

God of History - The King is Coming - Ruth 4:13-22

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[0 : 00] We have realized that the Old Testament is rich, and every time, you know, certainly in the book of Ruth, in each chapter, each page, if it was a living person and you were to cut it open, it would bleed the Lord Jesus Christ.

It just pours out from page to page. It tells us something about our Savior and about our salvation. So let's look at the text this morning, and we'll just read from verse 13 of chapter 4.

So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And when he made love to her, the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. The woman said to Naomi, Praise be to the Lord, who is this day has not left you without a guardian redeemer.

May he become famous throughout Israel, and he will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.

Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. And the woman living there said, Naomi has a son. And they named him Obed. And he was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

[1 : 14] So this is the genealogy of David. This then is the family line of Perez. Perez was the father of Hezron. Hezron the father of Ram. Ram the father of Aminadab. Aminadab the father of Nashon.

Nashon the father of Salmon. Salmon the father of Boaz. Boaz the father of Obed. Obed the father of Jesse. And Jesse the father of David. So how did we get to that list of names at the end of chapter 4?

It started off, if we remember, with a list of names and promise which came into hopelessness. Yet here we have a list of names after an event which is filled with hope.

In chapter 1 we had Naomi. Sorry. Done something to the PowerPoint. In chapter 1 we have Naomi who became empty.

She was bitter. She was old. She had lost her husband and she had lost her two sons. Everything looked pretty bleak. She had two daughter-in-laws. Orpah, if we remember, she went back to her family.

[2 : 21] She went back to the Moabites. But then we had Ruth. Ruth loved Naomi. Ruth loved the God of Israel. And she chose to convert.

She chose to leave her family. She chose to leave Moab. And she chose to join Israel. And she picked Israel and Israel's God and Naomi over her own flesh and blood, over her own family.

And what that tells us is that God's people are people of faith. Not just of a national identity. You see, those people who trust in God are truly Abraham's descendants.

It's those that by faith trust in Christ that are the Lord's. Not those who have some sort of heritage or ethnic leadings.

And in chapter 2, we saw the providence of God in that Ruth happened to come across Boaz's field. This potential kinsman redeemer or guardian redeemer, as it says in the NIV.

[3 : 24] And we found out in that that he was able to provide Ruth with protection from harm while she was working. He was able to fill up, if you like, the storehouses.

The cupboards were no longer bare. There was food on the table. And Naomi was just that little bit less empty. And in chapter 3, we found that there was a proposal of marriage.

There was hope maybe for Ruth in the future that she would have something and someone to come home to. Someone to look after her. And so there was an appeal to Boaz that he would do what was right.

That he would be the guardian redeemer for Ruth and Naomi. And Naomi, again, was just that little less empty. And we found them in chapter 3 waiting. Waiting.

Waiting to see if Boaz would go and do what he should do. And in some ways, that's where we are this morning. As a church in the story of salvation, we're waiting.

[4 : 22] And what are we waiting for? We're waiting for the return of Christ. We're putting our faith and our trust in our redeemer. And we moved on. And last week, we had the legal drama.

We had Mr. So-and-so, the person who is of insignificance. And he was there to tell us and to tell everyone else of the cost of redemption. What it cost Boaz to redeem Naomi.

To take Ruth as his wife. And we found the response and the blessing of the elders. And that they said, Ruth's no longer the Moabite. She's no longer the widow. She's going to be the wife of Boaz.

And she's going to be great in Israel. The blessing of the elders. And so then, we find that Naomi is just almost to the brim.

She's almost there, but she's not quite completely full. It's not quite what she had before. But it's getting there. And so we have a few questions.

[5 : 27] And the questions we have is, who's in control of the world? Who's in control of history? And can God be trusted with history? Is he trustworthy?

Can you? Can I? Can we trust God with our future? I think that the book of Ruth says that yes, we can. And we'll look at that. I think if we had ended the book of Ruth here at verse 12, I think we would have had a nice little heartwarming story of how God helped a widow and how God helped a Moabite to integrate into Jewish society, integrate into Israel, and they had a nice life.

And that was really great for everybody. And isn't God good? But I think with these last few verses, we actually see the expansive nature of how God is that intricately linked with the lives of ordinary people.

See, it's not just that Ruth and Naomi had Boaz come and redeem them. We witnessed the hand of God to bring about a blessing, not just to them, but to you and to me this morning.

