

Ruth 2026 (Week 3)

Love, Loyalty, Redemption

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Ruth 3-4

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Integrity is a small word with huge importance. Integrity is often defined as doing the right thing even when no one is looking. It is the quality of being honest, having strong moral principles, and being consistent in your character. My family and I have watched this show. There's been two seasons now from Mr.

Beast called The Beast Games. The first season had 1,000 contestants at the beginning of the season. There were 1,000 people that were trying to vie for the prize that one person would walk away with, the largest prize in game show or reality TV history of ten million dollars. As you would watch the show play itself out of the 1,000, contestants were gradually eliminated by strange challenges and games.

Of course, there were friendships and alliances and all the things that kind of play out in that type of show. But trust was very important throughout the entire time. At one point in the game, the remaining contestants were divided into four teams, and they were told to choose a captain that would represent their entire team.

And they said, "Make sure that you choose somebody that is the most trustworthy on your team." These four captains then that were representing their entire team were brought to the top of this huge tower that he had built, and a large red button was placed in front of each of the four captains. And this was the crazy game that MrBeast had come up with. He was going to offer them money to push the button.

It was a bribe of sorts, and if they chose to push the button, they would receive all of the money that he offered, and they would stay in the competition, but their entire team would be eliminated. So they would get to stay, they would get the money, and everybody else would have to leave. Now, of course, in dramatic fashion, a huge screen was placed behind these four contestants, and the amount of money that he was offering was continuing to rise on the screen behind them until one person would push the button.

And of course, all of this, while their teams watched on, urging them, "Don't push the button," because they wanted to stay in the competition. Now, this wasn't hundreds of dollars that he was bribing them with. The money continued to rise until the prize got to \$1 million. All they had to do was push the button, and MrBeast was going to give them a million dollars, they would have stayed in the game, and their entire team would have been eliminated.

As soon as that amount rose to \$1 million, my kids asked me, "Dad, what would you do in that situation?" I honestly answered them as I thought about it for a quick moment and said, "You know, if I told my team, not knowing what was happening when we volunteered, that I wouldn't push the button no matter what, then I would have stayed true to my Word because my integrity is not for sale." Amazingly, as we watched this play out on the screen, none of the four contestants pushed the button.

And Mr. Beast was shocked. You could tell he was literally shocked and amazed, thinking for sure, somebody would push the button and sell out these people that they had just met maybe weeks ago in order to get the million dollars. And not one person pushed the button and he had to reiterate to them, "You know this is real

money. I am really going to do this if you would push the button." And one of the contestants looked at Mr. Beast and he said, amazingly, "My integrity is not for sale." I thought that was neat.

How important is integrity to you? Is it worth more than a million dollars? As I thought about that scenario, the amount of money in my bank account would not have helped me sleep at night if I had sold my integrity. And I think it is true for many of you as well. Today, we're going to wrap up a series that we have been in for three weeks now in this Old Testament book of Ruth. And as we will wrap this up, you will see that integrity is one of the main themes of this book.

We have already seen it in the character of Ruth. It has been exemplified multiple times in the decisions that she has made and how she has responded to her mother-in-law, Naomi. She made the decision to abandon any sense of normal life by leaving her homeland and following Naomi to Bethlehem. She now bears the burden and the responsibility of providing for her own needs as well as for the needs of Naomi.

She had to give up on her dreams and on her hopes, and yet she continues to follow the advice of Naomi. Today, we're going to see the integrity of a different character, the man Boaz that we were introduced to last week. He is going to display this idea of integrity. Here is a quick recap before we jump in, in case you missed last week or the week before. As we started this story, we were introduced to a Jewish family where the mother's name was Naomi, her husband was Alimelek, and they had two boys.

As they were living in Bethlehem, in Judah, they were experiencing a famine, and so Limelek made the tough decision to move the family to Moab so that they could eat and survive. While they are there, we learn that a limelech passes away, and his two sons marry Moabite women. A little while later, as the story continues, both of their sons also die, leaving us in the story with three widows, Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth.

