

Ruth 4:1-12 - Thursday, May 2nd, 2013

(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." So 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.

- It's important to understand that these city gates were the place where business matters were conducted, and legal matters were settled.
- It's for this reason, Boaz, true to his word, goes there in order to settle this legal matter concerning the obligation of a kinsmen redeemer.
- More specifically, he can't legally marry Ruth unless the closer kinsmen redeemer forfeits his right to redeem the land and marry the widow.

- While we know how this ends the process with which it's detailed is most fascinating for a number of reasons chief of which is the typology.
- Be that as it may, all of these details will come in to play and in so doing paint a powerful and prophetic picture of our Kinsmen Redeemer.
- Suffice it to say, you may want to put a couple of these details in your hip pocket for now, because they will make sense at the conclusion.

- The first detail is the ten elders of the city that will ultimately serve as the court of law in the settling of this matter of his legal obligations.
- Another interesting detail, though not as significant in terms of the typology, is that the text doesn't record the name of this nearer kinsman.
- The thought is that Boaz would have certainly known him well in that they were related, which would indicate the omission was intentional.

Of this one commentator writes, "Doubtless Boaz both knew his name, and called him by it; but it is omitted by the holy writer, partly because it was unnecessary to know it; and principally in way of contempt, as is usual, and a just punishment upon him, that he who would not preserve his brother's name might lose his own, and lie buried in the grave of perpetual oblivion."

(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*."

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that Boaz doesn't mention anything about marrying Ruth at this point.
- The reason I find it interesting is that it's very likely Ruth and Naomi were close in proximity to the city gate and could hear everything said.
- In other words, the jury was still out, as it were, as to whether or not Boaz would be her Kinsman Redeemer as well as redeeming the land.

- This begs the question of why it is that Boaz would risk having him agree to redeem the land first, without bringing Ruth into the discussion.
- I'm of the belief that he wanted the ten elders as the court of law, if you will, to witness his explicit refusal to marry Ruth as the redeemer.
- I would suggest that had Boaz initially proposed the redemption of the widow with the land his legal standing wouldn't have been as strong.

- Here's how I get there, marrying Ruth would have been the fine print in this legal agreement, and as such Boaz knows it is a deal breaker.
- For Boaz to wait until after he's agreed to buy the land, which is a no brainer, to mention Ruth, he's bringing the fine print to the forefront.
- I suppose you could say that Boaz is being very wise and shrewd so there's no question as to "why" this man would decide not to do this.

(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." (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*."

- Notice the man says, "I cannot redeem," instead of saying, "I will not redeem." I point this out because it's germane to why Boaz did this.
- Here's what I'm thinking, Boaz foreknowing that he already had a wife and likely had sons, meant that any inheritance was already allotted.
- By that I mean, he couldn't redeem the land and marry Ruth by virtue of how doing so would've decimated any inheritance he already had.

- Also, notice how he says, "you redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem *it*." This is exactly why Boaz did it this way.
- Let me explain, had he not presented his case in this way, this man could have argued that he was somehow tricked into marrying Ruth.
- However, by Boaz presenting his case the way he did, he now has court transcripts recording this man saying, I cannot, you redeem this.

(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.

- Here we have, as was the custom in that day, the confirming of an agreement by having the sandal removed and given to the other party.
- This because of the laws and customs concerning that of the Kinsmen Redeemer, specifically as it relates to marrying a childless widow.
- You'll indulge me for just a bit as we revisit this law in Deuteronomy, which we looked at last week in chapter three. I do so for a reason.

Deuteronomy 25:5-10 (5) "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be *married* to a stranger outside *the family*; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. (6) And it shall be *that* the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. (7) But if the man does not want to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders, and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.' (8) Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him. But *if* he stands firm and says, 'I do not want to take her,' (9) then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his face, and answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house.' (10) And his name shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal removed.'

- Here Moses addresses the matter of a man dying with no son to carry on his name. In this case, the man's brother was to marry the widow.
- This was done in order to leave descendants who could in turn, not only carry on the family name, but to also have an inheritance as well.
- Moses then deals with the situation of a brother refusing to marry his brother's wife by telling them the widow is to go to elders at the gate.

