

RUTH'S REPENTANCE

Text: Ruth 1:1-22

Introduction:

1. Ruth is one of two Books in the Bible named after women, the other being the Book of Esther. William Macdonald writes, "It is noteworthy that of the two books in the Bible named after women, one was a Jewish girl who married a prominent Gentile (Esther and King Ahasuerus) and the other was a Gentile woman who married a prominent Hebrew (Ruth and Boaz). Another significant thing these two women have in common is that both were part of God's redemptive history. God used Esther to save His people from physical destruction and He used Ruth as an important link in the messianic line, first to David, and ultimately to Christ, who would save His people from their sins."
2. It is commonly believed that the prophet Samuel is the author of the Book. This makes sense as he was the last of the judges and the events recorded in Ruth took place during that time period (Vs. 1). Ruth became David's great grandmother and ultimately the ancestress of Messiah.
3. The events recorded in Ruth took place during the time of the Judges (Vs. 1). The period of the Judges was a time of moral and spiritual decline in Israel.
The Book of Ruth is a precious reminder that faith can flourish in families even in times of great apostasy.
4. Typology: The Book presents a beautiful type of Christ with Ruth, a Gentile, becoming the Bride of a Bethlehemite who redeemed her to himself. Boaz as the kinsman redeemer pictures Christ as our redeemer.
5. Suggested Outline
 - Ruth's Repentance (Chap. 1)
 - Ruth's Romance (Chap. 2-3)
 - Ruth's Redemption (Chap. 4:1-12)
 - Ruth's Reward (Chap. 4:13-22)
6. In this first message we look at Ruth's Repentance (conversion) from pagan idolatry to the One True God of Israel.

I. THE CONTEXT OF RUTH'S CONVERSION (VS. 1-5)

These verses provide the setting/background to the story that unfolds in the Book of Ruth. In these verses we see the events that brought Ruth into contact with Elimelech's family.

A. The Resort to Moab (Vs. 1-2)

Note the words 'sojourn' (Vs. 1) and 'continued' (Vs. 2). Elimelech made a choice to leave Bethlehem (house of bread) to try and find solace in Moab (enemy territory). Why did Elimelech move his family to Moab? What motivated him to make this decision? There were two motivating factors.

1. The famine in Canaan (Vs. 1a). The famine in the land was likely an act of judgment upon the children of Israel for their sin. The productivity and prosperity of the land for the Israelites was connected to their spiritual condition. (See Deut. 28 – blessings and cursings). The famine represented a test of faith for Elimelech. Times were tough. Elimelech's move revealed a lack of faith in God. The weakness of his faith is further highlighted by the fact he left while he was still "full" (1:21). He moved because he didn't want to lose anything but in so doing he lost almost everything! There are challenging times in the Christian life and the temptation to flee is common. This family tried to run from trouble but ended up finding trouble followed them all the way.
2. The façade of Moab (Vs. 1b-2). Moab appeared to offer what the promised land did not at this time. Further, it was close by (about 32-48 km). But in reality, Moab and the Moabites were no friends of God's chosen people. Consider the following facts about Moab:
 - a. It was the result of the incestuous sin of Lot with his oldest daughter (Gen. 19:30-38).
 - b. Moab refused to let Israel travel through their land (Judges 11:17) and would not help Israel (Deut. 23:4).
 - c. Moab hired the prophet Balaam to curse Israel (Num. 22-24), and then some Moabite women seduced many of the Israelite men. The result was 24,000 Israelites being slain in God's judgment that followed.
 - d. After Israel moved to the Promised Land, Moab oppressed the Israelites for eighteen years (Judges 3:12-30).
 - e. In reality, Moab was a dangerous place for Elimelech and his family. Remember! The world that crucified the Saviour is no friend of the Christian and has nothing to offer you in your time of testing. Moab represents the world in contrast to the walk of faith in the will of God. It is better to live in Bethlehem in a time of famine than to live in Moab in a time of plenty.
3. Note: We see multiple examples in the Bible to warn us that leaving the place of God's will to try and find nourishment and sustenance in the world never works out well for the child of God.
 - a. Abraham and Egypt (Gen. 12).
 - b. Lot and Sodom (Gen. 13, 14, 19)
 - c. Abraham and Gerar (Philistines) (Gen. 20)
 - d. Isaac and Gerar (Philistines) (Gen. 26)
 - e. David and Gath (Philistines) (1 Sam. 27)
4. Challenge: Stay faithful in the place of God's will and trust God to sustain and keep you through your trial. Heads of homes need to be men of faith lest they lead their families astray. Elimelech led his family to Moab.

B. The Results in Moab (Vs. 3-5)

Moab turned out to be a mirage. The Moab sojourn was characterized by:

1. Death – Elimelech dies shortly after their arrival in Moab (Vs. 3) and his two sons Mahlon and Chilion also die after about ten years (Vs. 4). The world will not help you flourish in your faith, it will suck the life out of you spiritually. Backsliding is dangerous spiritually. It can even be dangerous physically!
2. Barrenness – no offspring were born to either of Elimelech’s sons in Moab. A backslidden life is a life characterized by fruitlessness. The world and its ways will not produce anything of spiritual value in your life.
3. **Challenge: Fathers be careful where you lead your wife and children!**

II. THE CATALYST FOR RUTH’S CONVERSION (VS. 6-15)

Look at the events that brought Ruth to the most critical decision of her life. This was a turbulent time of Ruth’s life but it was ultimately used of God to propel her in the direction of God’s perfect will for her life.

A. Her Husband’s Death (Vs. 5). This would have been a difficult trial for Ruth. The impression we get of Ruth’s character from the Book is that she was a very loyal and loving lady.

