

# The Glory of Redemption

## Ruth 4

Good Morning! Today we will conclude our study of the book of Ruth. Ruth takes place during the time of the Judges where “there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in [their] own eyes” It was a dark and nearly hopeless time for God’s people and yet amidst nationwide lawlessness, famine, and idolatry God gives us this brief snapshot of hope through one small family in one small town, showing that He is still active and working for the good of His people and the Glory of His Name.

In Ruth 1: Naomi and her husband and two sons were forced to leave their homeland in Judah on account of famine. Then Naomi’s husband dies. Her sons marry Moabite women and for ten years the women prove to be barren. And then her sons die leaving two widows in the house of Naomi. Even though Ruth cleaves to Naomi, chapter 1 ends with Naomi’s bitter complaint: **"I went away full and the Lord has brought me back empty . . . The Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me."**

Ruth 2: Ruth goes out to “glean” and just happens to end up in the field of Boaz an older, single, respected, wealthy man who just happens to be in Elimelech’s clan, and who just happens to show up to his field and notices Ruth working. Boaz has heard of Ruth’s kindness in caring for Naomi and he shows her kindness in providing for her and Naomi. Naomi recover from her long night of despondency as she exults in God (2:20): **"The Lord's kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!"** Chapter two overflows with hope.

Ruth 3: Naomi and Ruth make a risky move in the middle of the night. Ruth goes to Boaz on the threshing floor and says in effect, "I want you to spread your wing over me as my husband." Boaz is humbled and honored by Ruth’s boldness and is willing to act in this way, but there is a catch. There is another man who has the first “right” to redeem Naomi’s property and marry Ruth. Boaz vows to redeem them if the other “kinsmen” is unwilling to.

### Scene 1: At the City Gate (4:1-12)

- 1 Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, "Come aside, friend, sit down here."0020So he came aside and sat down.**
- 2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down.**
- 3 Then he said to the close relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech.**
- 4 And I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy it back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am next after you.' " And he said, "I will redeem it."**

Boaz doesn’t hesitate to resolve the legal obstacle between him redeeming Naomi’s property and marrying Ruth, namely the claim/right of another closer “kinsmen”. So the

morning after his encounter with Ruth on the “threshing floor” Boaz goes to the city gate to make a deal.

Boaz shrewdly waits at the gate for the other kinsmen. The kinsman, maybe commuting to work in a field, unwittingly ends up in a real estate/probate court convened by Boaz. The 10 elders served as both judges and witnesses to any legal transactions that might take place.

Boaz presents the redeemer with an “investment opportunity”. The land that belonged to Naomi’s husband Elimelech has been sold. It needs to be redeemed and returned to the family. On the surface this seems like a great deal to the redeemer. Naomi is an older widow without any heirs so this man could conceivably buy the land and when Naomi dies there would be no more claims on the land but his so it’s a win-win for him, he gets all the future farming income from the land AND gets to have his total property increase. He would just have to take care of Naomi for a few years. He eagerly and publically says **“I will redeem it!”**

Just when we are about to say, "O no! Stop the story! Don't let this other fellow take Ruth!" This is when Boaz throws in the fine print. Anytime someone comes to you with a deal that sounds too good to be true it usually is.

**5 Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance."**

Once the redeemer buys the field from Naomi he’s also buying it from Ruth and as such Boaz tells the redeemer he’s required to provide Ruth (and by proxy Naomi) with an heir to reestablish the line of Elimelech and Mahlon.

Instead of the redeemer getting the profits of the farming and increase of his family land forever, he has to pay for the land then use the profits of the farming to take care of Naomi and Ruth. He has to marry Ruth and raise a son who will not carry his name but rather Mahlon’s name and will inherit the land back after the redeemer dies. He’ll work the rest of his life on this land and end with nothing from it to pass on as an inheritance.

So his response is in verse 6:

**6 And the close relative said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem it."**

He was willing to deal to increase the wealth, size, and glory of his kingdom, but was NOT willing to sacrifice at all if he is not going to personally benefit. So he had a fast change of mind! He didn’t want it after all – it would jeopardize his own inheritance. So he gave his redemption right to Boaz. Verse 7,

**7 Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was a confirmation in Israel.**

**8 Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself." So he took off his sandal.**

Boaz and the redeemer seal the deal with a Hebrew flip-flop exchange. This custom was outlined in Deuteronomy 25 for men who failed to redeem a widow and let their brother’s name die out, it was a sign of humiliation that included the widow spitting in the failed redeemer’s face, so this guy gets off easy and renounces his right of

redemption with his tail between his legs. We don't hear from him again as he fades back into obscurity.

Now it's the Boaz show! Verse 9,

**9 And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi.**

**10 Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day."**

Boaz buys ALL!! Restores ALL!! And he does it for the purpose of raising the name of the dead and so the name of the dead will not be cut off. Naomi's family and Ruth will not die off but will live on. He does all this publically so that the whole town can see he is shamelessly identifying himself with the foreigner Ruth and the tragic Naomi.