There is a blessing from the book of Ruth for us today because of the plan of God's unfolding salvation, God's unfolding plan in history, which is unfolding as we speak, as we live, as we breathe.

[6 : 58] We are waiting for the return of our guardian redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. And this little book, it is, if you like, a chain in the link that links, if you like, the first five books of the Bible and Joshua and Judges, and it links it into the period of the kings.

It's kind of a beginning again story, if you like. If you think of Eve, and Eve became the mother of all living, and then you had Rachel and Leah, and they became the mothers of what we now know as the nation of Israel.

Here you have Ruth, and if you like, she becomes the mother of the kingdom of Israel, of the descendants which go on then to David and eventually to Christ. And so we see God is alive, and he is working in the lives of ordinary people to bring about a redemptive purpose.

And God is still at that work. He's still at his work to use ordinary people to bring about redemption in the lives of ordinary people. If you're here this morning and you know the Lord Jesus Christ, what ordinary people influenced your life so that you might know the guardian, redeemer of all redeemers, Jesus?

And we might not know the significance of our lives. We know the significance of Ruth's life because it's recorded for us in Scripture, but we don't know necessarily how our life played out, how it fitted in to God's plan and purposes.

[8 : 34] We may have an idea, we may not know. But we can trust that God is involved, and God does want to know. He wants us to know eventually.

And so let's look at what we have here in the text. This morning we have heavenly matrimony. We have a marriage that had the design in heaven. God has brought Boaz and Ruth together.

He has a plan for them, and we know he has a plan for them, and we know he has done this. It says, So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And when he made love to her, the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.

They had a little baby. Little babies are great. I had two. They're not so great after their babies, but when they're babies, they're great. The Lord enabled her to conceive.

We know that it was in the plan of God for them to be together, because this word here, the Lord enabled her to conceive, is actually the same words that said when the Lord visited his people in chapter 1 and brought them food.

[9 : 39] When the Lord was doing something good in Bethlehem, he visited them. And he's now doing something significant in the life of Ruth, and he has visited Ruth. And he hasn't visited Ruth just for her own sake.

And he hasn't just visited Ruth for Naomi's sake. He has visited Ruth for you and for me. And in his unfolding plan, he has visited Ruth because he wants to bless the world.

And how he's going to do that is through Ruth the Moabite. We have to think about this for a little minute. We don't know how long that Ruth was married to one of Naomi's sons.

But it could have been as long as 10 years. And if that's the case, 10 years of marriage and no children suggests that, you know, there's something wrong.

Was it wrong with, you know, the male and the female or both? We don't know. But there was something wrong. We also know that Boaz was a lot older than Ruth. And again, we don't want to speculate about how old.

[10 : 42] But there is not necessarily the likelihood that they would conceive. But here, straight away, God gives them a child. It reminds us that God gave lots of other people important children.

Hannah, you know, gave birth to Samuel. And obviously, Rachel, she gave birth to some of the children of Israel. People who were longing to have children.

And they saw children as a gift from God. And I think that in that, we need to stop and to pause and to think, do we see children as a gift from God? The Bible is quite clear that all children are a blessing from God.

In today's culture, that's not what we see. Children are an inconvenience in today's culture. Children are so much an inconvenience that it's all right to even end a child's life before it breathes H₂O.

That is how much that we've come away from a biblical moral view of children as a gift. I remember that nervous time, you know, when I walked into, I think it was a 14-week, because we were on holidays and, you know, people were off.

[11 : 53] So we had a 14-week scan rather than the 12-week scan that everybody has. And we were nervous, sort of, parents, what on earth are we going to do? And, you know, my wife Claire, she gets up on the table and they get out the jelly and they get the machine and they put it on.

And before us on the screen appeared, because he was a little bit bigger, his whole little form, Elijah, my eldest, appeared on the screen.

And there he was, suspended in, like, space animation on this little, sort of, green-coloured monitor. And he was twisting his hands. Almost, we were saying, look there, there's our son.

He's waving at us. He's saying hello. And it was almost like, you know, when your mum or your dad or, you know, someone who you know and love opens the door and comes into the house, you don't need to say who's there. You know who's there.

Well, that day, I knew that someone had just entered our room. The thing that, you know, the secret place is no longer secret because of science.