- If the elders were unsuccessful in convincing him to reconsider his refusal to do so the widow was to remove his sandal and spit in his face.
- Furthermore he was to be named and identified as "the house of him who had his sandal removed," throughout all of Israel for all of his life.
- The reason I bring this up again here is that it answers the question of why it is that there's no spitting in his face or calling him this name.

- In addition to this, it also provides us with further evidence that God had given Boaz supernatural wisdom to resolve this matter in this way.
- Here's why, Boaz in no way dishonored this man such that he would be legally required to also spit in his face and then call him that name.
- Furthermore, Boaz had done everything precisely according to the law, and in so doing this man would have no legal recourse in the future.

(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."

- Here Boaz seals the deal, so to speak, with these witnesses by proclaiming "moreover," Ruth will be his wife to now perpetuate the name.
- Notice how his emphasis is not on the land, but the bride. You sort of get the impression that what he really wanted was this gentile bride.
- It probably goes without saying but this will come in to play once we get to the profound prophetic picture related to us as His gentile bride.

- Before we move on to verse eleven, there's something here that I think I'd be grossly remiss were I not to address concerning a marriage.
- Let me explain, couple of weeks ago I had someone send me a Facebook question, asking me something that I get asked a lot as a pastor.
- Before I read and answer the question this is probably as good of a time as any to apologize for not responding to all the messages we get.

The question reads as follows: "Does a person have to have a state issued marriage license, to be considered married in the eyes of God, or can they be married by a covenant with God and 2 or more witnesses without the legal license, to be considered married in the eyes of God?"

The answer to this question is found here in our text. What follows are several reasons a couple needs to have a "state issued license."

1. Like Boaz, we need to obey the laws of the land because not doing so would indicate a lack of honor.
2. Like Boaz, we need witnesses as a testimony of our union because not doing so would indicate a lack of love.
3. Like Boaz, we need a binding covenant in the eyes of both the law and God because not doing so would indicate a lack of commitment.

(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."

- What a grand and glorious celebration that ensues subsequent to all the people and all the elders emphatically stating; "we are witnesses."
- What's even grander and more glorious is the blessing they pronounce upon Boaz and Ruth in likening them to Rachel, Leah, then Perez.
- Here's why, Rachel and Leah would give birth to thirteen children, twelve of whom were sons of Jacob and as such twelve tribes of Israel.

- What's even grander and more glorious than the blessing of Rachel and Leah is the blessing of their house being like the house of Perez.
- Oh and by the way, it's not in any way for the reasons one may think. This because of both how, and to whom, this Perez would be born.
- Tamar dresses as a prostitute, and conceives by her father-in-law, Judah, who refused his legal obligation to have his third son marry her.

Genesis 38:27-30 NKJV Now it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins *were* in her womb. (28) And so it was, when she was giving birth, that *the one* put out *his* hand; and the midwife took a scarlet *thread* and bound it on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." (29) Then it happened, as he drew back his hand, that his brother came out unexpectedly; and she said, "How did you break through? *This breach be* upon you!" Therefore his name was called Perez. (30) Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet *thread* on his hand. And his name was called Zerah.

- So, as it turns out, we find out, Tamar has not only been with child, she's been with twins, and now the time has come for her to give birth.
- Now, in order to identify the firstborn, as was the custom, the midwife would tie a scarlet thread on his hand saying; this one came out first.
- Then, just as she does it the one with scarlet draws back and the brother comes out unexpectedly and is named "Perez," or breakthrough.

- Then, after that, the one with the scarlet thread on his hand comes out and they name him Zerah, though he had the scarlet thread on him.
- This begs the question of why it is that we would be given such specific detail, and more importantly, why they would bless Boaz like Perez.
- First, let's look at the significance of Zerah. One commentator suggests that he is a picture of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1. Zerah had a scarlet thread on his wrist just as Jesus had blood stain wrists of Jesus.
2. Zerah appeared first, just as Jesus is the Firstfruit of the brethren according to 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.
3. Zerah remained in the womb, just as Jesus remained in a tomb.
4. Zerah comes back out of the womb, just as Jesus comes back out of the tomb.