

GM // onliners // newbies

If you have a Bible ... Ruth 4 [also on screen]

We are almost done with our Ruth series ... one more to go after this.

Last week we ended on a cliff hanger ...

Boaz and Ruth basically got engaged ...

But their ability to get married hinges on what happens with Boaz at the city gates of Bethlehem.

And this is what makes this story so powerful.

It starts with tragedy ... two ladies that lost everything ... sons, husbands, wealth...

Now they are on the verge of all that changing.

We love these kinds of redemption stories...

It's not like Legends of the Fall where everything ends bad for everyone; and you leave depressed ... wanting to eat your feelings and sulk for a week.

We want the happily ever after ...

We want to believe that it's possible B/C we live in a world where we rarely, if ever, see or experience that.

And so here we are in Ruth's story, wondering what is going to happen ...

Will this guy Boaz be successful?

Will they all get their happily ever after?

It all hinges on this idea of Boaz being a Kinsman-Redeemer.

If you just thought "Huh?" ...

Don't worry, you're in good company ... I grew up in church and never heard of a kinsman-redeemer until well into my 20's.

But its worth learning about B/C it is an incredible picture of the Gospel and it also points to our greater kinsman redeemer ... Jesus.

But that is what today's passage is all about ...

Boaz is trying to be Ruth and Naomi's Kinsman-Redeemer.

And as we unpack what all that means ...

Pay attention and look at how it points to Jesus.

Ruth 4:1-12

Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, "Turn aside, friend; sit down

here.” And he turned 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. 3 Then he said to the redeemer, “Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. 4 So I thought I would tell you of it and say, ‘Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people.’ If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you.” And he said, “I will redeem it.” 5 Then Boaz said, “The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance.” 6 Then the redeemer said, “I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it.”

7 Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel. 8 So when the redeemer said to Boaz, “Buy it for yourself,” he drew off his sandal. 9 Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon. 10 Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from

among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day.” 11 Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, “We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem, 12 and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the Lord will give you by this young woman.”

It is important to remind ourselves why all this had to take place at all.

Boaz had to redeem this land for the sake of Naomi and Ruth because they were in dire straits.

They weren't in a place where they had the power to bring themselves out of a life of poverty.

They were poor and powerless.

And that is exactly who needs a redeemer.

The Hopeless and Helpless Need A Redeemer To Save Them

To appreciate what Boaz is doing we have to understand why this custom existed in the first place ...

And why it was so important to the Israelites.

We struggle to really appreciate it because we don't understand how significant land was to an Israelite.

They didn't move around like we do today.

Current stats say the average person will live in 11 homes in their lifetime.

That's a lot of moving around.

We aren't that attached to property.

But land to an Israelite was different.

More than just a place to sleep and eat.

It was given to them by God.

It was His inheritance for their household and their children and their children's children.

They didn't sell property for the sake of 'moving on up' to a bigger home with a better view.

They lived on it until they died ... they passed it onto their children (sons) to keep it in the family.

But there is even more to the importance of land.

They not only saw that land as God's blessing ...

It was God's means of provision.

He could bless the land to produce harvest and wealth.

A family's place in Israel and fellowship with God was tied to the land they were given.

Remember the beginning of Ruth ... Naomi's husband Elimelech made the catastrophic decision to take them to Moab.

He left his inheritance and died as did all his offspring.

Naomi is too old to pop out another son ...

So she can't hold on to the property herself ...

Ruth can't get it b/c she's not an Israelite.

This means that once Naomi and Ruth die ... that land will pass on to another family.

The clan of Elimelech will be cut off from memory ... and therefore cut off from existence.

As much as we've seen God provide food for them through the kindness and generosity of others...

We still see a massive unresolved issue.

Their future is still hopeless and they are helpless to change it.

They need someone to save them.

That is what Boaz is trying to do...