B. Her Mother in law’s Decision (Vs. 6-13)

1. Naomi hears good news from her homeland that God had blessed His people with bread and decides to return to Bethlehem (Vs. 6). She had left the house of bread (Bethlehem) to seek bread in Moab. That having failed, she now returns to back to the true house of bread.
2. Naomi departs from where she was living in Moab and her two daughters travel with her initially (Vs. 7)
3. Naomi then issues an appeal to her two daughters in law to return to their homeland in Moab (Vs. 8-13). Naomi was clearly motivated by a desire for her daughters in law to find a place of rest and happiness with a new husband and home. One thing that stands out in the life of Naomi is that she was a selfless woman. This was an emotion filled moment (Vs. 9b) as there was genuine attachment between Naomi and her daughters in law. This challenge from Naomi meant that Ruth had to really think through what her decision would be and to count the cost of that decision.

C. Her Sister in law’s Direction (Vs. 14-15)

1. Orpah chooses to return to Moab and kisses Naomi goodbye (Vs. 14). They all weep again! What a picture. Two Moabite women standing on the border of the land of Moab and the land

of God's chosen people. Which way would they go?! What eternal ramifications there were in this momentous decision. Orpah's decision to return to Moab must have tugged at Ruth's heart but somehow Ruth knew in her heart it was the wrong choice.

2. Naomi points out to Ruth that her sister-in-law had gone back to her people and her gods (Vs. 15). Naomi's reference to the "gods" of Moab highlights that this decision was not just about where they were going to live. It was a choice between the pagan gods of Moab and the One True God of Israel.

III. THE CHOICE IN RUTH'S CONVERSION (VS. 16-18)

This choice was:

A. A Sincere Choice – 'clave' (Vs. 14b).

1. The word 'clave' here is the same word used in Genesis 2:24 concerning a man cleaving to his wife.
2. Ruth was passionate about this choice she was making to go God's way. This passion is revealed not just in her action of cleaving to Naomi but in her heart stirring speech that follows (Vs. 16-17)

B. A Saving Choice (Vs. 16-17)

Ruth's choice had eternal ramifications. It involved:

- a. Repentance – Ruth made a definite choice to turn her back on the false gods of Moab. She "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thess. 1:9). Repentance is required for salvation. Are you willing to turn to Christ in faith from sin and your own way? "...repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:21)
- b. Faith – Ruth made a definite choice to make the God of Israel her God. This involved faith. There were so many unknowns for Ruth. Israel was a foreign place for her but she knew that she wanted to know the same God her mother-in-law knew. Clearly Naomi had told Ruth about the God of Israel over the decade they had been together as Ruth uses God's Name Jehovah (Vs. 17b). But know she had to make a personal choice to make the True God her God.

C. A Steadfast Choice (Vs. 18)

Naomi saw that Ruth was "steadfastly minded" about this matter. Her decision was final. The Hebrew word is translated multiple times "good courage", "courageous" and "strong/strengthen". So, she was making a strong, courageous, definite choice for the truth.

- a. It takes courage to choose salvation.

- b. It takes courage to choose the true and the right when the world (Moab) is pulling you in a different direction.
- c. We need some Christian women like Ruth today who are “steadfastly minded” for the Word of God, not only for what it teaches about salvation but also what it teaches about marriage and the family. If you are double minded or halfhearted about the truth, the world will suck you into its vortex.

IV. THE CONSEQUENCES OF RUTH’S CONVERSION

We will continue the study of Ruth in our next lesson but the blessings that came out of this decision are recorded in the rest of the Book. How lavishly God bestowed His grace and goodness upon this converted Moabitess.

A. The Blessing of a godly Husband

B. The Blessing of a godly Heritage

1. Ruth’s son Obed would become a part of the Messianic line. He was king David’s grandfather. That means Boaz and Ruth were the great grandparents of the famous King David.
2. Ruth became the ancestress of the Lord Jesus Christ. Her name is mentioned in Christ’s genealogy. Matthew 1:5-6 – “And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; and Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias.”
3. Note: It is fascinating to note the four women mentioned in Christ’s lineage – Tamar the adulteress who conceived to her father-in-law Judah (Vs. 3; Genesis 38), Rahab the harlot of Jericho (Vs. 5) Ruth the Moabitess (Vs. 5) and Bathsheba the wife of Urias who committed adultery with king David (Vs. 6). What a lineage of God’s grace!

Conclusion: Will you turn to Christ in faith this Mother’s Day?

RUTH'S ROMANCE PART 1

Text: Ruth 2:1-23

Introduction:

1. "The Book of Ruth sets forth a lovely picture of life in Israel during the time of the Judges. It was not written by Ruth, but is rather about Ruth. The name "Ruth" means "friendship" or "beautiful". It is commonly believed that the prophet Samuel is the author of the Book." (Sorenson)
2. Suggested Outline for Ruth
 - Ruth's Repentance (Chap. 1)
 - Ruth's Romance (Chap. 2-3)
 - Ruth's Redemption (Chap. 4:1-12)
 - Ruth's Reward (Chap. 4:13-22)
3. In our last message we looked at Ruth's Repentance, how she turned from her pagan idolatry to the One True God of Israel. In this message we study the romance between Ruth and Boaz which provides some wonderful lessons on Christian courtship as well as a beautiful type of Christ and his bride the church.