With the witness of all the people a story of death and suffering is now one of redemption and restoration. The people recognize the hand of the Lord in this story and respond in verse 11,

**11 And all the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem.**

**12 May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the Lord will give you from this young woman."**

The elders blessed Boaz' endeavor by wishing upon him great wealth and fame in Bethlehem with many children, as Rachel and Leah gave. And they compare Ruth to Tamar, another foreigner who in a strange way was taken into the Jewish family.

## **Scene 2: Marriage and a Child (4:13-17)**

**13 So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son.**

**14 Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel!**

**15 And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him."**

**16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him.**

**17 Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "There is a son born to Naomi." And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.**

Obed, the son, is a gift from God. Boaz and Ruth have a son, but Naomi is now the focus. The community rejoiced with her after they watched her come to town bitter and

broken in chapter 1 now to be fully restored and overflowing with joy. Naomi has gone from famine to fullness.

And all the women praised God for the baby because he would be a restorer of life and sustainer of old age. And they praised the Lord for the faithfulness of Ruth, who turned out to be better than seven sons.

Naomi became the baby's nurse. What joy that must have been for her!

So out of the brokenness and sorrow of chapter 1, God faithfully brought hope and a future to the family name!

### **Scene 3: the King to Come (4:18-22)**

**18 Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron;**

**19 Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab;**

**20 Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon;**

**21 Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed;**

**22 Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.**

Throughout the book of Ruth, God reigns supreme. He takes care of Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz all while working out His saving plan. Famine in Bethlehem and the death of Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion all serve God's plan to get to Israel's king David.

Three simple lessons as we close this wonderful little book of Ruth:

#### **1. God has a way of working things out!**

Even though this family faced suffering, tragedy, poverty, and death. God was working through it all to bring about their good and His glory. Again and again in this book it was God who was at work in the bitter setbacks of Naomi. When she lost her husband and sons, God gave her Ruth. When she could think of no kinsman to raise up offspring for the family name, God gave her Boaz. When barren Ruth married Boaz, God gave the child. As John Piper says, "The life of the godly is not a straight line to glory, but God sees that they get there."

Entrust into the hands of God your: health, job, church, marriage, future, family, children, money, friends, grandchildren, time, pains, & disappointments...

Entrust your whole life to God. Rest in His faithful hands. God is in control. His purposes for your life will not and cannot be thwarted. Trust Him. He has a way of working things out...

There's no better place to be than at rest in the faithful, strong hands of our God.

#### **2. What seems impossible for us is possible for God!**

It seemed impossible that Naomi would ever have joy in her life again.

It seemed impossible that these widows would ever eat anything but leftovers again.

It seemed impossible that the foreigner Ruth would ever marry again.

It seemed impossible that Naomi would ever care for a child.

But what seemed impossible in their eyes, was possible in God's eyes!

What are some of the things that seem impossible to you, yet are indeed possible by the will and power of God?

It may seem impossible... that our small church could reach this world or even our own community with the gospel. It may seem impossible that we could sponsor a new work when at times we struggle to just keep this church going.

But with God—It is possible!

It may seem impossible... for a struggling marriage that seems headed for divorce,

But God can save that marriage!

It may seem impossible... for that one you know who has a hardened heart to ever grow soft and accept Jesus as Savior,

But the Lord can save sinners!

It may seem impossible...that a prodigal son or daughter could ever come back to the Lord,

But the Lord can restore them to faith!

It may seem impossible... That God would ever accept you back again when you have sinned...

But He freely forgives when we confess and repent!

Hope in the Lord! Never close the door on God. Never give up hope on His love, grace, goodness, and provision.

### **3. The Best is Yet to Come!**

God is working all things for glory! John Piper says it this way:

If this story of Ruth just ended in a little Judean village with an old grandmother hugging a new grandson, glory would be too big a word. But the author doesn't leave it there. He lifts his eyes to the forests and the mountain snows of redemptive history. In verse 17 he says very simply that this child Obed was the father of Jesse and Jesse was the father of David. All of a sudden we realize that all along something far greater has been in the offing than we could imagine. God was not only plotting for the temporal blessing of a few Jews in Bethlehem. He was preparing for the coming of the greatest king that Israel would have, David. And the name of David carries with it the hope of the Messiah, the new age, peace, righteousness, freedom from pain and crying and grief and guilt. This simple little story opens out like a stream into a great river of hope.

I don't know where you are at in your spiritual journey today:

Maybe you are still in Ruth Ch. 1, feeling the heaviness of sorrow and pain.

Maybe you are still in Ruth Ch. 2, wandering through life, looking for refuge.

Maybe some of you are in Ruth Ch. 3, needing to ask the redeemer to save you.

Maybe some of you are rejoicing in Ruth Ch. 4, glowing with the joy of God's goodness.

Remember:

1. God has a way of working things out! - Trust in Him!

2. What is impossible for us is possible for God! - Hope in Him!

3. The Best is Yet to Come! - Praise Him!