

Oh, What A Night.

I. Slide1,2 Intro: Oh, What A Night.

A. All of this chapter takes place in *an evening* (Naomi devises a plan), *later that night* (Ruth makes her aggressive move at midnight), *early the next morn* (Naomi evaluates it the next morn; Boaz goes to resolve it next that morn).

1. *Oh, What A Night.* [Frankie Valli & the 4 seasons, 1963] I think Boaz looked back on this story singing, “*Oh, what a night. Late December back in '63. What a very special time for me, 'Cause I remember what a night.*”

B. Overview of Ruth – A Gospel Love Story, which [1] Focuses on *Redemption* (specifically of Ruth/Gentiles), and [2] Focuses on the *Redeemer* (Boaz) and the Royal Line leading to King David, and the ultimate *Son of David*, The Messiah.

C. Recap - Famine: Jewish family flees from Bethlehem to Moab.

1. Naomi and Elimelech, have Malone and Chilion.

2. The 2 Jewish boys *marry Moabite women*. 3 men die.

3. Naomi hears, *There's bread in Bethlehem*, heads back. 2 daughter-in-laws follow part way. Told to go back. Orpah does, Ruth still follows pledging herself to: *Naomi, to God, to God's people*.

4. Naomi & Ruth make it back to Bethlehem right at *Barley Harvest*. (ray of hope)

5. Naomi is in grief, empty, went out *pleasant* came back *bitter*.

Ruth has a spiritual turning point!

6. Ch.2 - Ruth *happens upon a field* owned by Boaz, who *happens* to be a kinsman redeemer (relative of Elimelech). Boaz becomes this foreigners *protection*. Blesses her (as a gleaner) with lunch, dinner, leftovers for Naomi

D. So we were left with wondering, *Will anything happen with this budding romance? How will it move forward? Boaz was able to redeem, but was he willing?*

E. Slide3,4 Let's read the whole chapter. Remember it's a *story*. READ

F. **Slide5 Outline:** Like Ruth we need to ⁵ (*Listen to Instructions. Obey. Believe what your Redeemer says. Receive His gifts. Wait in patience for Him to do the rest.*)

II. Slide6a **LISTEN TO INSTRUCTIONS (1-4)**

A. **Understanding the Levirate Law** (lev-er-it)

B. **Levirate** = from the Latin Levir *brother-in-law*. Still practiced in some parts of Africa today. Where a man may be obliged to marry his brother's widow. Explained in Deut 25:5-10. *Highlights ...*

1. The first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.
2. If the man does not wish to take his brother's wife ... then his brother's **wife** shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face.
 - a) Book of Ruth gives the *only illustration* of it in Scripture.

C. *A strange law, but a few reasons why:*

1. **To protect womanhood** – It would be very difficult for **her** to take care of the farm, vineyard, or flock of sheep, etc.
2. **To protect land rights** – Not only did God gave the children of Israel "*the land*"; but He also gave each tribe a particular parcel of land, & each family their own land.
 - a) A family could loose their land, but in the year of Jubilee it would be restored to the original owner.
 - b) If she could go off & marry a stranger, the *foreigner* would inherit the land.
3. **Ruth can now claim one of the brothers** (of Elimelech); in fact, **it's her duty** to her dead husband (Mahlon) to carry on His name. (Boaz maybe a cousin?)

D. **Slide6b Understanding the Threshing Floor** (to separate out grain from the debris)

E. A threshing floor was in the *opposite* position of the winepress.

1. Winepress at bottom of hill (drag grapes downhill). Threshing Floor at top of hill (needed wind).

2. That's why it was funny when **God** calls **Gideon** in Judges 6:11,12
“Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites. And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him, “The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!””

F. The Threshing floor was a hard smooth surface. It was usually circular with rocks places around it.

1. Late afternoon a breeze would come up, off the Med. It would blow until sundown, sometimes as late as midnight.

2. Sheaves were laid on the ground; they were trampled by oxen drawing sleds; then people took a winnowing fork & throw the grain up into the air (chaff would be blown away, good grain would come down on threshing floor).

3. **Then** a feast was had. [Dinner, Praise to God, then lie down]

G. The religious festivals were linked to the agricultural calendar.

1. **Passover & Unleavened Bread** came 1st at the time of **Barley harvest**. About 7 weeks later followed the **Feast of Weeks** (or Pentecost) at the end of the wheat harvest. Then the **Feast of In-gathering** (or Booths/ Succoth) came at the end of summer when the harvest of the various fruits were complete. **Each of these occasions was the opportunity for a good party**. [Naomi must really trust Boaz, she's sending Ruth into that kind of place]

a) Hosea 9:1 *Rejoice not, O Israel! Exult not like the peoples; for you have played the whore, forsaking your God. You have loved a prostitute's wages on all threshing floors.*

H. Then the men would sleep around the grain to protect it from thieves. Often with their heads towards the grain & their feet out, like spokes of a wheel.