I. THE PROVIDENCE OF THE ROMANCE (VS. 1-7)

The Providence of God is clearly seen at work in this godly romance. God was working to bring this couple together. We see God's Providence in:

A. The Plan to Glean (Vs. 1-2)

1. We are introduced to a snapshot of Boaz at the beginning of the chapter to help set the scene for what follows (Vs. 1)
 - a. He is noted as being a relative of Elimelech and a "mighty man of wealth". As we will see, he was a man not only of material wealth, he was a man of spiritual wealth.
 - b. Note: On the practical side, a man needs to be in a position to be able to support a wife. That does not mean he has to be as wealthy as Boaz but he needs to be able to fulfill his role as provider for the family.
2. Ruth proposes that she go and glean to help provide for her and her widowed mother-in-law (Vs. 2)
 - a. Evidently, she was aware of the gleaning provision in the law for the poor. Ruth's gleaning based on O.T. provision for the poor (See Lev. 19:9; 23:22; Deut. 24:19-21). Ruth was both a stranger and a widow so qualified for this provision. The fact she had to go and glean tells us that her and her mother-in-law Naomi were poor.

- b. Notice that she went looking to find “grace” in someone’s sight. What a picture of the poor sinner who has nothing seeking grace from the One who has the resources to meet the need.

B. The Place to Glean (Vs. 3-7)

1. Ruth goes out and begins to glean in a field. Little did she know that she had come to the field of none other than Boaz (Vs. 3). The Bible says “her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz” (Vs. 3) The word ‘hap’ means “by chance, unexpectedly”. “From a human standpoint it appeared to be a fortuitous coincidence but in reality, it was the result of Divine Providence. Who could have imagined the far-reaching effects of Ruth “happening” on the field of Boaz? (Flanigan) The hand of God was at work to bring Ruth and Boaz together. Little did they both know that day how their paths would cross in the will of God.
2. Boaz comes to the field for the day, greets his workers and then inquires of his manager as to the identity of the woman gleaning in his field (Vs. 4-7). Ruth clearly caught Boaz’s interest and attention which lead him to make the inquiry.

II. THE PEOPLE IN THE ROMANCE (Vs. 8-23)

These verses detail the first encounter between Ruth and Boaz that would spark a godly interest that would eventually lead to marriage in the will of God. These verses give us further insight into the character of the three main characters involved in this romance – Boaz, Ruth and Naomi. Let’s look at each of them in turn.

A. Boaz – The Portrait of a Godly Man (Vs. 8-9, 11-12, 14-16)

Boaz is a good example to Christian men in a number of key areas. His name means “in him is strength”. He was:

1. An industrious man (Vs. 1, 4, 3:2). Boaz was clearly a hardworking, diligent man. This is an essential requirement for a prospective husband. 2 Thess. 3:10 says, “For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that **if any would not work, neither should he eat.**” Boaz was a man of industry and activity. He wasn’t at home sitting on the couch watching better fields and vineyards or playing world of Canaan craft on his computer! If you are idle and lazy as a single man, you are not a good candidate for marriage!
2. A spiritual man (Vs. 4, 12). This is the most essential requirement. Boaz’s spirituality is seen multiple times throughout the account. For example:
 - a. In his greeting to his workers (Vs. 4). Clearly Boaz had a reputation as a man of God with his workers. Don’t forget that this is during **the time of the Judges**. It is an encouraging

reminder that by God's grace a man can be godly even in the midst of a polluted and apostate environment.

- b. In his blessing of Ruth (Vs. 12). Boaz's words reveal a man of spiritual substance. His words are really a prayer for Ruth. Little did Boaz know that he would end up being part of God's "reward" to this dear lady.
 - c. The great need of the hour is for spiritual men like Boaz. A woman needs a godly leader for a husband. There is nothing worse than men who are spiritually shallow.
3. A protective man (Vs. 8-9). Ruth, as a foreigner and a widow was vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Boaz instructs her to stay in the safety of his field with his female workers (maidens)¹ and assures her that he has commanded the men working in his field to not make any advances towards her. Further, in this whole account we never see Boaz use his position and power to exploit a vulnerable woman in need. Boaz is an example of a true gentleman.
4. A kind hearted man (Vs. 11-12). Boaz spoke in a kind and comforting manner to Ruth. His words reveal:
- a. He had heard of Ruth before they met (Vs. 11). He had genuine admiration for Ruth and her godly character and expressed that to her. Ruth and Boaz were clearly drawn together not just by physical attraction but by their attraction to each other's faith. It is entirely appropriate to express words of appreciation and admiration to one another in a godly romance.
 - b. He desired the blessings of the God Ruth had come to trust to be upon her (Vs. 12). The picture of Ruth coming to a place of shelter under Jehovah's wings is truly beautiful.²
 - c. Note: On a practical note, women appreciate a man who is kind and loving in his words towards her. Words are very powerful and meaningful for a woman. Look at Ruth's response in verse 13. Men need to be taught the appropriate treatment of women from a young age. Boys should be taught to treat their mother and sisters with gentleness and respect in word and action.³
5. A providing man (Vs. 8-9, 14-16)
Boaz was a good provider. God has put it in a man to want to provide for a woman. Sadly, that instinctive is largely smashed out of men today but it should be encouraged. His motivation to provide for Ruth is demonstrated in the following ways:
- a. The invitation to stay and exclusively glean in his field (Vs. 8)

¹ The men would cut the grain with sickles and the women would bind them into sheaves.

² Illustration: Baby quails.

³ Illustration: Dad's training in relation to mother and sisters.

- b. The invitation to help herself to the water his workers had drawn (Vs. 9) In a day when often women were considered inferior to men, this was a significant gesture on Boaz's part.
- c. The invitation to daily dining (Vs. 14). Boaz was present for these meals as he handed her parched corn. The "parched corn" was "some of the new grain, roasted on the spot, and fit for use after being rubbed in the hands - a favourite viand (food) in the East." (JFB) "Vinegar" is a type of sauce or "a sour beverage composed of vinegar mixed with oil; a very refreshing drink, which is still a favorite beverage in the East." (Delitzsch) Not only was this another act of kindness on Boaz's part, it undoubtedly gave them opportunity to get to know each other more over the several months of harvest.
- d. Note: It is appropriate for a courting couple to communicate and spend time together in order to get to know each other. There is romance of a wholesome and pure kind in contrast to the world and its ways.

