

## Lesson 9: A Kinsman Redeemer

Ruth 4:1-12

This Week's Prayer  
Requests:

**Memory Verse:** "For I know that my Redeemer lives; and He shall stand at last upon the earth" (Job 19:25).

**Text: Ruth 4:1-12** Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, "Come aside, friend, sit down here." So he came aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. Then he said to the close relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which *belonged* to our brother Elimelech. And I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy *it* back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem *it*, redeem *it*; but if you will not redeem *it*, *then* tell me, that I may know; for *there is* no one but you to redeem *it*, and I *am* next after you.'

And he said, "I will redeem *it*."

Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy *it* from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance."

And the close relative said, "I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem *it*."

Now this *was the custom* in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave *it* to the other, and this *was* a confirmation in Israel. Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, "Buy *it* for yourself." So he took off his sandal.

And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You *are* witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that *was* Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You *are* witnesses this day."

And all the people who *were* at the gate, and the elders, said, "*We are* witnesses. The LORD make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the LORD will give you from this young woman."

## Monday

[Father we pray that beyond the pages and beyond the distractions that come upon our minds, that we might meet with You, the true and living God this day. May we hear your voice. Please use your word to convince and convict and correct, to reprove, to encourage, to accomplish the purposes that You have ordained for it. We pray in Jesus' name, amen]

Have you ever been forced to just “sit tight” during intensely momentous exciting events in your life? What happened?

Chapter three ends with Ruth having met with Boaz in secrecy. It all took place under the cover of darkness. Ruth had then gone home to Naomi; and Naomi urged her to sit and wait until she finds out what happens. The Hebrew colloquialism means “sit tight” from which we get that phrase in our own language. So Ruth comes home after all of this life changing drama and Naomi in wisdom says, “Now just sit tight my daughter.” And Naomi, with all of her wonderful female intuition, honed by time and experience, knows good and well that Boaz is not going to be dilly-dallying, and will not rest until he has concluded the matter that very day.

Naomi is right. Boaz wastes no time in getting to the place that he needs to be in order to take care of the matter. He goes to the town gate. And I try in my mind's eye to see him: While the dew is fresh and the morning mist is still out, he is hastening as quickly as possible to get in place and not take a chance of missing his opportunity. There are people at that time in the morning, traders beginning to set up their stalls, beggars hoping for an ideal spot, so that they would be strategically placed for when people started coming and going, a scattering of others.

The gate area in this place and in this time was spacious and purposefully so. The towns and cities were very compact and labyrinthian, and the gates were used by the community for conducting all manner of business from weddings to market to business to civic to even civil and criminal courts much like a large plaza. It was the place where commerce was conducted and the law was administered. The elders of the city would take their places and had actual seats in the city gate to do so.

Now Boaz went to the city gate that morning because he was committed to doing the right thing. That's why he is there. You will remember that he said back in chapter 3, “There is a relative closer than I ... if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you – good; let him do it.

But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you.” In other words, “While I love you and want to marry you Ruth, I have a problem in that I must do the right thing.” And because he is determined to do the right thing, he goes to take his place in the city gate in order that he might make contact with this person and give him his lawful opportunity.

Now I don’t know about you, but I find myself reading this and thinking, “O c’mon Boaz, she loves you. You love her. Don’t go messing around with this gate business. You never know what might happen. Marry her for goodness sake!” But that would be wrong wouldn’t it?

Beloved, the first question every day about everything is always the same question: “What is the right thing to do?” And if you determine in every decision that you make to make this the first question you ask, then you will at least have asked the right question at the right time.

Because Boaz is a man of such integrity, because he is concerned about the law of Israel, because he is concerned to live in purity before God, he is unwilling and unable to allow himself to simply rush off on a great swell of emotion. Neither, is he about to encourage Ruth to do the same. So he says to her, “We’re going to have to do the right thing.”

What decisions are facing you today? What choices do you have to make this morning or tomorrow morning? What is the right thing to do?

