

Ruth – Part 4
February 5, 2023
A Kinsman Who is Willing and Able to Redeem
Ruth 4

Last week we left Ruth in the home of Naomi waiting on Boaz. In Chapters 2 & 3 Boaz was doing the waiting - - he was waiting on Ruth to claim him as her kinsman-redeemer. Now, it's Ruth's turn to wait as Boaz goes into town to meet with the closest kinsman. Perhaps, he is jeopardizing everything that he is and everything that he has for her, but he's willing to do that because he loves her and wants her.

Once again, we notice the beautiful picture here of what Christ did to redeem us - - why? Because he loves us.

- I. Boaz takes the matter in hand (Ruth 4:1-12)
 - A. Business at the city gate (vv. 1-2)

¹Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there, and behold, the redeemer of whom Boaz spoke was passing by, so he said, "Come over here, friend, sit down here." And he came over and sat down. ²Then he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down.

Why did he go to the city gate? Because the gate served as the courthouse. That's where court convened. Today we build our courthouses in the center of town - - a place called "the courthouse square." But in those days, the cities were compact, streets were narrow, and the houses were crowded close together. Many of the cities were walled for protection, and they used the city gate as the place to meet people and conduct business - - to get the news.

So, Boaz went to the gate for two reasons:

- 1. He wanted to conduct business, to take the other kinsman to court, so to speak
- 2. He knew that the other kinsman would come through the gate sometime during the day.

So, he went to the city gate and sat down, and when the other kinsman came through the gate, he asked him to come over and sit down.

It's interesting that he doesn't call him by name. The KJV says that Boaz said, "Ho, such a one! Turn aside, sit down here." He surely knew his name - - they were blood kin and the city wasn't that large. But regardless, he agreed to listen to what Boaz had to say.

They are going to conduct business, so Boaz took ten elders to serve as the judges. Do you recall other places in the Old Testament where business was being conducted at the city gate?

- a. In Genesis 19 we see Lot sitting at the city gate of Sodom, serving as a petty judge.
- b. In Genesis 23 Abraham went to the city gate of Hebron seeking a burial place for his wife, Sarah. He ended-up owning his first piece of real estate in what would become The Promised Land.
- c. In 2 Samuel 15, David's son Absalom was conspiring against his father for power. He'd stand outside the city gates and say, "Hey, I'm the King's son, and if I were in charge here, I would make sure that you were treated with equity and fairness."

So, it was a common practice to go to the city gate to get things done.

B. Boaz' proposal to the nearest kin of Elimelech (vv. 3-4)

So, let's see what Boaz told the near kinsman in Verses 3-4.

³ And he said to the redeemer, "Naomi, who has returned from the land of Moab, has to sell the plot of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. ⁴ So I thought that I would inform you, saying, 'Buy *it* before those who are sitting *here*, and before the elders of my people. If you will redeem *it*, redeem *it*; but if not, tell me so that I may know; for there is no one except you to redeem *it*, and I am after you.'" And he said, "I will redeem *it*."

Boaz is using a little finesse here, isn't he? Although he is primarily interested in Ruth, he doesn't mention her first.

{Note that "brother" in Hebrew would also mean "our near relative."}

He's only revealing that there's a piece of property belonging to Elimelech's estate that Naomi (returning from the land of Moab with nothing) is having to sell and he is suggesting that the near kinsman step in and be her kinsman-redeemer - - based on the Law of the Kinsman Redeemer.

Now, Boaz is asking the un-named near kinsman if he wants to redeem that property. It was actually a logical step because property had to be redeemed before people. It was all about keeping the property in the family.

And the near kinsman replied very quickly, “I will redeem it.” Apparently, he was a generous man and he was willing to serve as the kinsman-redeemer.

Well, Boaz’ heart must have skipped a beat when he heard those words, but I suspect he was ready to reveal the rest of the deal to him now. Let’s look at the next few verses.

C. “Lest I forget, there’s more to the proposal” (vv. 5-12)

1. “Oh yeah, you also get a Moabite widow” (v. 5)

⁵ Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the deceased, in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance.”

He sounded kinda like Columbo - - “Oh yeah, there’s just one more thing I forgot to tell you. There’s a woman - - and she’s a MOABITESS - - that comes with the property because she was married to Mahlon, Elimelech’s son.”

“So, my brother, you will also have to step in and marry Ruth and raise up children for her deceased husband.”

If you were a Hebrew and you heard that term, “Moabitess,” you’d think, “Man, are you nuts?”

Why??????

Recall the significance of him telling the near kinsman Ruth’s nationality. Deuteronomy 23:3 states very clearly that “An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the congregation of the Lord even to the 10th generation.” So, if the man brought Ruth into the congregation of the Lord, it would jeopardize his own property.

Obviously, Boaz did not mind doing that - - he’d be delighted to do it because he truly loves Ruth.

Now, I initially wondered about how he could consider entering into a relationship with a Moabite, considering the passage in Deuteronomy. Then I considered that Boaz knew her very well by this time

She arrived in Bethlehem in late April or early May. The barley and wheat harvest is over by mid-June. So, he's known her for a couple of months. They had surely had many conversations over that timespan because she was working in his fields with his people on a daily basis.

So, he knew her heart - - he knew that she had turned away from Chemosh, the god of the Moabites, and had come over to the God of Israel, Yahweh. He was a spiritual and a godly man and we have seen that he is an insightful business man.

And he surely knew that God looks at the heart of man - - at our motivations and intentions - - and that in His eyes she was no longer under the curse of the Moabites, perhaps much like we (who are in Christ) are no longer under the curse of the law as per Galatians 3:13:

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us.”

