

Ruth 4

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- [0 : 0 0] That's Ruth chapter 4. 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. 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 Redeemer, Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech.
- 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. 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.
- [1 : 0 8] 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. 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. So when the Redeemer said to Boaz, buy it for yourself, he drew off his sandal.
- 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 belong to Elimelech, and all that belong to Kilian and to Malon.
- Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Malon, 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. 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.
- [2 : 2 2] May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem, 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.
- So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife and he went into her and the Lord gave her conception and she bore a son. Then the women said to Naomi, blessed be the Lord who has not left you this day without a redeemer and may his name be renowned in Israel.
- He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons has given birth to him.
- Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name saying, a son has been born to Naomi.

They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. Now these are the generations of Perez. Perez fathered Hezron, Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab, Amminadab fathered Nashon, Nashon fathered Selman, Selman fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed, Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David.

[3 : 45] This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Well, good morning.

It's good to see you this morning. This last Sunday of October. As we look at Ruth chapter four, I'd love to take for a title, Behold, the Redeemer comes.

Behold, the Redeemer comes. Who doesn't love a great love story?

The ladies here in this room, perhaps a little more than us guys do, but deep down, we're all suckers for love.

To watch the unique story of how a couple meets, how they come together, they fall in love, they navigate the hardships and the trials that test their love, and then ultimately see how love hopefully triumphs at the end.

[5 : 13] We all root for it. Though tragic in its ending, perhaps the most famous of all love stories written in human literature comes from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.

Let me see. But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? It is the sun and Juliet.

Ah, see, I said it wrong. That's the best I can do. Many of us had to read this in school and perhaps even acted in some dramatic reproduction of this in theater class.

But as famous and tragic as this story is, and as much as we may root for and enjoy love stories in general, most of the impact from these stories ends with the principles involved in the story.

It really doesn't go any further. Rarely is there a love story with implications so deep, so broad, so vast, so far beyond the actual people in the story that it literally changes everything.

[6 : 36] This morning, as we look at our text and indeed look at closing out this series on the book of Ruth, we examine how one such ordinary family's love story of redemption somehow leads to redemption for us all.

Now, you've heard these terms, redemption, redeemed, redeemer, thrown around quite a bit. So let me again, for the sake of clarity, and for some that might be new here this morning, define redemption.

Practically speaking, it is the act of gaining or regaining possession of something in exchange for payment, clearing a debt, or perhaps some other action.

Even more importantly, it is the act of atoning for a fault or mistake, saving or being saved from error, evil, or sin.

It's to be set free. It's to be made whole, made new. It's a powerful word with profound implications, indeed going to the very heart of the gospel message itself.

[7 : 57] Now, I'm probably going to date myself here, but before the popularity of frequent flyer miles, grocery store loyalty points, and credit card cashback rewards, there was something called S&H; green stamps.

You could make a regular purchase at a store and get back these actual stamps as an additional reward. You would then save these stamps. I remember as a kid, we would lick the stamps and paste them in these special stamp booklets.

Now, for those of you who are a little too young to remember, don't laugh, because during the height of this program, it's estimated that 80% of American households had green stamps.

There are actually three times more green stamps in circulation than postage stamps. Once you filled up this booklet, or maybe several booklets, you could take them and redeem the stamps for great household items, anything from blenders and bedspreads to bicycles and end tables.

You could order out of this big catalog, it was called the Big Idea Book, or go to one of several redemption centers to get your items.

[9 : 25] There was no need to bring any money because the price had already been paid by virtue of the stamps that were being redeemed.

Lord, I think I've just preached half my sermon already. Let me go ahead and give you the bottom line right up front, way back here in the book of Ruth. God was already preparing payment and orchestrating a plan of redemption for all of us today.

It's with this in mind that we look now to the climax of this love story found here in our text today of Ruth chapter 4. Consider with me, if you will, these three movements of the text.

First, the price of true redemption, the path to true redemption, and ultimately, the product of true redemption.

Now, though Pastor Helm clearly outlined this on last week, it certainly bears repeating for our context today, the law from back in the book of Leviticus that indicated if a woman was a widow, which Naomi and Ruth both were, she could be redeemed, rescued, only by the closest male relative, a kinsman redeemer.

[10 : 52] He could purchase the widow's property, marry her, have children, and carry on the family name of the deceased in safety and security. This is important context as we first look at the price of redemption.