B. Ruth – The Portrait of a Virtuous Woman (Vs. 2-3, 7, 10, 13)

The name 'Ruth' means "beautiful" or "friendship". In Ruth 3:11 Boaz makes mention of Ruth's godly reputation as a "virtuous woman". It is a fascinating study to read the character traits of a virtuous woman in Proverbs 31:10-31 and then see how they are personified in Ruth. Ruth was:

1. A diligent woman (Vs. 2-3, 7) – Ruth was not an idle woman who spent her days in idle gossip. She was a disciplined woman who used her time productively. She knew how to work. She did not spend her days painting her face and posting pictures of herself on Instaglitiz.
2. A serving woman (Vs. 2) – Ruth clearly cared for her aged mother-in-law and took steps to help provide for their daily bread.
3. A spiritual woman (Chap. 1) – Ruth's spirituality is clearly demonstrated in her decision to follow the One True God of Israel. Her godly character is on display throughout the entire Book in multiple ways. **Boaz and Ruth were spiritually matched.** Remember, you tend to attract what you are! If you are mediocre spiritually, you will tend to be attracted to and attract someone of a similar spiritual temperature.
4. A humble woman (Vs. 10)
 - a. A humble posture (Vs. 10a). To bow in this manner was a demonstration of respect and humility in the East. She clearly had great admiration and respect for this godly man who had entered her life. Men, try to be a man worthy of a godly woman's respect!

- b. A humble attitude (Vs. 10b). Ruth was clearly a competent, characterized and beautiful woman and yet she was not puffed up in pride and arrogance. She had a humble view of herself.
 - c. Note: Ruth's words of gratitude to Boaz perfectly express the attitude of the grateful believer who has received grace from the heart and hands of the Saviour. Are we not in awe and wonder that we found grace in our Saviour's sight? Are we not filled with thanksgiving when we consider that as Boaz made his vast resources available for a poor widow like Ruth, our Lord Jesus Christ has opened the way for us through salvation to enjoy the exceeding riches of His grace (Eph. 1:7, 2:7) the riches of His mercy (Eph. 2:4) the riches of His glory (Eph. 1:18, 3:16) and the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8)? "What wonderful condescension! The mighty Boaz becomes interested in a poor, penniless, despised, weak, helpless stranger! Marvelous grace! Matchless goodness! Boaz is interested in Ruth!" (Heslop)
Those who love the Saviour can see here a beautiful picture of His grace toward them.
5. A pure woman (3:6-14). We will cover this in more detail in the next lesson but if you study the account without a set of glasses from Hollywood, you will find that both Boaz and Ruth conducted themselves in a modest, decent and pure fashion.
 6. A submissive woman (Vs. 23). Ruth was willing to follow Boaz's godly leadership. She took his advice on board and stayed in the safety of his field.
 7. A virtuous woman (3:11)
With amazing parallel, the "virtuous" wife of Proverbs 31:10-31 shares at least 8-character traits with Ruth. In fact, if Bathsheba was the author of Proverbs 31, which is highly probable, (see Prov. 31:1) then it is possible she had great grandmother Ruth in mind as her inspiration and example.⁴ Ruth is the personification and illustration of a virtuous woman:⁵
 - a. Devoted to her family (Ruth 1:15-18; Prov. 31:1-12, 23)
 - b. Delighting in her work (Ruth 2:2; Prov. 31:13)
 - c. Diligent in her labor (Ruth 2:7, 17, 23; Prov. 31:14-18, 19-21, 24, 27)
 - d. Dedicated to godly speech (Ruth 2:10, 13; Prov. 13:26)
 - e. Dependent on God (Ruth 2:12; Prov. 31:30)
 - f. Dressed with care and beauty (Ruth 3:3; Prov. 31:22, 25a)
 - g. Discreet with men (Ruth 3:6-13; Prov. 31:11-12, 23)
 - h. Delivering blessings (Ruth 4:14-15; Prov. 31:28-29, 31)

⁴ David was Ruth's great grandson (Ruth 4:21-22).

⁵ MacArthur Bible Commentary, p. 294.

C. Naomi – the Portrait of a selfless Parent (Vs. 18-23)

Naomi is the closest thing to a parental authority in this account, at least for Ruth, and she sets a good example for parents to follow.

1. She clearly recognized the hand of God at work in Ruth and Boaz's romance and was submitted to and supportive of it (Vs. 18-23).
Note particularly verse 20.
2. She was focused on what was best for her daughters in law (1:8-9; 3:1). She was motivated by a desire for Ruth to find a place of rest and happiness with a new husband and home. As an older woman with no husband and hardly any material resources, Naomi could easily have been self-centered and selfish and tried to hand on to Ruth. In reality, we see the opposite. Naomi was absolutely focused on helping Ruth marry the right man. She even helped speed up the process! (Chapter 3)
3. She provided godly advice that was a help, not a hindrance to what God was doing in bringing Ruth and Boaz together.

Conclusion: Will you commit to doing romance and marriage God's way as a single person?

RUTH'S ROMANCE PART 2

Text: Ruth 3:1-18

Introduction:

1. "The Book of Ruth sets forth a lovely picture of life in Israel during the time of the Judges. It was not written by Ruth, but is rather about Ruth. The name "Ruth" means "friendship" or "beautiful". It is commonly believed that the prophet Samuel is the author of the Book." (Sorenson)
2. Suggested Outline for Ruth
 - Ruth's Repentance (Chap. 1)
 - Ruth's Romance (Chap. 2-3)
 - Ruth's Redemption (Chap. 4:1-12)
 - Ruth's Reward (Chap. 4:13-22)
3. In our last message we looked at Ruth's Repentance, how she turned from her pagan idolatry to the One True God of Israel. In this message we study the romance between Ruth and Boaz which provides some wonderful lessons on Christian courtship as well as a beautiful type of Christ and his bride the church.
4. We are studying the beautiful romance the Holy Spirit has recorded between Boaz and Ruth and the salvation pictures we encounter along the way.

