The Fruits of Friendship

This address-ceremony has been prepared to honor the Star Point Station of Ruth, Grand Ruth or a Past Presiding Officer who once held the office of Ruth. Presiding Officers may also wish to use this address-ceremony on Friendship Night.

THE STORY OF RUTH is a never ending source of inspiration and charm. Every reading of this famous love story gives new avenues of thought and new insights which one may explore at his leisure.

That people have valued friendship as one of the good things in life has long been apparent. The theme has been adopted for poetry and song. In churches across the country, groups of people raise their voices in real pleasure while singing "What a Friend I Have in Jesus." Not long ago juke boxes across the country chanted out the teen-age favorite which reiterated "Friendship, friendship, what a beautiful friendship."

Tonight, let us consider one aspect of the theme of friendship which is illustrated so well by the story of Ruth.

Relationships Cherished with Fellow Man

Ruth lived long before the time of Jesus but I am very sure that Ruth enjoyed a real friendship with God. She had a deep sense of her significance in His Plans and she was intent that she herself would fulfill His Expectations.

However, the story of Ruth illustrates that it is not enough for individuals to concentrate all of their attentions on their relationship with God. The story in the Bible makes it very clear that God cherishes our good relationships with our fellow man. In fact, the Bible relates that God cherishes each goodly deed done for the sake of another human as much as He cherishes goodness done for His Sake alone.

Perhaps it is this very understanding which led Ruth, in the hour of her sorrow and grief, to turn in compassion to a suffering fellow human. It is interesting to observe that both Ruth and Naomi were beset with grievous problems. The death of Elimelech and his two sons had shaken the little clan. The girls had lost their husbands and so had Naomi. Naomi had lost two sons and the remaining members of the family group were in a state of shock and grief.

Under these circumstances, we can only admire the great courage of Ruth. She laid aside her own personal problems and concentrated on helping Naomi restructure her life so that she could live fully and richly once again.

Befriending Naomi Comfort to Ruth

I am very certain that the actual befriending of Naomi was a real comfort to Ruth. She could not help but enjoy seeing the frail, anguished woman regain her strength and ability to cope with the problems of living. She probably never even thought that her friendliness to Naomi would color and enrich her life through all of her days.

It seems apparent from the story of Ruth that adequate relationships with one's fellow man seem to start a desirable chain reaction. Befriending another seems to help us develop our insight so that we embark upon new and more meaningful relationships with others.
The capacity to regard our fellow humans in terms of their human struggle is invaluable. Somehow, befriending another makes the individual more responsive to the need for compassion and understanding which all people have. Unless Ruth had developed this willingness to regard people in terms of their human travail, it might have been utterly impossible for Ruth to join the group of common laborers in the fields of grain.

**Development of Ruth's Finer Self**

By the time that Ruth had learned to live beyond her own selfish interests and had given up her life interests for the sake of another, she had become her own finer self. Instead of fearing, despising or feeling ill at ease among the field hands, Ruth entered into the harvest work with joy and anticipation. Had she not learned to prize others as much as she prized herself, she could not have mingled with them.

We can only imagine the aura of kindly concern which must have emanated from Ruth as she joined the other workers about the feeding station in the field. There, as did the others, she received her portion of bread and sop, being careful to hoard a goodly amount to give to the elderly Namoi. Thus it was, and the great Boaz recognized the sterling virtues of the young woman and became her protector.

The story ends and begins anew in the delightful climax. Boaz marries the lovable Ruth and Ruth is eventually able to provide Naomi with life's most cherished value, a sense of belonging. Ruth gave Naomi a grandson to fill the declining years of her life with interest and love.

Although Ruth never knew how important her marriage to Boaz would be to subsequent generations, it is apparent that this union resulted in the formulating of the ancestral line of the renowned David.

**ADAH**

We think of harvesting fields of grain
And plucking fruit from bough-laden tree,
But, who knows when or how we harvest
The fruit of friendship between me and thee.

**RUTH**

There is no way to measure the bounty
That mounds about true friends and dear
For friendship is continuously rewarding
Each day throughout each succeeding year.

**ESTHER**

As the Heavenly Father befriends each man
So here on earth each must befriend some others
For we perform a goodly deed for God
Each time we befriend one of our brothers.

**MARTHA**

The golden cycle spins endlessly on
Each true friendship begets another friend
And so the link in Life's lasting chain
Is built to last all time without end.
ELECTA

The story of Ruth is all written in gold
Each line a treasure to the thoughtful mind
And when one goes from this world on
True friendship need not be left behind.