We begin with the cliffhanger left by Naomi and preached about last week in chapter 3, verse 18. Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today.

With that, the curtain now rises on chapter 4, with us looking to see how Boaz, this honorable, worthy man of action, and actually settles the matter today and rescues our damsel in distress.

He goes to the gate of the city looking for this closer relative, redeemer, spoken about earlier in chapter 3. Now, the gate of the city was a place where esteemed and honorable men and elders sat.

It was both city council chamber and courtroom where judicial matters were resolved and business was also conducted. It was a public meeting square, so to speak.

[12 : 16] So it was as likely a spot as any for Boaz to encounter this relative. And sure enough, the scripture says, still in verse 1, that behold, the redeemer of whom Boaz had spoken came by.

And Boaz asked him to stop for a moment and take a seat. Don't you love that about God? How when you're where you're supposed to be, he shows up with exactly the provision you need to fulfill his plan and his purpose.

So this relative comes and sits down. Now, I refer to him as this relative because the writer never gives us his name. Though I'm sure Boaz knew it.

Why? Maybe it was because it was unnecessary to know it. Maybe it was really of no consequence. Maybe it was because this really wasn't a man worthy of honor.

And the writer didn't want to risk his name getting mixed up with any of the other names at the end of this chapter. For whatever the reason, the man who shall not be named comes and sits down.

[13 : 27] And because business was about to be discussed, Boaz asked 10 of the city elders to sit down as well. Now watch here starting at verse 3, the shrewdness and wisdom of Boaz.

He tells him that Naomi has some land for sale that belonged to her deceased husband, Elimelech. And since you're the next closest relative, I wanted to give you the opportunity to redeem or purchase the property.

And if you won't, I will. Boaz initially puts this in terms purely of a land transaction. He doesn't mention Ruth at all.

And the relative jumps at the opportunity. Of course I will. Who wouldn't be interested in buying back some prime real estate to keep in his family name?

He was willing to pay the price of redemption as long as it didn't cost him anything. It's like the story of the hen and the hog.

[14 : 33] The hen and the hog were discussing how they could help the church with their program to feed the hungry. The hen says, I've got a great idea. We'll provide bacon and eggs for the church to feed the hungry.

The hog thought about this suggestion and said, there's only one problem with your bacon and eggs solution. For you, it only requires a contribution.

But for me, it'll be my total commitment. Are you willing to pay the price? So now, like a skilled negotiator or seasoned courtroom attorney, Boaz turns the table, starting here in verse 5, and says, okay, great.

You should know that if you buy this land, you're also going to have to take Ruth as your wife, have children, and carry on, perpetuate, the scripture says, the name of the deceased in his inheritance.

Well, now wait a minute. The relative says, I didn't sign up for all of that. I can't take a wife, carry on someone else's name. What about my own name?

[15 : 46] What about my own inheritance and my own family? That would mess all of that up. Boaz, you take it. I cannot redeem it.

So now, here it is. The real price of redemption. The willingness to give up your life for the sake of someone else.

The willingness to sacrifice all you have so someone else can be free. The willingness to marry yourself to someone, take on a debt you don't even owe for the sake of their inheritance, not yours.

In these first few verses, we see the cost of true redemption that Boaz would now be willing to pay. But what, Pastor Joe, does that mean for all of us?

Well, much like this no-name relative, there was a price for redemption for each of us that was way too steep for anybody in this room to pay.

[16 : 49] But Jesus paid it all. All to him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain, but he washed it white as snow.

Jesus, the only worthy redeemer, did all of that for you and for me. Ephesians chapter 1 verse 7 says, In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.

Then we look at the path to true redemption. This path or process to redemption, starting at verse 7, really breaks down in three distinct areas.

First, it was making it all legal. Secondly, it was doing it in front of many witnesses. And lastly, it's receiving the blessing of the elders and the people.

Boaz knew that if this was going to be true redemption, it had to be done the right way, following the right process. No shortcut, no fast track.

[17 : 59] To be legitimate, there could be no doubt or any claim of any error. Starting in verse 7, which is really a parenthetical history lesson where the writer describes to us, the readers, this generations old legal custom, you'll find it more specifically outlined back in Deuteronomy chapter 25, where the kinsman, the relative, who declined his responsibility, legally transferred his right to the property by taking off his sandal and giving it to another.