The famine ends in Judah, and Naomi, now with two daughters-in-law, decides her best chance at life is to go back to Bethlehem and try to make life work out. She tells her daughter-in-laws, Orpah and Ruth, to go and stay in Moab while she leaves. And just to start life over, they were young, they could remarry, and they could make life happen.

Orpah agrees after some persuasion, but Ruth refuses to stay in Moab and says to her mother-in-law, "Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God." Once they arrived back in Bethlehem, we discovered that Ruth, as she goes out to provide for herself and Naomi, ends up in the fields of a man named Boaz. We find out that Boaz is a family member of a Limelek, and this will help the story play out as she finds blessings with him.

And this will take us to Ruth chapter 3:1, which is where we're going to begin today. We're going to try to make it through two entire chapters as we wrap this up. So we are going to go fast, so if you want to open your Bibles, you can to Ruth chapter 3:1, they are short chapters. Let me pray, and then we will get started. Heavenly Father, we come before You today. We thank You for the stories of those who have been faithful before us.

As they cry out to us as a witness, as a testimony, that as we live in our world today where it's easy to sell your integrity, it's easy to only think about the moment and not the repercussions of our actions. We are grateful for these stories that encourage and call out to us to continue to remain faithful to you, even in our seasons of pain and hurt and suffering.

And so, Father, as we gather today and as we read through this story, I pray that You would speak to us, that You would help us to be people of integrity, not for our own praise or glory, but so that You would be lifted up and people would be drawn to You. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen. All right, Ruth chapter 3, starting in verse 1, "One day, Naomi, her mother-in-law said to her, 'Ruth, my daughter, should I not try to find a home for you where you will be well provided for?"

Is not Boaz with whose servant girls you have been, a kinsman redeemer of ours. Tonight he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. I want you to wash and perfume yourself, put on your best clothes, then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking.

And when he lies down, note the place where he is lying, then go, uncover his feet and lie down next to him, and he will tell you what to do. Now, I just want to pause here in the story, and I just want to encourage you don't get caught up in the weeds, all right? This is a very strange situation, what's happening here. I don't want to get into all of the cultural stuff, but this was definitely a cultural way for Ruth to communicate to Boaz that she was interested in him fulfilling his duties as the kinsman redeemer of the family.

And so she was simply letting him know, and this was one of the ways that she could. I am interested in you fulfilling that because as we will read here in a little bit, it is very likely that he was much older than she was, and he would not have pursued this option, knowing that she could do better, I guess, in some ways. So, let's go on in verse 5. The author says that Ruth answers, "I will do whatever you say." So she went down to the threshing floor, and she did everything that her mother-in-law told her to do.

When Boaz had finished eating and drinking, and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet, and then laid down. In the middle of the night, something startled the man, and he turned and discovered a woman lying at his feet. "Who are you?" he asked. "Well, I am your servant, Ruth," she said. "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman redeemer.

The Lord bless you, my daughter," he replied. "The kindness, this kindness is greater than that which you have showed earlier, you have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. And now my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character.

We see right away that Boaz appropriately picks up on her hints, and the fact that a man picked up on the hints of what a woman was doing shows us that God was definitely involved, right? Because many times in our life we have no clue as to what you're trying to say, but Boaz picks up on these hints. He recognizes that she is a woman of noble character, he sees her integrity, and he displays some integrity of his own.

Because you have to understand, again, this culture, this time, there was opportunity in this moment for sin to take place, and no one would have known about it or probably even judged him for it. But here we have two people that Scripture tells us we're people of integrity, so much so that Boaz is going to inform Ruth of something. He's going to say, "Yes, I am your kinsman redeemer.

I am on the line, but there's something else that she needs to know because he is a person of integrity." Look at this in verse 12. "Although it is true," he tells Ruth, "that I am near of kin, there is a kinsman redeemer nearer than I. So stay here for the night and in the morning, if he wants to redeem, good, let him redeem. But if he is not willing, as surely as the Lord lives, I will do it. So lie here until morning.

So she lay at his feet until morning, but got up before anyone could be recognized. And he said to her, "Don't let it be known that a woman came to the threshing floor." Boaz says to her, "Listen, I'm not going to bypass the system. I'm going to follow the rules, even if it interferes with your plans or with what I would like to see happen. I am going to leave this in the hands of God.