[12 : 57] And we can see inside the womb very clearly what goes on. And that day, I met my son, if you like, before he was born. And that, to me, is the greatest experience that I will take with me to, obviously, to my grave.

And I will be able to say, quite clearly, there's no one will convince me that Elijah was not there that day. And that's something that science cannot quantify. the human spirit, the life of an individual.

I say that in passing because I think it's something that we need to really embrace and encourage people that life is valuable and it is from God, it is a gift from God.

And Elijah does that to this day. When he was born and he was a little baby, when he got excited, he went with his hands. He still does that.

He's not here, so I can tell this morning. But, yeah, he's nearly 16, but he still does that. So there's nobody telling me that life is not a blessing.

[14 : 09] And life is from God. And here we have a little baby. A little baby that God has given to Boaz and to Ruth. And the Lord enabled her to conceive and she gave birth to a son.

Wow. What a tremendous story. Ruth, the widowed Moabite, childless baron, has now a husband. She now has a son.

But there's going to be another baby born, another son, a son promised. From Bethlehem. Bethlehem becomes a significant place. And you don't have to turn to it.

I'll read it for you. But there's a prophecy in Micah. And verses 1 to 4, it says, Marshal your troops now. City of troops, for a siege is laid against us. And they will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod.

But you, Bethlehem, Epaphrath, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.

[15 : 20] Therefore, Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son. And the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. And he will stand up and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord.

You see, the significance of this little baby is that one day there's going to be another little baby. We're about to celebrate Christmas. I think it's around the corner.

People may be trying to get their Christmas presents in. But the significance of Christmas is not Santa Claus. The significance of Christmas is not in our presents or the PlayStations that we want.

It's in the fact that God came to earth in human flesh and that he became our guardian redeemer. Do you know Christ this morning?

Do you know that you need a guardian redeemer? Do you know that one day when Christ returns again to judge the world that you will need him to be your guardian redeemer?

[16 : 18] If you don't know what that means, if you're unsure, it means that he needs to buy you back from slavery. It means that you are trapped in sin and he has died to save you.

He has died to make a way for your sins to be forgiven. And he has enabled through his death to bring you life.

So there is the promise of another, a greater one that would come from Bethlehem. And so in that, we see that human plans, they weave in and through the plan of God.

And we can see that God has visited his people, not just with food, but he's visited them by visiting Ruth in the birth of this newborn son. and that this newborn son is completely in God's plan.

But we also have a reversal. The story then shifts quite quickly away from Boaz and away from Ruth and it brings Naomi. Because of the idea of the guardian redeemership, the child is actually Naomi's in that he's going to be Elimelech's heir.

[17 : 38] And so we see that in the text. And we also see the women of Bethlehem. If you remember in chapter 2, the women of Bethlehem, they were saying, is that Naomi? Is that her?

The gossip was going around Bethlehem and they were saying, is that, is she back? Doesn't really look like her. She looks a bit more haggard and a bit worn. Is that Naomi? But now look at what they say.

And so the women of Bethlehem, they say, the women said to Naomi, praise be to the Lord who this day has not left you without a guardian redeemer. And you say, hold on. I thought that was Boaz.

And you say, yes. But now this little baby, he has now the right to be her guardian redeemer also. There's redeemers everywhere. And it says, may he become famous throughout Israel and he will renew your life and sustain you in your old age for your daughter-in-law who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons.

has given him birth. That's a change from their questioning, who's that girl? She looks a bit, hmm? Is that really her? She's been away a while.

[18 : 46] Imagine her coming back after leaving us at a time of famine. You know, all of those sort of things that they may have been thinking. But here they are. They're praising for what they can see God is doing in the life of Naomi.

Naomi. And in verse 15, if you remember in the first week we looked at the whole idea of turning and returning and God is bringing Naomi back.

And God, he says, God brought me back. God returned me to Israel. Well, here the women of Bethlehem, they're saying something very significant in verse 15.

It says, he will renew your life. And actually what it says, he will return to you life. This little baby, this little guardian redeemer is going to sustain you in your old age.

And there's another little baby, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he's going to return to us life. He is our guardian redeemer. He is the one that we need to look to this morning.

[19 : 50] You see, Naomi was not left without a guardian redeemer. This little bundle that she's now caring for in her arms is going to be the one who can sustain her in her old age.

He's the one who will be able to look after her. Because in that society without a man, without someone to provide food for her, she would be left destitute.