If others look closely at you, do they see a person of integrity? Why or why not? What do you long for them to see?

## Tuesday

We saw yesterday that Boaz was committed to doing the right thing. How sad it is that many marriages have been consummated without taking time to ask the question, “What is the right thing to do?”

Folks, just because you think the other person is a good package, or looks the right way on the outside, or you think the other person is the real deal, or you have a certain feeling in the pit of your stomach, or you had a great surge of emotion, or whatever it is, you must always ask “What is the right thing to do?” And how do we find the answer to this question?

To get an answer to the right thing to do, you must read your Bible carefully, you must listen to your mother and father in Christ, you must get the answer by paying attention to those who know you best and love you most and who also love the Lord in their own hearts. And then ultimately you will get to the right thing to do as a result of the Spirit of God bringing circumstance, guidance from Scripture and the counsel of Godly men and women to bear on your heart in a way that concurs with the faith that you hold.

But if the feelings in your heart take you counter to the word of Christ, then don't do it! It's not the right thing to do!! Don't spend another moment even considering it.

Now what we discover in the text this week is that the circumstances of Boaz and Ruth were such that they were determined to act in concurrence with the law of the Kinsman-Redeemer in the Scripture. Now that is not to say that they were moving towards marriage propelled simply by external circumstances. It is clear that their hearts belong to each other. Nevertheless, they were not about to be swept away by pure emotion. So Boaz goes to do what he needs to do and he puts himself in the best possible place to do it and meet this other man. This is the thoroughfare. This is where people pass by, and if he happens to find him here, then he is in an ideal spot, because this is where the elders of the city deliberate over issues just like this. If Boaz can meet this man here, then he is ready to get everyone together and he can get all settled

at once.

And that's exactly what happens. When the man he had mentioned comes along, Boaz is sitting there looking and you can imagine how his heart and stomach gave a leap. Here comes Mr. So-and-So.

What seemingly inconsequential circumstances has God woven together for your blessing this week? Spend some time thanking Him for these.

You remember back in chapter two, Ruth says to Naomi, "I would like to go out and see if I can find favor in the eyes of somebody and go and glean behind the reapers." And the Bible says, "And as it happened..." As it happened amongst all the fields of all the inhabitants of the land, it just so happened that she found herself in the field of Boaz. And here we have, "And behold .. The close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by ...." An apparently inconsequential moment in the eyes of everyone, which has been specifically guided by the providential hand of God, who has woven together perfectly all the myriad little decisions that people make in their everyday lives in order to accomplish His grand purpose. Wonderful ...

For some extra credit homework this week, go back and read again the account of how Rebekah is found and chosen as a wife for Isaac in Genesis. If you haven't read that story in a while and you have time before you go to sleep, read Genesis chapter 24. There will be extra credit for it. Not from me, of course, but in the providence of God, you'll get some kind of extra credit. It is a wonderful display of God's provision working in ordinary life to bring about great events and movements in His redemptive plan, without people even really know it.

So Boaz summons the individual. Actually in the original language it reads, "Ho, such a one, turn aside, sit down here!" Can you imagine? Your walking down the road and someone says, "Ho, such a one, turn aside, sit down here." That's what he says, and the remarkable thing is that the man, says, "Oh ... okay," and he turns aside and sits down. Of course, this is Boaz's cousin, not a stranger.

Then Boaz takes ten of the elders and says to them, "Sit down here." And they all just ho-de-do over and sit down. All of this speaks of Boaz's standing and respectability in the community. "Excuse me, sit down." "Okay." "And the ten of you over there, come here and sit down." "Okay, fine, not a problem, we'll be right there."

Here, then, is an indication of Boaz not only in terms of his standing, but also in terms of his character among these men. If he had been some kind of rascal, lout, gossip or lazy bum, they would have responded,

“No you go sit down, and when I think of it, I might get to you if I have time.” But instead, they’re all ready to hear him at the drop of a hat.