There is another person in the line of a Limelek, one of my relatives, that has the right to redeem you and to purchase the property of a Limelek before I do. Ruth doesn't argue. She trusts Yahweh. Even with the pain and the loss that she's experienced, it's amazing that her life, ever since she's been introduced to this Jewish family and ever since she has gotten to know this Jewish god, Yahweh, it seems that life has been miserable and difficult for her, and yet she continues to put her trust and faith in Him.

As I thought about the life of Boaz and the life of Ruth and Naomi and all of the difficulties that they went through, and yet they still remained faithful to God, it caused me to ask this question not just of me, but I pose it to you as well. Do you trust God and believe that He has your best interest in mind? That's a difficult question.

As we go through life, all of us have experienced seasons of life, struggles and trials, heartaches, sometimes called the dark season of the soul where we are trying to be faithful to God, and yet so much is happening to us that's outside of our control, and it would be easy for us to give up hope. And yet, this story will remind us that we should put our trust in God because He does have our best interest in mind.

Let's watch as that plays out. Verse 15, "He also said to Ruth, 'Bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it out. When she did so, he poured into it six measures of barley and put it on her, and then he went back to town.

When Ruth came to her mother-in-law, Naomi asked, "How did it go, my daughter?" And then she told her everything that Boaz had done for her, and added, "He even gave me these six measures of barley, saying, 'Don't go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.' Then Naomi said, 'Wait, my daughter, until you find out what happens, for the man will not rest until the matter is settled today.'" Here we again see Boaz's integrity and his character.

He continues to go above and beyond his duty. He didn't even know if he was going to be able to end up with Ruth. He didn't know how the story was going to play out, but he continues to carry it on as his responsibility to provide for Naomi and Ruth by giving them food, by protecting them, by taking care of them. And we also see here that Boaz is a man of action. He doesn't wait.

As we jump into chapter 4, we will see that that very day, Boaz is going to move forward with this plan. He is going to do what God has laid on his heart to do. And again, it reminds me of a truth in my own life that when God is leading, don't wait. When God is leading, don't wait. I have found this truth in my own life that if I feel I hear something from God, if I feel that He is directing me in some way, the longer I take to respond to that, the more likely I am to ignore it.

When God tells me to do something, if I take time and, you know, really process it and say, "Well, was that really God or did I just eat some bad pizza last night?" The more likely I am to convince myself that, "No, God doesn't really want me to do this," and I kind of just begin going my own way. And so I think it's important for us to be people of action. When God leads, don't wait.

As I was finishing up this series a couple of weeks ago, I had two things happen to me in a period of two weeks that just confirmed this point. It was a couple of weeks ago as it was Trine's graduation, and all the Trine students were getting ready to go back home for the summer, and it was that Sunday right after graduation, and I received a text from one of my guys on the basketball team at Shrine. And he was getting ready to head home, and he texted and said, "Hey, Joel, do you have time for a phone call sometime this week?" And I thought, "Oh no, what's happened?

What's going on?" And so I kind of panicked and I'm like, "Well, actually I'm eating now, but I have time today if you want to talk to me today. It was Sunday right after church." And so he said, "Yeah, that will work." And so we connected and he gave me a call and he said, "Hey, I just wanted to let you know. First off, everything's okay." And I was like, "Okay, everything's fine. There's nothing going on." And he says, "Well, I was driving home today and I was listening to your message on the radio." And I mentioned it was like, "What? You were doing what?" Like, who does that? You know, like what college guy listens to church on the radio when he's driving home?

And I'm like, "Okay, that's cool." And he says, "Yeah, I was driving and I was listening to your message." And he said, "I just felt spurred on to give you a call and to let you know that I feel called of God to participate in the church next year and to actually begin to serve other people. I want to serve other people." And he began to explain what that was going to look like and what he felt God was calling him to do.

