

Ordinary People, Extraordinary God

A study of the book of Ruth

Part 6: Under Pressure- Ruth 4:1-12

Tonight, we continue our study of the book of Ruth. Last time, we uncovered the details of the harvest in Bethlehem. We noted the sovereign hand of God was at work. We read of Ruth at the feet of her potential redeemer, making a marriage proposal. We saw that Boaz cared for Ruth as well & accepted Ruth's proposal, & that he gave her an assuring word. Tonight, the pressure will fall solely on Boaz to redeem Ruth.

1. The *meaning* of redemption

- *What does it mean to redeem?* It means to purchase back, to set free from a debt by paying the price.
- God wanted to *preserve & protect* the property & the names of the families.
- One of the sins of the people of Israel was their abuse of the land, as more wealthy Israelites began to take advantage of the less fortunate.
- God portrays Himself as the *Defender* of the fatherless & widows. There are constant warnings in the O.T. about taking advantage of them.
- *Isaiah 1:17; "Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow."*
- God intends for His people to follow His *lead & help* the defenseless.
- Last time, we discovered the role of the kinsman-redeemer & levirate marriage.
- *Why was Ruth a part of this transaction*, if the land belonged to Elimelech before he died? Why wouldn't Boaz have to deal with Naomi alone?
- When a man died in Israel, his firstborn son would inherit all that he had. It would be the *firstborn* son's responsibility to take care of his mother & to give a much smaller share to the siblings.
- Elimelech died, his estate passed to his firstborn, Mahlon, who is listed first in the text, signifying that he is first in order of birth. Because Mahlon died, as did his brother, Kilion, the land was in the possession of the surviving wife, Ruth.
- The land had either been *sold* or *mortgaged* when they left the country.
- This explains why Ruth is a part of the transaction. She had no ability to pay the debt that was owed for the land, & neither did Naomi.
- If no one would redeem these two women would truly be destitute.
- Likewise, Christ redeems people who cannot save themselves, those who would be hopeless without His redemption. Those in *spiritual bondage* can be set free.
- *John 8:36; "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."*

2. The *mark* of a redeemer

- To redeem, you must have more than wealth; you must be **next** in line to **qualify**.
- **4:4**; *"I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of these seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, 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 I am next in line." "I will redeem it," he said."*
- This presented an issue for Boaz, who is willing to redeem. Someone is closer; **3:12b**; *"there is a kinsman-redeemer nearer than I."*
- There's a truth here: Jesus had to become **related** to us **before** He could redeem us!
- Jesus came in human form, fully God & fully man, to die. God cannot die; only a human being with flesh & blood can atone for our sins.
- In doing so, Jesus became our nearest relative, our kinsman-redeemer.
- The redeemer had to have the **ability** to redeem and have the funds.
- **4:5-6**; *"Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the land from Naomi and from Ruth the Moabitess, you acquire the dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property." At this, the kinsman-redeemer said, "Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it."*
- Finally, the redeemer had to be **willing**.
- Though the unnamed man is initially willing & has the means, he is not prepared to endanger his family in taking on a new wife & possibly dividing future inheritance.
- If he only had one male child, & that by Ruth, then Ruth's son would not only get the redeemed land but any other property the father owned, endangering his line.
- He might have **feared** for his own life. To him, Ruth might have only been a Moabitess, whose previous Jewish husband had been judged by God in death.
- Jesus fulfills all three! Jesus qualified, Jesus is the only one with the ability to atone, & Jesus was/is totally willing to redeem.

3. The **means** of redemption

- Note, Boaz wanted everything to be official.
- **4:1-2**; *"Meanwhile, Boaz went up to the town gate and sat there. When the kinsman-redeemer he had mentioned came along, Boaz said, "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, "Sit here," and they did so."*
- The city gate was often the place where **official business** took place.
- God **sovereignly** sent the first redeemer at the right time.
- The elders are there as witnesses & ones who could speak from a place of wisdom.
- While we know that Boaz is successful in redemption, imagine the trepidation he felt & even disappointment when the first man said he would redeem.
- We know the name of Boaz, God's chosen man; we don't know the other man's **name**.

- The transaction was **sealed strangely**. We might go to a notary or a lawyer.
- **4:7-8**; *“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. So the kinsman-redeemer said to Boaz, “Buy it yourself.” And he removed his sandal.”*
- The ten witnesses would be all the proof Boaz would need if anyone questioned the transaction. Boaz now **owns** the land, but more importantly, he has a **bride**.
- **4:9-10**; *“Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, “Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Kilion and Mahlon. I have also acquired Ruth the Moabitess, Mahlon'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 had **privately** promised to gain redemption for Ruth one way or another. Now, **publicly**, he wants all to know that Ruth is his bride.
- We are the bride of Christ. Jesus wasn't worried about His own inheritance, His own station, when He came to redeem us. The prize was us, because of His great love.
- Boaz is a **picture** of Christ. Next time, we will fully compare & contrast the two along with the real purpose of God's sovereign blessing on the lives of Naomi, Ruth, & Boaz.

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- God intends for His people to follow His _____ & _____ the defenseless.
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- It would be the _____ son's responsibility...
- The land had either been _____ or _____ when they left the country.
- Those in _____ can be set free.
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- You must be _____ in line to _____.
- There's a truth here: Jesus had to become _____ to us _____. He could redeem us!
- The redeemer had to have the _____ to redeem and have the funds.
- Finally, the redeemer had to be _____.
- He might have _____ for his own life.

3. The _____ of redemption

- The city gate was often the place where _____ took place.
- God _____ sent the first redeemer at the right time.
- We don't know the other man's _____.
- The transaction was sealed _____.
- Boaz now _____ the land, but more importantly, he has a _____.
- Boaz had _____ promised to gain redemption for Ruth one way or another. Now, _____, he wants all to know that Ruth is his bride.
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