And God has not left his children, in this case, destitute. We need to praise God for not forgetting Naomi. And what will this mean?

We need to praise God for what it means. It means protection of Elimelech's name, his property, his inheritance within Israel, his place within the community, and her sustained existence.

You see, Naomi now is completely full. She is full. He's going to return to you new life. If you want life this morning, there is only one place that you can find it.

[20 : 50] And that is in the Lord Jesus Christ. In John 10, 10, it says that the thief comes to kill, steal, kill, and destroy. But I have come that you might have life and have it to the full.

I am the good shepherd and the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. God didn't leave Naomi without a Redeemer and he hasn't left us without one.

God is concerned about the future of Naomi and Ruth. I would say to you this morning that God is concerned about your future. And God's always working, always working to fulfill his plan.

But we need to be careful here that it's not about, you know, there's many preachers out there who will tell you, you know, Jesus wants to give you life to the full. And you say, yeah, I can agree with that.

With that, he then says that you can have anything you want. Just ask God and he'll give it to you. And I say, no, hold on. That's not what the Bible says.

[21 : 57] In fact, Jesus says in John 16, verses 26, and Jesus answered, very truly, I tell you, you're looking for me not because you saw the signs I performed, but because you ate loaves and had your fill.

So this is after the miracle of Jesus feeding the 5,000. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.

For on him, God the Father has placed his seal of approval. And what Jesus is saying is, don't be working to build a bigger house here. Work for the kingdom of God to build a reward there.

Our focus should not be on our immediate comfort, but on the fact that Jesus is going to bring comfort once and for all. When he returns, he's going to end all suffering.

Not now, but then. It says in Colossians 2, it says, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness, and he is head over every power and authority.

[22 : 59] See, already, we have the fullness of Christ. We have his blessing. We have his redemption. But then, we will experience that fullness in his kingdom when he comes.

And it's interesting, the idea of love, you would expect that in the chapter 4, it says, and Ruth loved Boaz. But it doesn't. It says, Naomi was loved by Ruth and was better than seven sons.

The whole book is building towards this climax of a birth of a son. And yet, these ladies say this remarkable thing about a Moabite widow, someone outside of Israel, someone who should be not included in Israel.

And they say that she should be better. You know, she's better than seven sons. I think in that, it's that sons do what sons do.

Sons grow up, and if they don't pass away as they did in this case, they would marry. And in the natural scale of things, that they would have children. It's just what sons do.

[24 : 11] But Ruth was not her son. Ruth actually chose. If you remember, Ruth chose to stay with Naomi and go back to Israel. She chose the God of Israel.

She didn't have to do any of this. And because of her love for Naomi, she chose to do this. And as a result of that, and as a result of her love, she now has this little bundle of joy.

So in a sense, sons don't try to please their mother with grandchildren, but Ruth had to. And the ladies of Bethlehem, they realize this, and they mark that.

It's a remarkable change from Ruth, the Moabite, to one who's worth more than seven sons. I think that's wonderful. And so we have the complete reversal, the complete reversal of chapter one in chapter four.

But we don't end there. You see, we continually have the unfolding plan of God. In verse 17, it says, the woman living there, they said, Naomi has a son, and they named him Obed, and he was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

[25 : 30] I suppose we could read that quite quickly and go, oh, that's okay, and we could all go home. Or, I think we're having lunch later, we could just, you know, stop here. But what does that mean?

Baby Obed. Names mean an awful lot and have quite big significance in the book of Ruth. we remember that Naomi was sweet. But then she said, call me Mara because I am bitter.

But now she's quite happy for everybody to call her Naomi again. Naomi is sweet. So baby Obed is unusually named by the ladies of the town and they call him Obed.

And this is quite an odd name when you think that Boaz is a man of standing in the community. He owns property. He has people working for him. He's quite respected in the elders. But Obed means servant.

Baby Obed is going to be a blessing. He's going to serve the people of Bethlehem. But I know a better servant who's going to be born in Bethlehem.

[26 : 33] Mark 10 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. See, we have an even better Obed, an even better servant.

And so we have the baby servant Obed, but we have the man Christ Jesus who came to seek and to save us and to serve us by giving us his life.

And then we have the line to David. We have this little small genealogy that says they named him Obed and he was the father of Jesse and the significance of that is then he was the father of David.

Now I want you to work this out maybe. King David, the greatest king that Israel ever knew. So if anybody says to you, you see that Bible, it's made up.

No one would make this up. And just, that's my word to you this morning. If you were going to write a back story for your hero, if you're going to write a back story for the greatest king of Israel, you're not going to make this your back story.

[27 : 39] you're not going to make the back story that you came from a Moabite widow. That's not how you're going to, if you like, fabricate a genealogy.

And I think that attests to its historic accuracy and its truth that this is history. This really happened. This is David's great-grandmother, Ruth.

But we also know that if you want to flick over in your Bible, maybe you haven't realized this, but you can flick over to Matthew. I'm not sure what page that is in the church Bible.

Maybe someone might find it and shout it out if that's helpful. 955.

So it's 965 if you're struggling to find it. My Bible doesn't want to turn there either, so don't worry. So Matthew chapter 1, verse 1.

[28 : 48] We have a different genealogy than the one that's recorded in Ruth 18. It says, this is the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the greater son of David, son of Abraham.

And it reads, see Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah, and his brothers in Judah the father of Perez and Zerah whose mother was Tamar. Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Aminadab, Aminadab the father of Nashon, Nashon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz whose mother was Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed whose mother was Ruth.

And Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David. And if you read on down and it gets to the end, it then says, And Jacob, the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.

You see, in this little story, Ruth didn't know, David didn't know, that they were taking part in a genealogy that was going to be added to. And that genealogy was going to go right the way through and to the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

And we see that unfolding plan. And so we learn from that and we ask the question, is God in control? In a time, as we reminded earlier, when Israel had no king, what was God doing?

[30 : 18] God was about his work. He was moving people around. He was moving Ruth to Boaz. Boaz to Obed.

Because he had a plan to bring about a king in Israel. And his plan was to bring about David, Israel's greatest human king. But we know that David wasn't good enough. We know that David, as great a king he was, as great as a man after God's own heart, as the Bible tells us, as great as a musician he was and all the songs that he wrote, he just wasn't quite good enough.

In fact, he was a murderer. In fact, he committed adultery. He fell into sin. His family was a little bit broken up. In fact, he morally, he just didn't quite meet the mark, did he?

And so we needed someone greater than David. And we only find that in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. So where are we heading to? Well, we're heading to somewhere else.

And I would like to say, I'm heading home. You know, the Bible would say that this world is not our home. We're heading for a city whose builder and maker is God himself.

[31 : 32] And so if we turn in Revelation, if you want to turn there, Revelation chapter 7, I'm going to read some verses for you. And so if you're a Christian this morning, this is about you.

This is our future. This is what we are waiting for. And then verse 9 says, And after this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count. You know, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.

And they were wearing white robes and they were holding palm branches and in their hands and they cried out in a loud voice as we sang this morning, Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

And all the angels were standing around the throne and they, with the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell down in their faces before the throne and they worshipped God saying, Amen, praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God forever and ever.

Amen. And it says just on down there in verse 15, Therefore they are before the throne of God and they serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will shelter them in His presence.

[32 : 48] And this is where we get the fullness of Christ. Never again will they hunger. Never again will they thirst. And the sun will not beat down on them and nor any scorching heat.

For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd and He will lead them to springs of living water and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Amen.

If you know and you love the Lord Jesus Christ, that is your future. The future of Brexit is in the hands of the politicians. You could say, but my future is in the hands of my kinsman, Redeemer.

The sad part of this is that if you don't know Christ on that day, that will not be your future. Your future will be marred by the judgment and payment of your own sin.

And on that day, you will need a kinsman, Redeemer. You will need someone who will legally stand, if you like, before God and say, know He's mine.

[33 : 51] And if you don't know Christ this morning and you don't have that, I would urge you to make Jesus your guardian, Redeemer. But for us who know and know the Lord, we're looking forward to a day when we'll never again be hungry, never again thirst, never again will we need to put on Factor 50 sun cream, especially for me.

I burn, you know, quite into the sun. The rest of my family, they all tan in an instant. There's a picture, I think, of me and my sister and she looks like she comes from, you know, Brazil.

And I'm standing there as white as a ghost beside her. But never again am I going to have to worry about being scorched by the heat of the sun.

Because when Christ returns, He's going to make all things new. Let us pray. Heavenly Father,