



Silverdale Baptist

RUTH: BEAUTY FROM ASHES ~ GOD IS WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES.
RUTH 4 ~ 07/1-2/2023

Big Idea

The kinsman redeemer brings beauty from ashes.

Getting Started

What have you learned so far from the story of Ruth?

How have you seen God's hands at work in your life since we began this study?

Learn

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ RUTH 3:12-14.

When Naomi sent Ruth to Boaz, she described Boaz as a kinsman redeemer. But how does Boaz describe himself?

Boaz is a kinsman redeemer, but there is one closer kinsman. Pastor Tony described him as the Rival Redeemer. Boaz has to talk to the other redeemer before he can marry Ruth. What happens? Let's find out.

The Rival Redeemer

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ RUTH 4:1-10.

What do you learn about the rival redeemer?

From what we have read in Ruth so far, did the rival redeemer know Ruth and Naomi's situation?

What are some of the likely reasons he had not acted to help Naomi and Ruth?

1. Irresponsible – He Hadn't Taken Care of Them (Ruth 3:12-14)
2. Selfish – He Only Wanted Cheap Land (Ruth 4:3-4)
3. Uncaring – He Was Unwilling to Redeem Ruth (Ruth 4:6)

The Real Redeemer

In a village as small as Bethlehem, the Rival Redeemer must have known about Ruth and Naomi's situation. But, unlike Boaz, he had done nothing to help the widows. He had not offered to help them or initiated a conversation about the land or marriage.

Contrast Boaz's actions with the rival redeemer's inaction.

1. Passionate – He Wanted Her Quickly. (Ruth 4:1)
2. Responsible – He Cared For Her Financially. (*Ruth 3:13*)
3. Integrity – He Did It All Legally. (Ruth 4:8)

| Have a volunteer read Leviticus 25:23-27.

What does this passage teach about redeeming the land?

How does Leviticus 25:23-27 relate to Boaz's actions?

- Boaz Fulfilled the Law of the Kinsman Redeemer
- Boaz Fulfilled the Law of the Levirate Marriage

If you wondered why Boaz waited and didn't pursue buying Naomi's land or marrying Ruth, now you know. Boaz was not the closest kinsman redeemer. He took care of them and provided for them. But he could not do any more until the nearest relative stepped aside. But on that faithful day, in God's timing, at the Bethlehem gate, the closest kinsman refused to redeem. At that moment, Boaz became the nearest kinsman, and he willingly and passionately became the redeemer.

Beauty from Ashes

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ RUTH 4:11-22.

How does the story of Ruth end?

1. The Widow Has A Wedding

So Boaz took Ruth, and she **became his wife** (Ruth 4:13)

2. The Barren Has A Baby

And the LORD enabled her to conceive, and **she gave birth to a son.** (Ruth 4:13)

3. The Bitter Becomes Blessed

He shall be to you **a restorer of life** ... of your old age (Ruth 4:14-16)

4. The Loss Becomes A Legacy

They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. (Ruth 4:17)

Apply

As we mentioned last week, take a moment and reflect on your current life circumstances. How do you see God at work in your circumstances?

Think about the ideas that describe the two kinsman redeemers.

Do you see characteristics of the rival redeemer in your life?

What can you do to intentionally shape your life to model the characteristics of Boaz?

Again, as we asked last week, what are you doing to intentionally develop your love relationship with God?

Pray

Father, thank You that Jesus took on flesh to become our kinsman. Thank You that Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the dead to be our redeemer. Thank You that we have been redeemed. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Digging Deeper into Ruth 4

Love Finds a Way

The Book of Ruth opens with three funerals but closes with a wedding. There is a good deal of weeping recorded in the first chapter, but the last chapter records an overflowing of joy in the little town of Bethlehem. “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Ps. 30:5, KJV). Not all of life’s stories have this kind of happy ending; but this little book reminds us that, for the Christian, *God still writes the last chapter.* We don’t have to be afraid of the future.

This chapter focuses on three persons: a bridegroom, a bride, and a baby.

1. The bridegroom (Ruth 4:1–10)

The law of the kinsman redeemer is given in Leviticus 25:23–34, and the law governing levirate marriage is found in Deuteronomy 25:5–10. The purpose of these laws was to preserve the name and protect the property of families in Israel. God owned the land and didn't want it exploited by rich people who would take advantage of poor people and widows. When obeyed, these laws made sure that a dead man's family name did not die with him and that his property was not sold outside the tribe or clan. The tragedy is that the Jewish rulers didn't always obey this law, and the prophets had to rebuke them for stealing land from the helpless (1 Kings 21; Isa. 5:8–10; Hab. 2:9–12). The nation's abuse of the land was one cause for their Captivity (2 Chron. 36:21).