I. THE PROVIDENCE OF THE ROMANCE (VS. 1-7)

The Providence of God is clearly seen at work in this godly romance. God was working to bring this couple together.

II. THE PEOPLE IN THE ROMANCE (VS. 8-23)

We considered the character of the three main characters involved in this romance – Boaz, Ruth and Naomi.

A. Boaz – The Portrait of a Godly Man (Vs. 8-9, 11-12, 14-16)

B. Ruth – The Portrait of a Virtuous Woman (Vs. 2-3, 7, 10, 13)

C. Naomi – the Portrait of a Selfless Parent (Vs. 18-23)

III. THE PLAN FOR THE ROMANCE (VS. 1-6)

Naomi now gives Ruth some helpful counsel on the way forward in her romance with Boaz. It highlights how godly counsel can function as a guide in a godly relationship.

A. The Motive of Naomi's Counsel (Vs. 1)

1. Naomi's counsel was motivated by a desire for Ruth's rest and wellbeing. Naomi is characterized by her selflessness in this whole situation. Ruth was providing for her at this stage of her life. She could have selfishly tried to hang on to her but we see the opposite.

Naomi's selflessness would be wonderfully rewarded (See Ruth 4:14-17).

2. Naomi's desire was to help Ruth find a place of "rest" with her own home and husband. What a beautiful picture of both the salvation and sanctification of the believer.
 - a. Salvation rest – Ruth would cease from her own labors and would come to rest in Boaz's work on her behalf (Chap. 4). In like manner, salvation involves us resting in Christ's finished work, not trusting in our own works (John 19:30; Eph. 2:8-9).
 - b. Sanctification rest – once Ruth was married to Boaz, she was probably busier than ever, especially once Obed was born. But it was labor in the context of Boaz's bountiful resources and provisions for her. The rest of the Christian is not a rest of inactivity. It is soul rest in the midst of service. It is serving in God's strength. It is Christ doing the work through us (John 15 – vine and branches).
3. Naomi provides a good example to parents. As parents we should desire that our children marry well in God's will and seek to be a help to God's plan, not a hindrance.

B. The Wisdom of Naomi's Counsel (Vs. 2-4)

Naomi's counsel was:

1. Practical (Vs. 2-3) – on a practical level Naomi understood the value of a couple of things as an older woman.
 - a. The importance of a woman's grooming (Vs. 3). Naomi advises Ruth to prepare for her audience with Boaz. She was to:
 - i. Wash herself – cleanliness and hygiene are important in a good relationship. It is not spiritual to be stinky, dirty and greasy!
 - ii. Anoint herself – an oil to enhance her appearance. Possibly it was scented so an ancient perfume.
 - iii. Cloth herself – she was to put on her best clothes for this audience with Boaz. It is not wrong to dress up for the one you love so long as it is within the bounds of biblical modesty. God has made a woman to be a creature of beauty. The world and the devil use feminine appeal to destructive ends. A godly woman can use her feminine appeal within her marriage to be a blessing to her husband.
 - iv. Good grooming is important in the lead up to marriage but it is also important that it be maintained after marriage.
 - v. Note: We should be appropriately groomed for our audience with our Heavenly Bridegroom when we come to meet with Him in the local church.

- b. The importance of a man's eating (Vs. 3b).
 - i. She wisely advised Ruth not to approach Boaz until he had finished eating and drinking. As an older woman, Naomi understood something about men – looking after their appetite is very important. Further, the outcome of the meeting was likely to be more favorable after he had a full stomach.
 - ii. Note: Prospective wives need to learn how to cook if they are going to care for a husband and family one day. If you don't like cooking as a wife, pray and get used to it!
- 2. Scriptural (Vs. 4)
 - a. Naomi was advising her daughter in line with Old Testament law in relation to Levirate marriage (See Deut. 25:5-10) and the Jewish customs of her time. William Macdonald explains, "The Law of Moses required that when a man died childless, a close relative should marry the widow thus perpetuating the family name and keeping the land in the family. It was especially important that when a man died without a son, someone should marry his widow so that a son would be born and the name carried on."
 - b. The principle is that counseling needs to be Bible based, not opinion based!

C. The Acceptance of Naomi's Counsel (Vs. 5-6)

- 1. Ruth recognized the value of Naomi's counsel. She must have had some confidence given the background of her blossoming friendship with Boaz.
- 2. Ruth voluntarily followed her mother in laws advice. There relationship was clearly built on mutual respect. This is important. It was important that Ruth give Naomi's advise respectful consideration. It was also important that Naomi respect Ruth's will in the whole matter.
- 3. Parents need to remember to give balanced, biblical advice to help guide their son or daughter's courtship. They need to make sure that the motive behind their advice is with the child's best interest at heart. They need to make sure their advice is a help and not a hindrance to what God is doing in their adult child's life. They need to remember to respect the adulthood and individual soul liberty of their son or daughter. Some parents are carnal, controlling and manipulative with their adult children and they weaponize their carnal counsel by giving it a fake spiritual veneer when in reality the inner motive is out of order.
- 4. Adult children need to value Spirit lead, Scriptural advice from the authorities in their life (e.g., parents, pastors). There is safety in godly counsel (Prov. 11:14; 24:6).