Ruth 4:3-6

3 Then he said to the redeemer, “Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. 4 So I thought I would tell you of it and say, ‘Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people.’ If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you.” And he said, “I will redeem it.” 5 Then Boaz said, “The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance.” 6 Then the redeemer said, “I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it.”

See the difference between the unknown redeemer and Boaz?

The first is interested because he could get more land for himself.

It was an opportunity to increase his wealth and land holdings.

He's all for the deal until he finds out it comes with an old widow and her Moabite daughter-in-law.

This redemption comes with a lot of bills to pay and mouths to feed.

So he backs out.

That's how counterfeit love acts.

Counterfeit Love is never up for redemption b/c it costs too much and demands too much.

Counterfeit Love looks at people through the lens of a cost-benefit analysis.

“What will it cost me to be in this relationship? What do I get out of it? And will I end up ahead?”

But Boaz shows us how Real Love works.

He isn't redeeming to pad his real estate portfolio.

He isn't after more wealth.

He is doing it for love.

Real Love Pays The Price To Be With Those It Loves

Now, in this story ... a part of what is driving Boaz is romantic love.

He is diggin' on Ruth for sure.

If you were here for last week's sermon you know what I'm talking about...

Sparks were flying in the cold desert night ... but they kept it pure. :)

Boaz is motivated to HAVE Ruth as his wife.

We get that.

Romantic love drives us to do crazy things.

I've known guys that would regularly drive half-a-day after a work week to see the woman they loved.

(\$800 cell phone bill when Hayley was up in Washington.)

Jesus' desire for us is like that and more!

Though we were far away he did whatever it took to be with us.

He moved out of heaven ... came to us ... came to earth.

He shed his glory and invincibility and took on our flesh ... took on our weakness ... all for the sake of redemption.

Boaz is willing to give up the security of his current position of wealth.

He's willing to buy the land and take on the responsibility of providing for Naomi and Ruth.

The only benefit he gets in return is them ...

But that's all he wants.

Real love pays any price to be with those they love.

Don't we see that in Jesus?

Didn't he pay the ultimate price to overcome the sin that separated us from God?

Boaz love shows us that kind of love as a kinsman redeemer.

And It's the kind of love we see in Jesus our kinsman redeemer.

But it is more than romantic love that is driving him.

He wants what is best for Naomi and Ruth.

But ALSO, he is caring for a dead man.

He cares that the name of Elimelech is in danger of vanishing into non-existence.

Real Love Pays The Price To Redeem What Was Lost

What Boaz is doing for Elimelech is pretty foreign to us...

When's the last time you thought twice about a distant uncle that's been dead for 10 years?

And you definitely wouldn't go through the effort and expense to start a foundation in his honor so his name would carry on.

But that's kind of what Boaz is doing for Elimelech.

Ruth 4:9-10

9 Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon. 10 Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day."

Boaz is caring about a dead man's name and reputation.

He wants to make sure Elimelech's name isn't cut off and removed from the land.

So he buys the land ... NOT for himself ... for Elimelech's sake.

And his commitment to Elimelech goes even further.

We see this in what he says in V10 ...

His marriage to Ruth will serve a noble purpose...

"To perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance...

So that Elimelech's name will not be cut off from among his brothers."

We see here the important role of the kinsman-redeemer.

His job is to restore what was lost.

But in that restoration comes something powerful ...

Something we all need.

Jesus' Redeeming Love Restores And Heals Our Broken Past

Elimelech is a dead man.

Dead men don't do much.

They don't talk back, give back, show up on your birthday. [... and if they did ... !]

If ever there was a picture of grace ... this is it.

Dead Elimelech is experiencing restoration.

He's done nothing to earn it...

The inheritance he lost through his sinful decisions is being given back to him by a living Redeemer!

This is what God's *hesed* love is all about!

Do you see the parallels to Jesus?!

Ephesians 2:1-7

1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

We too are dead ... just like Elimelech.

We need Jesus to be our redeemer.

And that is exactly what God did ... B/C he loved us.

His *hesed* love is a redeeming love!

Although we were dead in our sins ... He saved us ... made us alive with Christ and raised us up with him.

You don't have to be defined and chained to the sin and brokenness of our past. [guilt & shame invades]

**Jesus our redeemer heals it through his redeeming love.
This gives us freedom from guilt and shame.
Our past has been sanctified ... made clean in Christ!
What an incredible salvation!
What an incredible Savior!**

But redemption doesn't just heal our past ...

Jesus' Redeeming Love Heals Our Future Too

The people in Bethlehem recognize this.

They dare to believe that the future for Boaz, Ruth, and Naomi is bright and beautiful ... full of redemptive possibilities.

That's what Real Love calls us into ...

Ruth 4:11-12

11 Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem, 12 and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the Lord will give you by this young woman."

Redemption always leads to celebration.

But the celebration isn't just B/C your past is healed.

The joy comes through looking to the future with fearless hope.

This scene of celebration is in stark contrast to the Naomi's sad return ... [mourning turned into joy]

All the witnesses pray a blessing over Naomi and Ruth.

First they say, make them like Rachel and Leah who were married to Israel and bore the 12 tribes.

They are saying to Boaz ... may your house become as established and mighty as the nation of Israel.

May your future be secure and blessed.

Redemption doesn't heal our past without healing our future.

And the two are tied together...

If you struggle with past guilt and shame ...

You will struggle with crippling fear and anxiety of the future.

Jesus' Redemption frees us from all that.

When we are rooted in God's *hesed* love that redeems us ... we live truly free!

You might think your past is too broken to have any hope for a better future.

Well then you need to hear more about Tamar ...

That is who the people here in Ruth choose to bring up ...

“May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.”

Tamar's story happened back in Genesis 38 (100's years b4 Ruth).

She was Judah's daughter-in-law ... [foreigner like Ruth] ... her husband was killed by God ... [childless like Ruth]

She was promised by Judah that she'd get to marry his other son [kinsman-redeemer like Boaz] ...

This is where the story stops being like Ruth...

See, Judah didn't keep his promise to her... basically forgets her ...

Then she disguises herself as a prostitute and Judah pays for her.

Fast forward, when Tamar is revealed as being pregnant by prostitution, Judah gives orders to burn her (thought Ruth was a crazy story) but at the last second...she reveals Judah was the dad!

That is some Jerry Springer crazy!

But this is the story they choose to bring up!!!

They rejoiced at what Boaz just did and said, “It’s like that!!!”

This woman was left alone in the world, destined to suffer and die!

But, at the last second, she was given a husband and two sons!

That is a messed up story ... that is a painful past.

But God healed that past and look what he did with Tamar’s future ...

God healed it too!!!

God comes through for her and gives her a role in His big story.

Boaz’ future ... Naomi and Ruth’s futures ... are built on that same redemption.

They have nothing to fear or be anxious about anymore.

And that is the hope we have in Jesus our kinsman-redeemer.

Our future is healed ... it is secured in His redemptive promises.

Colossians 1:12-13

12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,

Your future is not built on your past's failures or successes.

Your future inheritance is built on the riches of God's immeasurable grace ... it is secured and awaiting you.

Nothing can take that away.

BAND COME UP

Whether or not you are a Christian ...

You will never live free of guilt and shame, fear and anxiety apart from God's redemption.

This redemption is a free gift ...

Jesus' death heals our past ... His resurrection heals our future.

We live in this freedom through faith in Jesus ... our Kinsman-Redeemer.

This redemption is available to everyone here ...

By faith take hold of it right now.

EXAMINE

How is the Holy Spirit leading you to respond?

Is it faith for the first time?

Or returning to it and holding on to what Jesus' redemption means for you ...

A healed past and a healed future!

COMMUNION

Communion reminds us that Jesus died to heal our past ...

And we take it believing that in Him is a glorious future.

[Body broken ... Blood shed]