Comments??????

2. The closest relative was unwilling (v. 6)

⁶ Then the redeemer said, “I cannot redeem *it* for myself, otherwise I would jeopardize my own inheritance. Redeem *it* for yourself; you *may have* my right of redemption, since I cannot redeem *it*.”

Likely, the other kinsman was already married and had grown children. His property already would be allotted to his children. If he was already married, I'm sure he didn't want to tell his wife, “Hey sweetheart, look who's coming to live with us!”

To marry Ruth and bring her into the congregation of the Lord would jeopardize everything he owned.

3. “Buy it for yourself” (vv. 7-8)

⁷ Now this was *the custom* in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange *of land* to confirm any matter: a man removed his sandal and gave *it* to another; and this was the *way of confirmation* in Israel. ⁸ So the redeemer said to Boaz, “Buy *it* for yourself.” And he removed his sandal.

In Deuteronomy 25:7-10 we read what is to take place if the closest kin does not desire to redeem his deceased brother's wife. It's, basically:

1. His brother's wife goes to the city gate to the elders and says "my husband's brother refuses to establish a name for his brother in Israel; he is not willing to perform the duty of a husband's brother to me"
2. The elders are to summon him and speak to him about the matter
3. If he persists, then his brother's wife is to come up to him in the sight of the elders, pull off his sandal, and spit in his face
4. Then, she is to say, "Thus it is done to the man who does not build up his brother's house"
5. In Israel, his name shall be called, "The house of him whose sandal is removed."

Well, apparently, there had been revisions in the law - - they were a bit more civil in handling this type of affair. So, there was "loogie" involved.

Boaz has taken the place of Ruth in the entire transaction. He is acting for her. On her behalf he takes off the shoe of the other man and addressed the ten elders and others gathered at the city gate:

D. Boaz acquires Ruth, widow of Mahlon (vv. 9-10)

⁹ Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses today that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon.

¹⁰ Furthermore, I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, to be my wife in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance, so that the name of the deceased will not be eliminated from his brothers or from the court of his *birth*place; you are witnesses today."

So, the nameless near kinsman (we'll just call him, "Old Barefoot") said, "Deal off," and goes off into posterity, never to be mentioned again in the Bible.

And Boaz goes on to have his name recorded in the genealogy of our Savior. What a difference.

Think about Boaz buying this field from the hand of Naomi. Boaz doesn't need a field. He's very wealthy - - the last thing he needed was more land. In fact, Boaz really didn't want the field, did he? He wanted the girl! But he's willing to buy the field to get the girl. Now, does that sound anything at all like a parable Jesus told?

Listen to Matthew 13:44:

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

⁴⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid *again*; and from joy over it he goes and sells everything that he has, and buys that field.

And what was the treasure that Boaz was getting? Not just a bride, but a Gentile bride. Here is Boaz from Bethlehem willing to buy a field to get a Gentile bride for himself. Isn't that what Jesus did for the church? Another lovely picture here in the Book of Ruth.

E. “Best wishes! This meeting adjourned” (vv. 11-12)

¹¹ And all the people who were in the court, and the elders, said, “We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel; and may you achieve wealth in Ephrathah and become famous in Bethlehem. ¹² Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the descendants whom the LORD will give you by this young woman.”

Rachel & Leah – sisters; daughters of Laban; both were wives of Jacob from Genesis 29-30. Rachel was the mother of Joseph and others; Leah was the mother of Judah and others.

Rachel, by the way, was buried very close to Bethlehem.

II. Boaz takes Ruth to be his wife (Ruth 4: 13-15)

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he had relations with her. And the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. ¹⁴ Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed is the LORD who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel. ¹⁵ May he also be to you one who restores life and sustains your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who

loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.”

III. A child is born in the genealogical line of David (Ruth 4:16-22)

¹⁶ Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her lap, and became his nurse. ¹⁷ And the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi!” So they named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

¹⁸ Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez fathered Hezron, ¹⁹ Hezron fathered Ram, and Ram fathered Amminadab, ²⁰ and Amminadab fathered Nahshon, and Nahshon fathered Salmon, ²¹ and Salmon fathered Boaz, and Boaz fathered Obed, ²² and Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David.

Recall the requirements for the Kinsman-Redeemer:

1. He had to be a near kinsman
2. He had to be willing to redeem; to do the work of redemption
3. He had to be able to redeem
4. He had to be free himself
5. He must pay the price of redemption

Ruth had one man willing to do that in our story and that was Boaz. “Old Barefoot” was excluded because he was not willing to redeem her.

In this, we see how Jesus Christ was such a wonderful and highly qualified Redeemer for us:

1. He is a near kinsman because He took upon Himself our humanity.
Hebrews 2:14-16
¹⁴ Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, so that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. ¹⁶ For clearly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendants of Abraham.
2. He was willing to redeem - - Indeed, Jesus was a willing sacrifice.
Hebrews 12:2
² looking only at Jesus, the originator and perfecter of the faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3. He had to be able to redeem

Hebrews 7:25

²⁵ Therefore He is also able to save forever those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

4. He had to be free Himself

He was, indeed, free. In fact, He chose to leave heaven to come to earth to redeem us

Philippians 2:6-7

“Although He existed in the form of God, He did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond servant and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

5. He had to pay the price of redemption

We know the price He paid - - it was a high price - - but He willingly did it for us because He loves us:

Philippians 2:9-11

⁹ For this reason also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.