The meaning of redemption. The word *redeem* means "to set free by paying a price." In the case of Ruth and Naomi, Elimelech's property had either been sold or was under some kind of mortgage, and the rights to the land had passed to Ruth's husband Mahlon when Elimelech died. This explains why Ruth was also involved in the transaction. She was too poor, however, to redeem the land.

When it comes to *spiritual* redemption, all people are in bondage to sin and Satan (Eph. 2:1–3; John 8:33–34) and are unable to set themselves free. Jesus Christ gave His life as a ransom for sinners (Mark 10:45; Rev. 5:9–10), and faith in Him sets the captive free.

Each time I visit a bookstore, I try to observe what subjects are getting prominent notice; and in recent years, it's been the theme of *deliverance*. I see shelves of books about addiction and codependence and how to find freedom. In a world that's enjoying more political freedom than ever before, millions of people are in bondage to food, sex, drugs, alcohol, gambling, work, and dozens of other "masters." While we thank God for the help counselors and therapists can give, it is Jesus Christ who alone can give freedom to those who are enslaved. "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36, NKJV).

The marks of the redeemer. Not everybody could perform the duties of a kinsman redeemer. To begin with, *he had to be a near kinsman (Lev. 25:25)*. This was the major obstacle Boaz had to overcome because another man in Bethlehem was a nearer relative to Ruth than he was (3:12–13). When you see this as a type of Jesus Christ, it reminds you that He had to become *related* to us before He could redeem us. He became flesh and blood so He could die for us on the cross (Heb. 2:14–15). When He was born into this world in human flesh, He became our "near kinsman"; and He will remain our "kinsman" for all eternity. What matchless love!

In order to qualify, the kinsman redeemer also *had to be able to pay the redemption price*. Ruth and Naomi were too poor to redeem themselves, but Boaz had all the resources necessary to set them free. When it comes to the redemption of sinners, nobody but Jesus Christ is rich enough to pay the price. Indeed, the payment of money can never set sinners free; it is the shedding of the precious blood of Christ that has accomplished redemption (1 Peter 1:18–19; see Ps. 49:5–9). We have redemption through Christ's blood (Eph. 1:7), because He gave Himself for us (Titus 2:14) and purchased eternal redemption for us (Heb. 9:12).

There was a third qualification: The kinsman redeemer *had to be willing to redeem*. As we shall see in this chapter, since the nearer kinsman was not willing to redeem Ruth, Boaz was free to purchase both the property and a wife. The nearer kinsman had the money but not the motivation: He was afraid he would jeopardize his own family's inheritance.

The method of redemption. In ancient times, the city gate was the official court where judicial business was transacted in the presence of the elders (Deut. 21:18–21; 2 Sam. 15:2; Job 29:7ff). When Boaz arrived at the gate, he gathered ten men to witness the transaction. Just then, the nearer kinsman walked by—another evidence of God's providence—and Boaz hailed him. Now everything was ready for the great transaction that would ultimately involve the coming of the Son of God into the world.

The key theme of this chapter is *redemption*. The words “redeem,” “buy,” and “purchase” are used at least fifteen times. *There can be no redemption without the paying of a price*. From our point of view, salvation is free to “whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord” (Acts 2:21, KJV); but from God’s point of view, redemption is a very costly thing.

The other kinsman was willing to buy the land until he learned that Ruth was a part of the transaction, and then he backed out. His explanation was that, in marrying Ruth, he would jeopardize his own inheritance. If he had a son by Ruth, and that son were his only surviving heir, Mahlon’s property *and part of his own estate* would go to Elimelech’s family. The fact that Ruth was a Moabitess may also have been a problem to him. (Both Mahlon and Chilion had married Moabite women and died!)

Boaz was undoubtedly relieved when his relative stepped aside and opened the way for Ruth to become his wife. It’s worth noting that the nearer kinsman tried to protect his name and inheritance; *but we don’t even know what his name was or what happened to his family!* Boaz took the risk of love and obedience, and his name is written down in Scripture and held in honor. “He who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:17, NKJV). This also explains why Orpah’s name is missing in Ruth 4:9–10.