It’s interesting to me that this man, this cousin, has no name in the Biblical record. Clearly Boaz and the others knew his name, and yet he isn’t named. He’s just referred to as “such a one” by the Spirit. Why not?

I can think of two possibilities: 1) The writer doesn’t give a name because he doesn’t want the embarrassment to follow to the man’s heirs when they realize that this man, who had such a great opportunity, decided not to follow through, because of his worldly interests. But this seems unlikely to me simply because the Scripture elsewhere doesn’t hesitate to hand out embarrassment to those to whom embarrassment is due. Or perhaps, 2) There is a sense of judgment in that this man, in deciding that he wants to preserve his name and his inheritance, is unprepared to do anything for Ruth. In making his decision the Spirit is essentially saying, “You who were so interested in preserving his own name, I’m not even going to let you be named.” So the Biblical record just treats him as “Mr. So-and-So.”

This is just a little reminder, then, in passing for those who truly want to make a name for themselves in this life: FORGET IT! Let someone else make a name for you, if it is to ever happy. You just be concerned about honoring God, loving others and doing what is right. Don’t ever worry about your name, legacy and inheritance. Do what’s right and let God worry about those things.

### **Wednesday**

Now the negotiations that follow are pretty straight forward. Ten of the elders acting as witnesses was standard practice. The law made a provision for the widow who was childless. It was her late husband’s family’s duty, specifically the brothers if they lived, to marry her as a widow in order to care for her. The law also provided for the care a woman, who as a result of widowhood, was forced to sell the property that had fallen to her as a result of marriage, her and her late husband’s marital property, land. And the next of kin to the original owner had first dibs on whether or not to buy the land, in order to keep it in the family. The object in both of these instances, the marriage and the

purchase of the property was the preservation of the family and the family name in Israel for the man who had died.

So the marriage responsibility was seen as a duty and the purchase of the property was regarded as a duty and an opportunity. The property of Naomi went both in equity and in law with the hand of Ruth in the hope that an heir might be produced to preserve the name of Elimelech and Mahlon. It was a package deal. So Boaz properly and very skillfully set's before this Kinsman the opportunity of acquiring the land and then the duty of marriage to Ruth. "Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling her land. I thought I might bring it to your attention so that you could have first crack at it and redeem the land."

Now as you are reading the story, they Spirit already has you on the side of Boaz and you're thinking, "Not this guy! He can't possibly redeem it."

But then Mr. So-and-So says at the end of verse 4, "I will redeem it." And we're all like, "What!?! No way! Get out! Boaz, why did you go to the gate? I told you not to do that. I said, just go ahead and marry the girl and now look what's happening!"

But then Boaz says, "Now listen cousin, before we start chucking sandals at each other to confirm it, I'm not done ... I just need to mention that you will also be acquiring a new wife, the dead man's widow, Ruth the Moabitess, whom I haven't mentioned yet. Plus you will now have the duty to raise up a child to receive the land as an inheritance and preserve the name of the dead."

And the guy balks and says, "Wait a second. I'm in for the land, but not the widow. If the two go together, then I'm out."

We all breathe a big sigh of relief. Boaz looks at Mr. So-and-So, a grin spreading across his face, shrugs his shoulders and says, "Well, I guess you're out."

The reason that he was out, was he was afraid of endangering his own estate. You see, if he was just buying the land and providing the revenue to take care of the elderly Naomi, then it gave him the opportunity of an accruing asset. The only thing that could be a detriment to him would be if Naomi were able to marry and have an heir, who would then be able to redeem the land some day or have it revert back in the year of jubilee.

Everyone already knew, though, there was no possibility of that. Naomi was now past all thought of marriage and other children. But now when he hears about Ruth everything changes. He realizes, “Wait a second. If I do this, I will not only be out for the purchase price of the land; I also get a wife that I’m not particularly interested in having; and not only that, if I fulfill my duty to her, this will dilute my own estate and also create the possibility that what I am holding in trust for my current children will be diminished as a result of entering into this transaction. So he indicates that he is uninterested and unwilling to take that chance.