In verse 8, the actual transfer of the shoe symbolized the relinquishing of his right to act as the nearest kinsman and exchange his authority to another.

In essence, taking off one's shoe and giving it to someone gave them the right to walk on the land they were unwilling to walk on themselves. Boaz made sure the legal customs of the day had been observed.

Secondly, there were many witnesses. In most Christian weddings, as it was in mine and perhaps many of yours, you hear this familiar opening line, Dearly beloved, we are gathered here in the sight of God and in the presence of these witnesses.

Now, of course, when my wife and I got married, we got married in her hometown of Lexington, Kentucky, where on her side of the church, it looked like the whole town had shown up to be witnesses to our wedding and just a few rows on my side.

[19 : 53] Witnesses attest to, confirm, bless, endorse, validate, and to some degree help hold accountable the action that has just taken place.

This text is really instructive to the concept of marriage. Marriage is not just two people deciding in the kitchen, hey, let's get married and we're good to go. There's a process and there's more involved than just the two of you.

This union first is before God who created the institution of marriage. Then, to be legal, there are civil authority concerns. Marriage licenses, a duly ordained minister to officiate, and then in most states, public witnesses, public profession, some sense of community is required.

I would venture to say that even to this day, years later, if you walk around Lexington long enough, you're bound to bump into somebody that was a witness to our wedding.

What bothers me, young ladies hear me especially, it's these guys that tell you all these wonderful things in secret.

[21 : 09] And they profess their undying love for you in private, but won't talk or act the same way in public in front of your friends and family.

You should watch out for these guys. They may not be willing to walk out the path to true redemption. All that smooth-talking Boaz did to Ruth back in chapter 3 at midnight in the threshing room you heard preached about last week, it wouldn't have meant anything unless Boaz was prepared for some public action behind it.

Watch Boaz here in verse 9 as he provides us with this great example. he eagerly engages the witnesses around him and boldly, publicly, proclaims his intentions towards Ruth.

Hey, you all are witnesses. First, you see, I got this sandal. And I'm redeeming all of Naomi's property. I'm marrying Ruth and I'm going to perpetuate the name of the dead so that it may never be cut off from the gate of his native place.

Look, I might add as an additional note, this concept applies to Jesus as well. In Luke chapter 9 verse 26, the scripture says, For whoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

[22 : 41] If you're going to talk the talk, then you're going to have to publicly walk the walk as well. And then the witnesses did what witnesses are supposed to do.

Verse 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.

They blessed it. They blessed Ruth. They blessed Boaz. They blessed their house and offspring who were yet to come. There is blessing when you follow the right path.

Do it the right way. God's way. That leads us to the product of true redemption. What did following the path and paying the price for redemption actually produce?

Well, first, Boaz and Ruth got married. After all the pain, all the wondering, all the feeling of isolation with no protection or provision, Ruth finally is redeemed by Boaz through marriage.

[24 : 04] What about you? If you've been wandering, lost, and feeling isolated without covering, Jesus Christ is waiting to save you, cover you, rescue, and redeem you.

Secondly, the Lord caused Ruth to conceive and they had a son, another product of true redemption. Truly amazing when you consider that back in Ruth chapter one, the Bible says Ruth and Malon had been together for ten years and had no children.

They hadn't been able to conceive. Had they had children then, this whole story might have been different. But then after true redemption comes, in God's timing, according to God's plan, God causes Ruth to conceive.

Thirdly, another product of true redemption, though the book is actually named after Ruth, though Ruth is the one who actually conceives, it's Naomi here who gets redeemed.

Verse 14, the women said to Naomi, blessed be the Lord who has not left you this day without a redeemer and may his name be renowned in Israel.

[25 : 28] How fitting it is that our story started with Naomi and then comes back full circle to Naomi towards the end. this same Naomi who at the beginning of this story didn't even want to be called by her own name because she felt the Lord had dealt bitterly with her and had brought calamity upon her.

This same Naomi is now being called blessed, nursing her own grandchild who becomes a restorer of life and a nourisher of her old age.

Have you ever been there? I sure have. Felt like God had abandoned you, let you down, left you alone? Well, if she could, I'm sure Naomi would now tell you that even when you can't see it, even when it doesn't make sense, even when things seem to be at their lowest point, God knows what he's doing.