- I. **Slide6c** A basic reminder about biblical interpretation, a foundational rule is, *Narratives are not always Normative*. [storytellers are describing events, **not always prescribing activities**]
1. This isn't advice you'd necessarily give to your daughter.
 2. Narrators describe *what happened*, **not always** what *should happen*.
 3. We must use **all of scripture** to get proper *principles and application*.
So don't normalize every story.
- J. There is a lot of **culture** going on, some we're not even positive of what it symbolized.
1. **Attention is important between sensuality and purity**. Remember, it was a time *where everyone did what was right in their own eyes*. **Except**, not for Ruth and Boaz, both remain pure.
- K. 1st move here is for Ruth to make. Boaz must wait for her to claim him as her husband.
- L. **Slide6d** Naomi 7 step plan to win her man: 1) Take a bath, **wash** (if you're pursuing a spouse bathe!) 2) Put on some **perfume** (Estee Lauder's *Midnight Moabite*) some essential oils. 3) **Fresh Clothes** (poss had on widows mourning garment, don't present yourself as a widow but a potential bride) 4) Don't bother him until **after dinner**
5) **Make sure it's him** vs.4a 6) **uncover his feet & lie down** (prob a gesture for marriage. See Ezek16:8 *Lord to Israel*) 7) Listen to Boaz's instruction.
1. This was not only for *Ruth to look alluring*, **but it does** include that.
 2. It is not wrong or unspiritual to look nice. It is not more holy to look frumpy or be unhappy. We do not need to forsake pleasure, we are not ascetics. Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. Abigail was discerning & beautiful.

III. **Slide7a OBEY (5-9)**

- A.(5) **Great response**. Accept all that God has planned for you.

1. *The will of God is not a cafeteria where we can pick & choose what we want.*
- B. Slide7b Being obedient: The only true guarantee of happiness has little to do with being married or being single. And everything to do with being obedient to the will of God.
1. A lot of singles yearn to be married. A lot of marrieds wish they were single again.
 2. Contentment isn't a singleness or a married issue, because everyone wrestles with dissatisfaction & envy. Contentment is found in enjoying God! - *Godliness with contentment is still great gain.*
- C. Slide7c (7) Lying at his feet (probably feet to feet) *not at his side.*
1. Obviously Naomi trusted Boaz to act responsibly.
 2. This whole uncovering of the feet was a ceremonial act that was completely proper.
 3. Uncovered his feet – He got cold. Wakes up, notices his outer garment down below his feet ... he reaches for it ... Whoah!
- D. Slide7d (9) Spread yur wings over your servant. *Spread the corner of your garment over me* (NIV)
1. This was the legal way of *claiming protection & redemption.*
 2. [same word used in 2:12 wings] 1st Ruth took refuge under the wings of the Lord. Now, refuge is requested of Boaz.

IV. Slide8 BELIEVE WHAT YOUR REDEEMER SAYS (10-14)

- A. (11) A worthy woman - everyone in town knew her *impeccable reputation.*
1. She was available but careful; responsive but pure.
- B. (12) One more hurdle – a closer relative.
1. Maybe Elimelech's brother? (an uncle of Ruths 1st husband), whereas Boaz was probably a cousin of her 1st husband.
- C. This was the perfect opportunity to let their feelings determine their actions.

1. They could have said, *“Forget the Law. I love you & that’s all that matters. Let’s not take the chance on anyone else!”*

2. **But** they realized that *gaining a blessing by ungodly means* was **no blessing at all!** Though interested in one another, they were **patient**.

a) **They trusted God!**

D.(14) Stay until dawn & secretly leave, lest her mission be **misinterpreted** by witnesses. **Or** someone gets a jump on letting his relative know what’s happening. [Boaz wants to handle this himself]

V. Slide9 **RECEIVE HIS GIFTS (15-17)**

A.(15) **A very generous gift.** Boaz sealed the vow with *a gift of barley*. (60-90 lbs.)

B.(16) **How did you fare my daughter? or did you change your FB status yet?**

VI. Slide10 **WAIT IN PATIENCE FOR HIM TO DO THE REST (18)**

A. What great instructions for us when we have needs to be met.

1. **Like Ruth we need to** (***Listen to Instructions. Obey. Believe what your Redeemer says. Receive His gifts. Wait in patience for Him to do the rest***)

B. **Ruth is called to Rest.** From here on **Boaz** will be the man of action. **The work of redemption is totally His work.** All Ruth could do was **ask** for it. (us and Christ)

C. *The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should hope and wait quietly For the salvation of the Lord.* Lam.3:25,26

1. Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe; Sin had left a crimson stain, he washed it white as snow.

2. As Boaz from Bethlehem was a near relative, who was both **able to redeem & willing to redeem.** **So** our *greater than Boaz*, who was also from Bethlehem, **Jesus is both willing & able ... this evening. [end]**

D. Slide11,12 Video

E. Keywords: