

“Boaz Redeems Ruth”
November 15, 2015
Ruth 4:1-12 (Read Ruth 3:18 - 4:12)

I. Introduction

Boaz is ready to act in the capacity of kinsman-redeemer. Ruth is to wait and let him be the one to make all the arrangements. In today’s Scripture, we see that Naomi’s prediction that Boaz was a man of immediate action was fulfilled. It seems that as soon as he got back to Bethlehem from the threshing floor, he went up to the town gate. The town gate was really the center of the community’s life; there cases were heard and contracts were made. There the “*elders*” dispensed justice, the poor waited for help, and the ordinary people met one another to exchange news. Everyone had to pass through the gate, so it was the obvious place to go in order to meet someone in a relatively small community.

The Book of Ruth opened with three funerals but closes with a wedding. It started out with much sorrow and tears but ends with joy in this little town of Bethlehem. Not all of life’s stories have this kind of happy ending, but the Book of Ruth reminds us that, for those who fear God, God still writes the last chapter. Christians don’t have to fear the future. **Romans 8:28** needs to be the motto for every Christian, “**We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.**”

This last chapter focuses on three persons: a bridegroom, a bride, and a baby. This morning we will look at the first two persons as “Boaz redeems Ruth.” But before we look at the story itself, we need to consider some background terminology.

II. The Bridegroom

A. Background

1. First, the Kinsman-Redeemer The law of the kinsman-redeemer is given in Leviticus, **turn to Leviticus 25:23-27**. The law governing levirate marriage, i.e. a brother or near kinsman marrying his brother’s widow to continue a family name, is found in Deuteronomy; **turn to Deuteronomy 25:5-6**. The purpose of these laws was to preserve the name and protect the property of the families of Israel. God owned the land and didn’t want it exploited by the rich people who would take advantage of poor people and widows. When they were 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 his tribe or clan.

2. The meaning of the word “redeem.” 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. When Elimelech died, the rights to the land passed to Ruth's husband, Mahlon. As Mahlon's widow, Ruth now had those rights. However, she was too poor to redeem or free the land by paying the price. But as we read in Leviticus, a near kinsman could redeem it—he could set it free by paying a price.

3. The qualifications of a redeemer. **a. He had to be a near kinsman.** Not everyone could perform the duties of a kinsman-redeemer. According to [Deuteronomy 25:25](#), he had to be a near relative—a near kinsman. This was the major obstacle Boaz had to deal with—another man in Bethlehem was a nearer relative to Ruth than he was. **b. He had to be able to pay the price.** In order to qualify, the kinsman redeemer had to be able to pay the price of redemption. Ruth and Naomi were too poor to redeem themselves, but, as a man of standing, the nearer kinsman and Boaz both had all the resources necessary to pay the price to free them. **c. He had to be willing to redeem.** As we saw in Ruth, the nearer relative was not willing to redeem Ruth while Boaz was more than willing to purchase both the property and a wife. The nearer kinsman had the money but not the motivation: he was afraid that he would diminish his own family's inheritance or estate.

B. Boaz meets the nearer kinsman. Now back to the story. When Boaz went up to the village gate and sat there, who should come along but the nearer relative. This wasn't a coincidence; it was the hand of God at work again. So Boaz called him over. At the same time, Boaz gathered 10 men to witness the transaction.

Sticking to the letter of the law, Boaz presented to the nearer relative, the challenge of Naomi needing to redeem her property. Boaz recognized the other man's prior claim but he admitted his own readiness to act if the nearer kinsman declined.

The other kinsman was willing to buy the land but when he learned that Ruth was a part of the transaction, he backed out. His explanation was that in marrying Ruth, he would “**endanger my own estate.**” If he had a son by Ruth, and that son were his only surviving heir, Mahlon's 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 for him.

The writer of the book of Ruth tells the reader that the custom of taking off a shoe or sandal was the method of legalizing transactions. In years to come, the 10 witnesses would be able to testify that the transaction had been completed because they saw the kinsman hand his sandal to Boaz. It symbolized the kinsman's forfeiture of his right to possess the land. Not knowing the rest of the story, like we do, Boaz must have been relieved when this relative declined Boaz's offer and opened the way for Ruth to become Boaz's wife. Boaz now could redeem the land and Ruth.

Once the nearer kinsman waived his rights, Boaz immediately assumed them. Here is the completion of the story of the Book of Ruth. In exact, precise, legal language, but also with great compassion and kindness, Boaz made two statements before those same 10 witnesses. He accepted the role of kinsman-redeemer with regard to Elimelech's property, which had technically passed to Elimelech's sons. Second, he married Ruth, Mahlon's widow, so that the family name may not die out or disappear from the town's record.

III. The Bride

The elders and all those gathered at the gate declared their witness of the legal proceedings when they said, **"We are witnesses."** They then pronounced a blessing on Ruth and Boaz, the bride and the bridegroom. In the first blessing, the elders expressed the hope that Ruth would be fruitful and build up the house of Boaz as Rachael and Leah had done in the case of Jacob with his 12 sons. They, obviously, had no prejudice against Ruth being brought into the community of God's covenant people. The second blessing was: **"May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem."** Ephrathah is the area around Bethlehem, but it also means *"place of fruitfulness"*—again, the people were praying that Boaz and Ruth will be fruitful. Finally, the people of Bethlehem wanted the house of Boaz to be like that of Perez. The family of Perez had settled in Bethlehem and Boaz was a descendent of Perez. Tamar, the mother of Perez, was not a godly woman, but her name is also found in Jesus Christ's genealogy in [Matthew 1:3](#).

IV. Conclusion

The Book of Ruth is more than just a love story; otherwise, God would not have included it in His Book—the Bible. There are a variety of things that can be seen, for example: **A. We see that even when, as [Judges 21:25](#) says, "In those days Israel had not king; everyone did as he saw fit" there were still God fearing men and woman that walked as God would have them walk; B. We see that God guides and blesses those who trust Him; C. We are reminded that God loves all peoples—Gentiles and Jews; D. We see an analogy of THE kinsman-redeemer Jesus Christ in the action of the kinsman-redeemer Boaz.**

Just like Naomi and Ruth who were unable to free themselves, all people are in bondage to sin and Satan and are unable to set themselves free—[turn to Ephesians 2:1-3](#). Jesus Christ gave His life as a ransom for sinners—[Mark 10:45](#) says, **"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."** [Turn to Revelation 5:9-10](#). Jesus is the only way sinners can be redeemed—[Acts 4:12](#) says, **"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other**

name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” Or as Jesus said in [John 8:36](#), “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

To be our kinsman-redeemer, Jesus had to satisfy the same requirements as Boaz. First, Jesus had to become related to us. This is why He became flesh and blood so He could die for us on the cross—[turn to Hebrews 2:14-15](#). When He was born into this world in human flesh, Jesus Christ became our “near kinsman” and He will remain our “kinsman” for all eternity. All this is because of His love for us!

Second, as our “near kinsman,” Jesus had to be able to buy the price for our redemption. It was the shedding of His precious blood that paid the redemption price—[turn to 1 Peter 1:18-19](#). As [Ephesians 1:7](#) says, “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.”

Third, like Boaz, our Redeemer came willingly, [Hebrews 12:2](#) says, “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Jesus came willingly, joyfully to set us free by paying the price for our sins. From our point of view, salvation is free—[Acts 2:21](#) says, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” but from God’s point of view, redemption is a very costly thing—it cost His Son.

Like Boaz, Jesus wasn’t concerned about endangering His own estate, instead, He made us a part of His inheritance—[turn to Galatians 4:4-7](#). 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.

But analogies are good only to a point; there are some contrasts between Boaz and the Lord Jesus Christ. Boaz redeemed Ruth by giving out of his wealth, while Jesus redeemed His bride, the church, by giving Himself on the cross. Unlike Jesus, Boaz didn’t have to suffer and die to get a bride. Boaz had a rival in the other, nearer kinsman, but there was no rival to challenge Jesus—[Acts 4:12](#) says, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” Or as Jesus said in [John 8:24](#), “I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins.” Jesus is the only One who can pay the price of redemption for your sins. There were witnesses on earth to testify that Ruth belonged to Boaz, but God’s people have witnesses from heaven—Jesus said in [Luke 15:10](#), “I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents;” the Holy Spirit is also a witness—[Romans 8:16](#) says, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (NAS).

Some 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 work to rest, from poverty to wealth, from worry to assurance, and from despair to hope. The same transformation happens to those who accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior—Jesus said in [Matthew 11:28](#) “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Or as [Philippians 4:7](#) says, “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

If, like Ruth, you have trusted God for your redemption; if, as [Romans 10:9](#) says, you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then your name is written in the Book of Life. Then, like Ruth, you have gone from loneliness to love, from work to rest, from poverty to wealth, from worry to assurance, and from despair to hope. This change isn't just for life here on earth, but for all eternity—in this season of Thanksgiving, this is something for which we must thank God. However, if Jesus isn't your Lord and Savior, then your name is NOT written in the Book of Life and none of these promises are for you—[turn to Revelation 20:11-15](#).

If you have accepted God's gift of redemption, your name is written in the Book of Life; take time to thank God for the love and rest and wealth and assurance and hope you have. If you haven't accepted God's gift, it's not too late, accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and you, too, will be redeemed and brought into the family of God.