And I said, "Absolutely, that's awesome, man." I said, "Yep, when you get back this fall, let's talk through this, and let's figure out how this is going to happen." And I thought, "This is great because he could have easily felt that urge from God to do something, and he could have gone home, and he could have gone on with his business in the summer, and he could have easily come back and said, nah, maybe I was just having a weird day." Right? But he said, "No, I'm going to act on this right now." And so he texted me, and so I said, "Yep, absolutely, we'll talk about this. I'll hold you accountable.

We'll make sure this happens." And I thought, "How cool is that?" That he just responded to God's Spirit in the moment. He didn't wait. Then it was a couple of days later, and I get a phone call from another Trine student that attends here on Sunday mornings during the school year. And he began, it was a strange beginning to the conversation because he started asking me what it looked like to get eloped. And I thought, where is this going? You know So he's asking me all these questions, and I explained to him, I'm like, yeah, you can just go to the courthouse and they'll just sign the paper there, you know, like that's all it really takes, and whatever else.

And I began asking more questions and more of the story began to come out. And the more the story came out, the more excited I was and encouraged by this young man and young woman that were getting married. He went on to tell me, "Yeah, you know we got engaged, and our plan was to get married next year." So in 2027, you know I have one more year of school left, and so we were going to wait.

He said, "But then I just found out that I got this internship somewhere else in the country, and my fiance, who I'm engaged to, her family ended up moving away from town, and so she's living close to here, and so her family, which are not believers, said, "Hey, why don't you just move in with your fiance, you know that way you have a place to stay?" And he said, "Pastor, we just want to do things right, and I don't want to live with her before we're married, and so we just want to get married first." It's like my jaw just dropped. You know, talk about counterculture today.

Here is a young couple that's saying, "I want to honor God with my marriage." And so, yeah, we want to have a big ceremony later, but we want to be married now so that we can honor God with our decision. And I thought to myself, I will make that happen, right? And so we're going to have a wedding ceremony here with just some family, just a small service, and they've already gotten their paperwork from the courthouse, and I just thought to myself, that's what it means to take action. That's what it means to be obedient to God's Spirit on your heart.

Here are young people, which again, I firmly believe that God is moving in this generation, that they're making decisions like this that are so contrary to culture as they're moving closer to God, being people of action and being obedient to God, being people of integrity. I think that we should not wait when God is leading. Let's go on as we wrap up in Ruth chapter 4:1. Meanwhile, Boaz went up to the town gate and he sat there.

When the kinsman redeemer that he had mentioned to Ruth came along, Boaz said to him, "Come over here, my friend, and sit down." So he went over and sat down. Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said to them, "Sit here and they did so." Then he said to the Kinsman Redeemer, which would have been part of his family in some way, "Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our brother, Alimelek.

I thought that I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of all of those that are seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will choose to redeem it, then do so. But if you will not, tell me, so I will know, for no one has the right to do it except you, and then I'm next in line. And he said to him, "Well, then I will redeem it." So then Boaz says, "Oh, there's one more thing.

On the day you buy the land from Naomi and from Ruth the Moabites, you acquire the dead man's widow in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property." You remember this strange Israelite law, right, that I shared with you. So, if you purchase this land, you need to continue the family line of a Limelek down his family

line so they can keep that land in their family. Now at this, this is one of the wisest thing that a man ever says in Scripture, all right?

At this, the Kinsman's Redeemer said, "Well, then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself, I cannot do it," right? So he probably already has a family, he already has land, and again, a wise man says, nope, not marrying another lady, not doing this, all right? One of the wise decisions that he makes, you go ahead and do it. I can't make that happen. Now we get this parenthetical statement in verse 7.

Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel. Aren't you glad that we don't do this anymore? We just sign our name, right? It's a little easier. You don't got to give up your shoes all the time, all right? So in verse eight, "So the kinsman redeemer said to Boaz, 'Buy it yourself,' and he removed his sandal." That's why we're given that little note so we know why.

In verse 9, "Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people that were there, 'Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Alimelek, Kilian, and Malan, the two sons. I have also acquired Ruth, the Moabites, Malan's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from the town records. Today you are witnesses.

Boaz follows through on his promise to Ruth and to Naomi that he would indeed become their kinsman redeemer. Now, I wish I had time, but I don't have time to go into this idea of what it meant truly to be a kinsman redeemer, that you sacrificed yourself and your family line in order to continue and care for the family line of somebody else. It truly was a self-sacrifice.