The custom of taking off the shoe probably relates to the divine commandment to walk on the land and take possession (Gen. 13:17; Deut. 11:24; Josh. 1:3). In years to come, the ten witnesses would be able to testify that the transaction had been completed because they saw the kinsman hand his shoe to Boaz. It symbolized the kinsman’s forfeiture of his right to possess the land. Boaz now had the land—and Ruth!

I have mentioned before that Boaz is a picture of Jesus Christ, our Kinsman Redeemer; and this scene is no exception to that. Like Boaz, Jesus wasn’t concerned about jeopardizing His own inheritance; instead, He made us a part of His inheritance (Eph. 1:11, 18). Like Boaz, Jesus made His plans privately, but He paid the price publicly; and like Boaz, Jesus did what He did because of His love for His bride.

However, there are also some contrasts between Boaz and the Lord Jesus Christ. Boaz purchased Ruth by giving out of his wealth, while Jesus purchased His bride by giving Himself on the cross. Boaz didn’t have to suffer and die to get a bride. Boaz had a rival in the other kinsman, but there was no rival to challenge Jesus Christ. Boaz took Ruth that he might raise up the name of the dead (Ruth 4:10), but we Christians glorify the name of the living Christ. There were witnesses on earth to testify that Ruth belonged to Boaz (vv. 9–10), but God’s people have witnesses from heaven, the Spirit, and the Word (1 John 5:9–13).

Five times in Ruth 4:1–2 you find people *sitting down*. When Jesus Christ finished purchasing His bride, He sat down in heaven (Heb. 1:3; Mark 16:19) because the transaction was completed. “It is finished!”

2. The bride (Ruth 4:11–12)

It’s a wonderful thing when the covenant community sincerely rejoices with the bride and groom because what they are doing is in the will of God. In my pastoral ministry, I’ve participated in a few weddings that were anything but joyful. We felt like grieving instead of celebrating. The popular entertainer George Jessel defined marriage as “a mistake every man should make,” but the last place you want to make a mistake is at the marriage altar. Contrary to what some people believe, marriage is not “a private affair.” This sacred union includes God and God’s people, and every bride and groom should want the blessing of God and God’s people on their marriage.

The people prayed that Ruth would be fruitful in bearing children, for in Israel children were considered a blessing and not a burden (Ps. 127:3–5). Alas, that’s not the attitude in society today. In the United States each year, a million and a half babies are legally destroyed in the womb, and the pieces of

their bodies removed as though they were cancerous tumors. A Christian nurse said to me one day, “In one part of our hospital, we’re working day and night to keep little babies alive. In another part, we’re murdering them. What is God going to say?”

It was important that the Jewish wives bear children, not only to perpetuate the nation, but also because it would be through Israel that God would send the Messiah to earth. The Jews abhorred both abortion and the exposing of children to die—practices that were common in other nations. Jacob’s two wives, Leah and Rachel, bore to him eight sons who “built” the nation by founding the leading tribes of Israel (Gen. 29:31–30:24; 35:18). The use of the word *Ephrathah* in Ruth 4:11 is significant, for the Hebrew word means “fruitful.” The people wanted Ruth to be fruitful and famous and bring honor to their little town. It was the place where Rachel was buried (Gen. 35:19), but more importantly, it would be known as the place where Jesus Christ was born.

The neighbors also wanted the house of Boaz to be like that of Perez (Ruth 4:12; see Matt. 1:3). The family of Perez had settled in Bethlehem (1 Chron. 2:5, 50–54), and Boaz was a descendant of Perez (v. 18). Tamar, the mother of Perez, was not a godly woman; but her name is found in our Lord’s genealogy (Matt. 1:3).

What wonderful changes came into Ruth’s life because she trusted Boaz and let him work on her behalf! She went from loneliness to love, from toil to rest, from poverty to wealth, from worry to assurance, and from despair to hope. She was no longer “Ruth the Moabitess,” for the past was gone, and she was making a new beginning. She was now “Ruth the wife of Boaz,” a name she was proud to bear.

One of the many images of the church in the Bible is “the bride of Christ.” In Ephesians 5:22–33, the emphasis is on Christ’s love for the church as seen in His ministries: He died for the church (past), He cleanses and nourishes the church through the Word (present), and He will one day present the church in glory (future). Christ is preparing a beautiful home for His bride and one day will celebrate His wedding (Rev. 19:1–10; 21–22).