Then, he removes his sandal and hands it to Boaz, a symbolic gesture of transferring his legal right of redemption to the next in line. A simple gesture to commemorate the event in the minds of the people and to demonstrate Boaz’s desire and commitment to love, redeem, provide for the needy, sacrifice financially and personally to do what Mr. So-and-So was unwilling to do.

So Boaz makes this wonderful announcement in verses 9 and 10, explaining in part the motivation for his actions that day. His words were striking and clear for all to hear. He assumed both the privilege and the duty of redemption and his readiness to fulfill the law of Moses. And Boaz made very clear that he was going to marry Ruth the Moabitess as his wife, and undoubtedly he paid dearly for her. Which ... I should add, he was very happy to do, because he loved her.

It’s amazing this statement that he makes in these verses. Notice what he doesn’t say. He doesn’t say, “I’m in love with her.”

Is he in love with her? Yes, most definitely, but he doesn’t say that.

Rather, he says that he wants to perpetuate the name of the dead, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. He says, “I am taking the role of a Kinsman Redeemer to protect and provide for both the living and the dead,” and he references God’s word in Leviticus 25.

Why is this more important and indeed more beautiful than simply saying, “I love her”?

## Thursday

We ended yesterday by thinking about Boaz's statement in verses 9&10 of chapter 4. But what does this mean?

It is a reference to the provision by God of a Kinsman-Redeemer given in Leviticus to ransom and rescue widows, property or those who have sold themselves into slavery. Who was a Kinsman-Redeemer? A Kinsman Redeemer was a person with certain qualities, five at least that bear mentioning:

1. He was a close relative - usually a brother but not always, sometimes an uncle or a cousin.
2. He was necessarily a man of means - strength, opportunity, wealth and the ability to redeem.
3. He was necessarily a man of compassion and love.
4. He was a man committed to pursuing God's heart, doing what is right; and finally,
5. He was a man with a willing self-sacrificing heart.

Now when all of these things were united in a person, you have the makings of a Kinsman-Redeemer.

Boaz, whose name means in Him is strength, is a picture here of the Lord Jesus Christ, the ultimate, the one true Kinsman Redeemer. How so?

Think how this same Hebrew word is used elsewhere in the Old Testament to speak of the coming Messiah. There are many references, but hear just these three:

Job 19:25-27, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"

Isaiah 54:5, "For your Maker is your husband, The Lord of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; he is called the God of the whole earth."

Isaiah 59:20, "'The Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,' says the Lord."

What do these tell us about the one true Kinsman-Redeemer?

How does the Lord Jesus act as our Redeemer:

1. He was a close relative. He, who was fully God, became a man that He might be a true mediator and have compassion as a faithful High Priest. (Read Phil 2:5-7).
2. He was a man of means - strength, opportunity, wealth and ability to redeem.
3. He was a man of compassion and love - often moved with compassion and weeping over the souls and condition of other, tireless in His love.
4. He was a man committed to pursuing God's heart, doing what is

right. The Lord lived without sin, ever doing what was right, ever doing what was pleasing to the Father's heart, ever doing God's will.

5. He was a man with a willing self-sacrificing heart. (Read Phil. 2:8)

Hymn: I Will Sing of My Redeemer

I will sing of my Redeemer  
And His wondrous love to me;  
On the cruel cross He suffered  
From the curse to set me free.

Chorus:

Sing, oh, sing of my Redeemer,  
With His blood He purchased me;  
On the cross He sealed my pardon,  
Paid the debt and made me free.

I will tell the wondrous story,  
How my lost estate to save  
In His boundless love and mercy,  
He the ransom freely gave.

I will praise my dear Redeemer,  
His triumphant pow'r I'll tell,  
How the victory he giveth  
Over sin and death and hell.

I will sing of my Redeemer,  
And His heav'nly love to me;  
He from death to life hath brought me,  
Son of God, with Him to be.

Words: Philip P. Bliss, 1876.

Music: James McGranahan, 1877.