something different may appear, yet majority of the time it is just what is said on the packet, Cress.

Potatoes are somewhat different. With no idea why or where it really comes from I have this memory of folks saying Good Friday is when you get your Potato sets in the ground. As I grew up in County Durham it was more likely to be snowing or at least too cold for gardening on Good Friday. A village with farms nearby so it was potato picking in the October half term to earn money for November fireworks night. We followed the tractor along the field with instructions to be careful of stones and only pick the potatoes. Now I wonder what else they thought we would pick.

Unlike the cress without the weeds. The potatoes would have weeds and nettles growing alongside. It was back breaking work in whatever the weather was for the week. We were rewarded with a pay packet at the end of the week and occasionally a few potatoes to take home. Was it worth getting up and to keep going for the week, hard as it was, well we thought so.

S - Our reading today comes from the Old Testament Book of Ruth.

Ruth 2: 6-8

*6. The servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, She is the Moabite who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab.*

*7. She said, "Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the reapers." So she came, and she has been on her feet from early this morning until now, without resting even for a moment.*

Let us look back a little at the background of the passage.

Within this short book of 4 chapters many emotions are present: loss, grief, love are a few. They are certainly worth reading in one sitting.

Naomi is the mother -in-law of Ruth. They are both widows. After losing her husband and two sons Naomi decided to return to her home land of Bethlehem. After trying unsuccessfully to persuade Ruth to return to her family Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem in April in time for the barley harvest.

These two women had a good relationship and there was much love between them. After seeking permission Ruth a foreigner goes to work in the fields to gather grain to provide food for Naomi and herself. In those days widows, the fatherless, and the poor were allowed to glean for their needs.

Ruth worked hard gathering stalks of grain left behind when the wheat was cut and put into bundles. She worked through two harvests from April to June when the wheat was harvested.

In verse 6 we hear after greeting the reapers with a blessing Boaz is in conversation with the foreman regarding Ruth. Boaz and his servant

both looked on Ruth with kindness. She was not overlooked; they listened to her request; Naomi listened to Ruth's plea to remain with her. When life was uncertain and difficult Ruth and Naomi did not give up they kept on going they found a way. When our path through life takes an unexpected turn and the way is not easy, remember Ruth and Naomi keep going trust in the Lord he will listen.

### J - A Prayer

Today Lord we pray at a time when there are so many people not only in our country but around the world, who are able to relate to what happened to Ruth. Like Ruth they have lost so much and had their world turned upside down. Some are so similar to Ruth for they are also wondering where the next meal will come from. Lord, as we pray for them at this time, we give thanks for the many, many people who are working so hard to relieve this horrible situation. Although it is extremely difficult we pray that they like Ruth will stay strong and believe in their faith. Lord, bring strength, comfort and practical help to such people. In your precious, caring name we pray. Amen.

Our hymn for today is from Singing the Faith 484.  
Sizohamba Naye. We will walk with God.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKybxg99fUc>