He has a plan and he's working on your behalf for we know that all things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose.

Lastly, we see the blessed lineage of Ruth and Boaz's child, Obed. Old Testament scholar David Kidner writes here, God's hand is all over history.

[26 : 59] God works out his purpose generation after generation. Limited as we are to one lifetime, each of us really sees so little of what happens.

A genealogy is a striking way of bringing before us the continuity of God's purpose through the ages. The process of history is not haphazard.

There is purpose in it all and the purpose is the purpose of God. So now at verse 18, don't just dismiss these last verses of genealogy.

This is not just some aside, some historical footnote. As Kidner says, there's purpose in it. And to dismiss it really misses the true exciting ending to the story.

Have any of you ever been to a Marvel comic movie? I mean, Captain America, The Avengers, Spider-Man, Iron Man, Black Panther.

[28 : 09] Those of you who may be Marvel movie veterans, you know that at the end of the movie, as the credits start to roll, you don't get up and leave the theater.

If you're a Marvel movie veteran, you know to stay seated. Because after the credits, another post-credit scene is coming.

and it's going to provide further context to the whole story and set up future stories. And if you leave too soon, you might miss it.

As I close, Dave, my dad, would say right here, I think I feel my help coming. Ruth, welcome to Ruth's post-credit scene.

The son of Ruth and Boaz was named Obed. Obed had a son named Jesse. Jesse had a son named David, King David, the greatest king of Israel.

[29 : 18] But that's not really how the story ends. Because where Ruth chapter 4 verse 22 ends, Matthew chapter 1 verse 6 picks up.

and we see David at verse 6. Go all the way to Jacob at verse 16. Jacob, the father of Joseph, Joseph, the husband of Mary, and unto Mary a child was born, a son was given, and the government was upon his shoulders.

They called his name Wonderful, Counselor, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Mighty God, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Behold, our Redeemer comes. So this is how one ordinary family's love story of redemption led to redemption for us all.

I know you thought this was just a story about Ruth, Boaz, and Naomi. but what we've been trying to tell you all series long is that this is a story about you and me and Jesus Christ.

[30 : 38] For our story is much like Ruth's story, lost, unable to save ourselves, cover ourselves, and in desperate need of a qualified Redeemer to rescue us.

Much like Boaz came to redeem Ruth, Jesus Christ came to do for us what no one else could, become our kinsman Redeemer.

Ruth's Redeemer had to be a family member. Our Redeemer, Jesus, became flesh and dwelt among us so that he could be our kinsman and save us.

By law, Ruth's Redeemer had the duty of buying the family out of slavery. our Redeemer, Jesus, bought us with a price and redeemed us from slavery to sin and death.

Ruth's Redeemer had to be selfless, obedient, and motivated by love for Ruth. Our Redeemer, Jesus, who became obedient unto death, was moved to redeem us because of his great love for us.

[31 : 47] For God so loved the world that he gave. Ruth's Redeemer, Boaz, in our text, had a plan to redeem Ruth unto himself.

Our Redeemer, Jesus, had a plan to redeem us, my God, by shedding his blood and dying for us on a cross. Ruth's Redeemer took her as his bride.

Our Redeemer, Jesus, has called all of us collectively his bride. God could have sent an angel to save us, but that angel wouldn't have been our kinsman.

A great pastor, prophet, or priest could have been our kinsman, but their own sins would have disqualified them from being our Redeemer.

Only Jesus the eternal God who added humanity to his eternal deity could be both kinsman and Redeemer for all mankind.

[32 : 58] He came from heaven to earth to show the way. From the earth to the cross my debt to pay. From the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky.

Lord, I lift your name on high. Let me read verse 14 one last time. Verse 14 of our text, blessed be the Lord who has not left you this day without a Redeemer.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your sacrifice. We thank you for redeeming us. We thank you for paying a debt that you didn't even owe for rebels like us.

Father, we love you for doing for us what no one else could do. Thank you, God, for redeeming us.

And because of your sacrifice, we now are free, free from the penalty of sin.

[34 : 17] God, we thank you. We love you. May those in this room who don't know you as Redeemer come to the full knowledge of your saving grace because you died once and for all, for all.

God, we bless your name and we thank you in your son's name we pray. Amen.