And I encourage you this afternoon, take some time to study this idea of a kinsman redeemer because Scripture tells us that Jesus is our kinsman redeemer, that He has sacrificed Himself for us. And so not only do we have this amazing story in the Old Testament of how God is working in this family. We are also given this image of what Jesus has done for us.

And so I encourage you to go and study what it means that Jesus is our kinsman redeemer. Let's wrap this up. So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. Then he went to her, and the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. And so the women said to Naomi, "Praise be the Lord, who this day has not left you without a kinsman redeemer, may he become famous throughout Israel.

He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age, for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, and who is better to you than seven sons has given him birth." Then Naomi took the child, laid him in her lap, and cared for him, and the women living there said, "Naomi has a son, and they named him Obed, who was the father of Jesse, the father of David." I know I ruined that little bit for you earlier in the series, right?

The fact that God would use this entire crazy story to bring about King David, who truly was the greatest king, man-king, that Israel would ever have, and then of course following his line, the line of David, we would have the lineage of Jesus, that God would use this crazy story to bring His own Son into the world.

Do you remember when Naomi came back to Bethlehem and all these people started to recognize her, and they recognized, "Well, you went away with a husband and two sons, and now you're coming back with just this moabite named Ruth," and, you know, she said, "Don't call me Naomi anymore. Instead, call me bitter." Do you remember that? Because life had been so difficult for her, almost as if she would be shamed and she would be looked down upon. And now we read this, and those same women are now saying to her, "You are blessed.

This blessing of Ruth is greater than if you had seven sons." Can I just tell you how crazy that is to say in that culture? For a woman to give a man sons was considered the greatest gift that you could ever give. It meant that your family line, your bloodline, was going to continue, and that was extremely important in this culture, and yet

now they look at Naomi, and she is considered one of the most blessed they've ever known. God blesses Naomi beyond her wildest imagination.

Can you imagine the joy when she holds that child thinking to herself, "I never saw this happening." And so I try to always remember that tomorrow is a new day. Things can seem dark, things can seem confusing, they can seem bleak. You might be going through a situation in your life right now that is truly unfair and you are questioning God's goodness and wondering why this is all happening to you and why you are in such a rough season, but can I just encourage you with the story of Ruth that if God shows up, everything changes.

When God shows up, everything changes. So even in our seasons of pain, even in our seasons of hurt, even in our seasons of celebration, integrity matters. Proverbs 11:3 says, "The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.

May I encourage you just as I encourage myself to allow integrity to be our guide?" A life of integrity, remember, is defined by making one small right step at a time. As you look in the mirror, would you and I pray that we would be people of integrity? Again, not for our own glory, but so that we can point people to God, our kinsman redeemer, our Savior.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to be people of integrity. And so as you go home today, I want you to just take a moment and see in your life if there's anything that you need to give up to Jesus today. Maybe it's an issue of repentance, maybe it's an issue of a struggle that you have, and Jesus understands, and that you would just give it to Him and say, "Father, take this from me." I repent of it. Maybe it's a commitment.

Maybe God has been calling you to do something for a while now, and you have just written it off as, "Well, I'm not really sure that's what I'm supposed to do." Would you go home today and say, "God, I want to be faithful. I want to be a person of integrity. And if you are calling me to do this thing, I will do it." May we be people that are known as people of faithfulness and people of integrity, so that God would receive the praise so that we could shine and reflect His image and His goodness, knowing that even in our dark seasons, God is shining through us.

Let me close in prayer. Heavenly Father, we come before You today, and I know that there certainly are many here, many watching online, many listening on the radio that are going through what I have called in my own life and experienced in my own life a dark season of the soul, a struggle, a difficulty where in that season it feels as if you're a million miles away. We can't even make sense of things.

God, in that season, would you continue to pour Your Spirit and love upon us? Help us to remain faithful. Help us to remain strong. Continue to sing of Your praises and of Your goodness. Lord, for those that are hurting, would You pour Your peace upon them? May they even in a difficult season shine for you? We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.