IV. THE PROGRESSION OF THE ROMANCE (VS. 7-13)

A. Ruth's Appeal (Vs. 7-9)

1. The posture of her appeal (Vs. 7)
 - a. Winnowing – After sunset the cool, Mediterranean winds would blow. The chaff and grain would be thrown from a shovel high into the breeze and this would blow away the light chaff while the heavier grain would fall to the floor. The threshing floor of Boaz is a happy scene. Here Ruth's destiny as a mother in Israel was determined. (Flanigan) A threshing floor was usually a large hard area of earth or stone on the downwind (east) side of the village where threshing took place.
 - b. Ruth came to where Boaz was sleeping, uncovered his feet and lay down. This was a symbolic gesture that she was seeking to shelter under his protection as her kinsman redeemer.
 - c. Note: Please don't read this account through the lens of our sexualized, seductive culture. Ruth was not going to seduce Boaz. She was not going dressed like a harlot. There was no plan for immoral conduct at the threshing floor. The whole romance is pure, wholesome, appropriate and holy.
 - d. In salvation, we find a place of safety, shelter and protection at the nail scarred feet of our Lord Jesus. To be saved you must bow in humility at Christ's feet and ask him to spread his garment of salvation over you.
2. The plea of her appeal (Vs. 8-9)
 - a. She pleads for Boaz to cover her – “spread thy skirt over thine handmaid”.
 - i. Ruth asked that Boaz take the fringe of his long, flowing robe and spread it over her to symbolize her desire to shelter under him as her kinsman redeemer. Interestingly, the Hebrew word translated “skirt” here is the same word translated “wings” in Ruth 2:12. Boaz became a part of the answer of his own prayer for Ruth! The Hebrew word is ‘kanaph’. The prophecy of Malachi 4:2 revealed that Messiah would have healing power in the wings (kanaph) of his garment. Malachi 4:2 “But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his **wings**;” This is why the woman with the issue of blood touched the hem or border of Christ's garment and received instant healing (Matt. 9:20; Mk. 5:27; Lk. 8:44).
 - ii. Ruth is asking for more than a material covering. She is asking for the protection of a redeemer, which, in the circumstances would imply marriage. Adam Clarke

- enlarges, saying, “Spread therefore thy skirt over thine hand maid, Hebrew, Spread thy wing. The wing is the emblem of protection, and is a metaphor taken from the young of fowls, which run under the wings of their mothers, that they may be saved from birds of prey.”
- iii. Similar imagery is used by God in describing His marriage to Israel in Ezekiel 16:8 “Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time *was* the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.”
 - iv. Illustration: Even today in Jewish weddings, there is a custom where the couple is wrapped in a tallit (prayer shawl) around the shoulders, a symbol of their unity and love.
 - v. Praise God the day we got saved we were covered with the robe of Christ’s righteousness. Isaiah 61:10 “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with **the garments of salvation**, he hath **covered me with the robe of righteousness**, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels.”
- b. She pleads for Boaz to redeem her – “for thou art a near kinsman”.
- i. Ruth was requesting that he fulfill the role of kinsman redeemer on her behalf. Marriage was clearly implied in her request.
 - ii. Christ is our near kinsman; he was born of a woman and thus became related in his humanity to the whole human race (Gal. 4:4). Christ came to redeem us and the price he paid for our redemption was His own life’s blood. Colossians 1:14 “In whom we have **redemption** through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins:” 1 Peter 1:18-19 “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not **redeemed** with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:”

B. Boaz’s Answer (Vs. 10-13)

Ruth’s plea was bountifully rewarded. Boaz answered her plea with:

1. Praise for Ruth (Vs. 10, 11a).

- a. Boaz praised her for making a spiritual rather than a carnal choice for a husband. The exact age gap between Ruth and Boaz is not disclosed in the Bible but if he was a near kinsman of Elimelech's who appears to have died prematurely, we have reason to believe that it was not excessive. Boaz was clearly an active, fit man even though he was Ruth's senior. This is not an example of an old, frail grandpa marrying an 18-year-old! He was clearly able to be her 'companion' in marriage physically and mentally (Mal. 2:14).¹
 - b. Boaz praises her for being a virtuous woman. The basic meaning of the noun is "strength".² The same Hebrew word is translated elsewhere multiple times as "valour" or "valiant". Also, "power", "strong/strength", "might". Boaz had found a priceless gem in Ruth. Proverbs 31:10 "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price *is* far above **rubies**." Proverbs 31:10-31 outline the character traits of such a woman.
2. Promises for Ruth (Vs. 11-13)
- a. "I will do to thee all that thou requirest" (Vs. 11a)
 - b. "then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the LORD liveth" (Vs. 13b)
 - c. Ruth's appeal received an abundant answer of assurance from Boaz. In like manner, a salvation plea to the Lord Jesus Christ is richly rewarded in accordance with His precious promises. Romans 10:12-13 "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is **rich unto all that call upon him**. For whosoever shall **call** upon the name of the Lord **shall be saved**."

V. THE PEACE OF THE ROMANCE (Vs. 14-18)

Ruth is now at a place of rest, peace and trust in Boaz's grace and love for her. We see her:

A. Resting in his Presence (Vs. 14)

- 1. Ruth resumes her place of rest at Boaz's feet. Nothing impure or inappropriate takes place here. It is very likely other men were there at the threshing floor that night. Ruth leaves before dawn in order to avoid being detected and Boaz issues an instruction that the matter be kept private, not to cover up a scandalous affair but to protect their integrity.
- 2. It says much for the virtue of both, that, alone together on the threshing floor in the night hours, they remained pure. Bishop Hall writes, "Boaz, instead of touching her as a wanton, blesseth her as

¹ "yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant" (Mal. 2:14).

² Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, p. 271.

a father, encourageth her as a friend, promiseth her as a kinsman, rewards her as a patron, and sends her away laden with hopes and gifts, no less chaste, more happy than she came. O admirable temperance, worthy the progenitor of him in whose lips and heart there was no guile.”

3. Ruth’s posture provides a good example for the believer. We can to the feet of Christ for salvation and it is at His feet we continue to find a place of fellowship and security. Illustration: Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and heard His Word (Luke 10:39).

B. Resting in his Provision (Vs. 15)

1. Boaz gives Ruth six measures of grain, a lovely token of His love and care for her. His word to her was “go not empty”. Through his kind provision, emptiness was a thing of the past. So it is with all who come to know the Saviour. Hearts that once were empty are filled with God and His grace.
2. The grain was also a lovely token that he would follow through and fulfill his promises to her.
3. On a practical note, It was also an act of kindness towards Ruth’s mother-in-law as well as a desire to provide for his bride to be.
4. Praise God our Heavenly Bridegroom provides for all our needs. He has given us the Holy Spirit as the earnest (downpayment) of our inheritance (Eph. 1:13-14).

C. Resting on his Promises (Vs. 16-18)

1. “When Ruth returned home, her mother-in-law asked her, “*Who art thou?*” i.e., as what person, in what circumstances dost thou come? The real meaning is, What hast thou accomplished? Whereupon she related all that the man had done (cf. [Rth 3:10-14](#)), and that he had given her six measures of barley for her mother.” (Keil & Delitzsch)
2. Naomi counsels Ruth to “sit still” and wait upon Boaz to perform his promises to her. Note again how Ruth is in a posture of rest. Up until now she has been working and labouring in the fields. Now she ceases from her own labours and rests in the labours of Boaz.
3. In like manner, we must come to rest in faith upon the work of our Heavenly Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. We are to “believe on” the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts. 16:31).

Conclusion: Have you come to that place of salvation rest at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ? Will you commit as a single man or woman to honoring God in the area of romance?

RUTH'S REDEMPTION

Text: Ruth 4:1-22

Introduction:

1. In the last two messages, we considered Ruth's romance in Chapter 2-3 and gleaned some helpful principles for Christian romance as well as some beautiful pictures of Christ and the church.
2. In this lesson we study Boaz fulfilling the role of kinsman redeemer for Ruth and the wonderful way this pictures Christ as our Redeemer. The word 'redeem' occurs 8 times in this chapter.
3. Review of Outline for Ruth
 - Ruth's Repentance (Chap. 1)
 - Ruth's Romance (Chap. 2-3)
 - Ruth's Redemption (Chap. 4:1-12)
 - Ruth's Reward (Chap. 4:13-22)

I. RUTH'S REDEMPTION (VS. 1-12)

Consider four truths about Ruth's Redemption.

A. The Person of Her Redemption (Vs. 1)

Boaz was the man who took steps to redeem her. John Phillips points out that the kinsman redeemer had to fulfill three basic requirements and Boaz fulfilled all three.

1. He had to have the *resources* to Redeem. Redemption was costly business. The first reference we have to Boaz in Ruth is that he was "a mighty man of wealth" (2:1).
2. He had to have the *resolve* to Redeem. The other near kinsman in the story didn't. He was interested in the property but not in Ruth. Boaz fully committed himself to Ruth's redemption.
3. He had to have the *right* to Redeem. He had to be a near kinsman.
4. "In Boaz we see illustrated many of the excellencies of Christ. Boaz was a man of great wealth (Vs. 1). He was compassionate to the stranger, who had no claim on his favors (Vs. 8-9), He knew all about Ruth, even before she met him (Vs. 11), even as the Lord knows all about us even before we come to know Him. He served Ruth graciously, and all her needs were satisfied (Vs. 14). He granted her protection and prosperity for the future (Vs. 15, 16). In these acts of grace, we see a foreshadowing of our blessed Redeeming Relative's mercies to us." (Macdonald)
5. Consider how Boaz pictures Christ
 - a. Christ has all the resources for our redemption as the Son of God.

- b. Christ has the resolve to redeem us. He fully gave Himself in order to buy us back from the slavery of sin.
- c. Christ had the right to redeem sinful humanity. It was His Divine right as Creator. It was also His right as the second Adam. Through the incarnation, Christ, the God man, became related in his humanity to the whole human race.

B. The Process of Her Redemption (Vs. 1-8)

1. The location of the dialogue (Vs. 1). The meeting was conducted at the city gate. The city gate was like what our council chambers are today. It was the place where official business was conducted. See Gen. 19:1; 23:10; 34:20; 2 Sam. 15:2; Neh. 8:1; Psalm 69:12).
2. The witnesses to the dialogue (Vs. 2). Ten of the elders of the city were asked to act as witnesses to what transpired (See Vs. 9) The number 10 apparently comprised a quorum to officially transact business.
3. The unnamed kinsman in the dialogue (Vs. 3-6) Boaz outlines the proposal to the nearer kinsman. He is more than willing to redeem the parcel of land but is unwilling and unable to redeem Ruth. Some Bible students have suggested that the unnamed kinsman represents the law and its inability to purchase the sinner. J.M Flanigan elaborates, "Perhaps the unnamed kinsmen represents the law and its inability to redeem the sinner. He hands Ruth over to Boaz to redeem her. She was under him legally but he could not perform the role of redeemer. He brings Ruth to Boaz. We are under the law but it cannot provide redemption for us. It brings us to Christ and He redeems us."
4. The custom in the dialogue (Vs. 7-8). Drawing off the shoe and handing it to another was a symbolical act signifying the giving up of rights of possession. Delitzsch writes, "The custom itself, which existed among the Indians and the ancient Germans, arose from the fact that fixed property was taken possession of by treading upon the soil, and hence taking off the shoe and handing it to another was a symbol of the transfer of a possession of ownership." See Josh. 1:3. The unnamed kinsman had conceded his rights to Boaz by giving him his shoe.