3. The baby (Ruth 4:13–22)

God had been gracious to Ruth back in Moab by giving her the faith to trust Him and be saved. His grace continued when she moved to Bethlehem, for He guided her to the field of Boaz where Boaz fell in love with her. God’s grace continued at the town gate where the nearer kinsman rejected Ruth and Boaz purchased her. After the marriage, God poured out His grace on Ruth and Boaz by giving her conception (Gen. 29:31; 30:1–2; 33:5) and then by giving her the safe delivery of a son, whom they named Obed (“servant”).

God would use this baby to be a source of blessing to many.

Obed was a blessing to Boaz and Ruth. This was no ordinary baby, for it was God’s special gift to Boaz and Ruth; and what a blessing little Obed was to their home! But every baby is a special gift from God and should be treated that way. Every baby deserves a loving home and caring parents who want to raise the child “in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4, NKJV). What a great privilege it is to bring new life into the world and then to guide that life so it matures to become all that God has planned!

Obed was also a blessing to Naomi. His grandmother informally “adopted” him as her own son and became his foster mother. The women of Bethlehem shared Naomi’s joy when they said, “Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a kinsman-redeemer” (Ruth 4:14, NIV). The reference is to Obed, not Boaz.

Obed was a “restorer of life” to Naomi. Every grandparent can bear witness that grandchildren are better than the Fountain of Youth, for we “get young again” when the grandchildren come to visit. Though not all grandparents agree with it, they all know the saying: “They’re called ‘grandchildren’ because they’re grand when they come and grand when they leave.” *There’s no better way to get a new lease on life than to start investing yourself in the younger generation.* Every baby that is born into this world is a vote for the future, and grandparents need to focus on the future and not on the past. When you’re holding a baby, you’re holding the future in your arms.

Obed would be a blessing to Naomi in another way: He would one day care for the family that brought him into the world, including his grandmother Naomi. Boaz had redeemed the family inheritance; now Obed would continue the family line, protect the inheritance, and use it to sustain Naomi. He would live up to his name and be a “servant” to Naomi, his “foster mother.”

The guarantee for this ministry would not be the law of the land but the love of Ruth for her mother-in-law. Obed would early learn to love Naomi even as Ruth loved her. Obed was an only son, but his affection for his mother and grandmother would be equal to that of seven sons.

Obed would bring blessing to Bethlehem. The child would bring fame to both the family name and the name of his native town. Elimelech’s name almost disappeared from Israel, but Obed would make that name famous and bring glory to Bethlehem. This happened, of course, through the life and ministry of King David (v. 22) and of David’s greater Son, Jesus Christ. Naomi would have the comfort of knowing that the family name would not perish but increase in fame.

Obed would bring blessing to Israel. Obed was the grandfather of King David, one of Israel’s greatest rulers. When the name of David is mentioned, we usually think of either Goliath or Bathsheba. David did commit a great sin, but he was also a great man of faith whom God used to build the kingdom of Israel. He led the people in overcoming their enemies, expanding their inheritance and, most of all, worshiping their God. He wrote worship songs for the Levites to sing and devised musical instruments for them to play. He spent a lifetime gathering wealth for the building of the temple, and God gave him the plans for the temple so Solomon could do the job. Whether he had in his hand a sling or sword, a harp or hymnal, David was a great servant of God who brought untold blessings to Israel.

Obed would bring blessing to the whole world. The greatest thing God did for David was not to give him victory over his enemies or wealth for the building of the temple. The greatest privilege God gave him was that of being the ancestor of the Messiah. David wanted to build a house for God, but God told him He would build a house (family) for David (2 Sam. 7). David knew that the Messiah would come from the kingly tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:8–10), but nobody knew which family in Judah would be chosen. God chose David’s family, and the Redeemer would be known as “the son of David” (Matt. 1:1).

Little did those Bethlehemites know that God had great plans for that little boy! Obed would have a son named Jesse; and Jesse would have eight sons, the youngest of which would be David the king (1 Sam. 16:6–13). Remember that the next time you behold a baby or a child, that little one might be one for whom God has planned a great future. The medieval teacher who always tipped his hat to his pupils had the right idea, for among them perhaps was a future general or emperor.

The Moabites were not to enter the congregation of the Lord “even to the tenth generation” (Deut. 23:3). But the little Book of Ruth closes with a ten-generation genealogy that climaxes with the name of David!

Never underestimate the power of the grace of God.¹

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, [Be Committed](#), “Be” Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993), 50–59.