

YOU DON'T HAVE TO WAIT TO BE ACCEPTED

Anyone with college-aged kids knows the inundating routine that is college applications. Visit campuses. Choose a few schools to focus on. Make applications. Fill out forms. Write essays.

For anyone who hasn't "been there, done that," the filing of the application and financial aid forms is nothing compared to the waiting. It's like the first time you look at your girlfriend or boyfriend and say, "I love you." You've made the first move. And then you wait. You wait to see if they respond in turn.

For the college applicant, the end of the waiting is signaled with a letter in the mailbox – hopefully saying "You have been accepted."

We all have a desire to be accepted, don't we? In fact, that desire made it into Maslow's well-known hierarchy of needs. He theorized that acceptance is basic to our nature and to our psychological health.

Ruth had the same need as we do. She was a Moabite living in Bethlehem who we meet in *The Story*. She ended up there with her mother-in-law Naomi when her husband died. And she found herself picking up the leftovers after the harvest in a field owned by Boaz.

Boaz discovered she was an outsider—a Moabite—the same people who would oppress his nation for eighteen years. You'd expect fireworks when they met. Instead, Boaz tells Ruth, "May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge."

His acceptance of Ruth goes a step further. Ruth finds him asleep on the threshing floor and lies down at his feet. When he awakens, Ruth asks him to "spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a family guardian." The word for "garment" is the same Hebrew word for "wings" in the blessing Boaz had pronounced over Ruth. God's acceptance came to Ruth through Boaz.

Your acceptance did too. You see, Boaz and Ruth had a son named Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David. In Matthew's genealogy the lineage of Jesus is traced through David. Boaz is there too along with his mother Rahab (Matt. 1:5). Yes, that Rahab. The prostitute that lived in Canaan and sheltered the two spies Joshua sent into the land.

¹ Story told by Randy Frazee in *The Story* sermon, Chapter 9.