C. The Price of Her Redemption (Vs. 9-10)

1. How much Boaz paid to redeem Ruth and the piece of property connected to her is not stated but it must have been considerable. The word 'redeem' occurs 8 times in the chapter (Vs. 4, 6), 'redeeming' once, the word 'buy' 4 times (Vs. 4, 5, 8), 'bought' once (Vs. 9). In love, Boaz sacrificed of his wealth (2:1) to purchase Ruth to Himself.
2. Our Lord Jesus Christ paid the highest price for our Redemption. All the silver and gold in the world could never redeem lost, sinful

humanity. Jesus Christ paid for our redemption in His own life's blood.

- a. 1 Peter 1:18-19 "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not **redeemed** with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
- b. Eph. 1:7 "In whom we have **redemption** through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;"
- c. Heb. 9:12 "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained **eternal redemption** *for us*."
- d. Acts 20:28 "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath **purchased** with his own blood."

D. The Praise of Her Redemption (Vs. 11-12)

The onlookers and witnesses to the proceedings rejoice and pronounce a blessing upon Boaz and Ruth.

1. Their prayer wish was that the LORD would make Ruth like Rachel and Leah, the matriarchs of the nation of Israel. Rachel was buried near Bethlehem (Gen. 35:16). They also desire that Boaz and his family "do worthily" and "be famous" in Bethlehem. Boaz and his family did live in a worthy, godly manner and to this day they are famous for their spirituality and godliness. "These words seem to be directed to Boaz, particularly praying that he might continue to do worthy and virtuous actions, as well as increase in wealth and riches, power and authority, and retain his name and fame, and grow in credit and reputation among his fellow citizens." (John Gill)
2. They further wish that Boaz's house might be blessed like the house of Pharez whom Tamar bare unto Judah.
3. Note that Both of these blessings pronounced upon Boaz and Ruth have to do with blessing of offspring. The modern anti-baby trend and anti-baby advise given to many newly married Christian couples has no basis in Scripture. It seems today that many wish for barrenness more than fruitfulness. That was not the attitude of the godly saints of old in the Scriptures. To be blessed with children was highly prized and highly valued.
4. Note: On a practical level, when a godly couple gets married, it is important that the people of God rally around them with prayers, blessings and support.

II. RUTH'S REWARD (VS. 13-22)

Look at the abundant blessings that God lavished upon Ruth. The story of Ruth the Moabitess is now all but concluded, but its end is brighter than its beginning. The story which commenced with famine and funerals is ending with a happy family in Bethlehem of Judea. All these blessings trace back to the most important decision she made in Ruth 1 to make the True God of Israel her God.

A. The Blessing of Marriage (Vs. 13a)

1. This was the climax and crowning moment of their godly romance. What had proceeded this special moment?
 - a. Courtship – Ruth and Boaz had become friends and companions over the approx. 3-4 months they had gotten to know each other.
 - b. Counsel – God had used Naomi to provide godly help in the form of wise counsel to help guide the romance.
 - c. Covenant – a formal ceremony was conducted (Ruth 4) within the cultural setting of Israel to formalize the marriage.
 - d. Consummation – Boaz and Ruth consummate the marriage in the one flesh union. Notice the order. This came last after they had entered into the marriage covenant.
2. Will you commit as a youth or single adult to God's model for romance and marriage?

B. The Blessing of Conception (Vs. 13b)

1. Ruth's conception is attributed to the work of God. God was the one who "gave her conception".
2. Fertility in marriage is a gift from God, not to be taken for granted. There is a sovereign, miraculous element to the conception and birth of a child.
3. Sadly today, we have largely lost a God-centric view of conception and child bearing. To be able to conceive and bear children is a wonderful blessing, not a curse!

C. The Blessings to Naomi (Vs. 14-16)

The women pronounce a blessing on Naomi. She also experienced God's blessings.

1. The blessing of God's graciousness (Vs. 14). Notice how the focus of their praise is on the Lord – "Blessed by the LORD". God had worked in a gracious and mighty way in both Naomi and Ruth's lives.
2. The blessing of a grandchild (Vs. 15-16)
 - a. Obed was a bright spot in Naomi's old age. Grandchildren are blessings from God for grandparents! She had returned from the Moab sojourn feeling empty and bitter (Ruth 1:20-21) but now she was experiencing the refreshing and restoring hand of God

in her life. Little Obed would be used of God to breathe some fresh life into Naomi.

- b. The blessing was multiplied for Naomi on account of the godly character of her daughter in law Ruth. To say that Ruth was more valuable than seven sons was a statement of highest praise in those days.
- c. Naomi had the privilege of being a “nurse” to Obed. She was an active help and support in the raising of Obed. What a blessing for Naomi and what a blessing for Ruth! Naomi was not a disengaged, disinterested grandparent with the “been there done that” mentality.

D. The Blessings of a godly lineage (Vs. 17-22)

1. Ruth had the privilege of becoming a part of the royal line. Her son Obed was the father of Jesse who was in turn the father of David, Israel’s most beloved king. With this little genealogy ending with David (Vs. 13-22), the reader is prepared for the monarchy and the next books in Biblical order, 1 and 2 Samuel.
2. Ruth had the privilege of becoming a part of the Messianic line. Matthew 1:5 “And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;”
3. Remember, your decisions determine your destiny! Choose God and His will for your life.

Conclusion:

1. Have you been redeemed by Christ? He paid the full price for your redemption. All you need to do is repent and receive!
2. What decisions are you making in your life as a Christian? Which direction are they taking you? Are you considering the long term or only the short term in your decisions?