

Ruth - A Virtuous Woman

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[0:00] Do that well. Let's go to the book of Ruth, if you've got your Bibles. The book of Ruth. And I trust you've been encouraged in the worship this morning.

I know there's a few folk that I'm not sure they've met you yet or might have seen you before. Welcome, especially to you. There's some new faces, so we're glad you're here in fellowship together.

I must apologise for the... It's always a little hiccups now and again with our systems at times, but it's no fault of Joseph, who's doing a fine job supporting the leading of the service today.

Let's just pray, can we? Lord, we come to you. We need you. Lord, we need your grace. And pray for every soul here, Lord. Precious souls. Every soul is precious, Lord, and it's worth more than the whole way to the whole wide world.

One soul. And, Lord, for every soul, visit us, Lord, with your tender care. Minister, Lord, by your Holy Spirit's power. Lord, that you would be uplifted and praised, that our hearts would have a foretaste of heaven.

[1:09] Dear Lord, we love you. We praise you. Thank you for your grace and care, your tender mercies, your love, which is an everlasting love. And, Lord, for the word of God now, as we open it to our understanding, Lord, may your spirit make it real and make it such that it will speak to us, Lord, as we know it always does.

In Jesus' precious name, amen. Amen. The book of Ruth. It's a short, compelling, touching story. A tale of two women.

They'd lost everything. They knew pain and heartache, sadness, setbacks, loss. Naomi lost her home and her family. And then Ruth, she gave up her life back at Moab to go with Naomi.

And it is said that the name Ruth can mean friendship. Friendship. And it's tied in with the theme of Naomi and Ruth, their friendship.

And, of course, then Ruth and Boaz. The book of Ruth shows us how God guides and leads as we trust in him. It shows his love reaching out even to the Gentiles, such as we.

[2:25] And it shows us Ruth, who is called a virtuous woman. A rare quality, I put to you. And just to interlude, before we get to Ruth, we're going to start from Ruth 1, verse 1.

But just to touch on this theme, Proverbs 31, verse 10, tells us, it tells you all about my wife, Julie. Proverbs 31. It says, verse 10, Who can find a virtuous woman?

For her price is far above rubies. A virtuous woman. Who can find such? What makes a virtuous woman, I put to you, we see these virtues in the book of Ruth, as the story unfolds.

So now there's some 85 verses. We're going to read most of those, so bear with me. This is going to be a bit of a journey. But we'll get to the end together as we walk through it, and I'll talk through it as we go, and look at some of the virtues of this godly woman, Ruth.

The virtues of a virtuous woman. Now, all you men folk here, don't you feel left out here? I know this is a, I know last week I talked about Elijah, a man of God.

[3:38] Now we're talking about Ruth, a woman of God. But it doesn't mean that the men should tune out. This is what you should be looking for, for one thing, if you're yet to marry. And of course, but also with Ruth, she's like a type of the sinner.

And Boaz is the type of the saviour. So you could see in the characteristics and the virtues of Ruth, what we should have as sinners seeking and getting saved, as growing Christians.

We can learn from Ruth too, as men. So let's look at some of the virtues of this virtuous woman.

Who can find a virtuous woman for her prices far above rubies?

Ruth 1, and we're going to start strangely enough in verse 1. Ruth 1, verse 1. Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled that there was a famine in the land.

Here was this time, it was called the time of the judges. There was much upheaval and trouble, and now there was famine in the land. This was dreadful. And it continues, And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.

[4:49] Now, the husband of Naomi, his name is Elimelech, uprooted his family from God's land, and went to the land of idolatry, the land of the pagans.

It was really, you could say and reflect, it was an unwise choice. He left Bethlehem, the house of bread, much as there was famine, to go to the idol-worshipping land of Moab.

And we see what happened. Verse 2. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife, Naomi, and the name of his two sons, Marlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And it says they left Israel, and it says they came into the country of Moab, and they continued there. Elimelech and his wife went to dwell in the land of the pagans.

Verse 3. And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left, and her two sons, and they took them wives of the women of Moab. The name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other, Ruth.

[5:57] And they dwelt there about 10 years, and Malon and Chilion died also, both of them, and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband. So here was Naomi.

She'd gone to this foreign land with her husband. He had died, and then her sons had died. It seemed like everything was going wrong.

She was losing everything. Naomi. She'd suffered the crushing loss of her own husband, and now also of her two sons. She was left all alone in the world, and what's more, living in a country which she did not belong to.

Verse 6. Then she, Naomi, arose with her two daughters-in-law, and that she might return from the country of Moab. She felt she had to go back to Israel. For she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread.

So she wanted to go back to Bethlehem, which means house of bread. Strangely enough. Despite her bitter loss, Naomi had hope. She held on to hope as much as she grew bitter, and she headed homewards.

[7:05] Verse 7. Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was and her two daughters-in-law with her, and they went on the way to return unto the land of Moab. Oh, sorry.

Judah, rather. Thank you. Verse 8. And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each of you to your mother's house, and the Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me.

The Lord grant that you may find rest, each of you, in the house of her husband. And then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice and wept. So here was Naomi. She was saying to her two daughters-in-law, who themselves were widows now, Go back to Moab.

Go back home, as it were, to your homeland. They kissed, and she lifted up their voice. Sorry, they lifted up their voice, and they wept. Verse 10. And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people, to Israel.

Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters. Why will you go with me? Are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters.

[8:14] Go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband also tonight, and should also bear sons, would you tarry for them, till they were grown?

Would you stay for them, from having husbands? Nay, my daughters, for it grieveth me much for your sakes, that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me. They lifted up their voice, and wept again, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her.

So here was Naomi. She released her daughters-in-law of their responsibility, to look after her, and so Orpah headed back to Moab. We don't hear about Orpah anymore.

She went back to the idols, she went back to Moab, to her pagan land. Naomi then urged Ruth, also to go back. Verse 15, Naomi says, Behold, thy sister-in-law has gone back, unto her people, and

unto her gods.

Return thou after thy sister-in-law. But Ruth wanted to stay, with her mother-in-law Naomi. Friends, the choices that we make, make up our character, don't they?

[9:23] What we decide, what we choose to do, is going to be what we end up, being like. It's our character. And Ruth made the right choice here. Orpah made the wrong choice, she went back to Moab.

Ruth made the right choice, to go with God's people, with her godly mother-in-law, to the land of Israel.

She chose to go with Naomi. So here I put to you, in the next verse, verse 16, you see, I put to you, a virtue of Ruth right here, is faith.

Faith. We'll get to that. Faith. Verse 16, And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee. For with us, however, thou goest, I will go.

Where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God. Here was Ruth, declaring by faith, that she was saying, I want, the Lord God, to be my God.

[10:26] Staying in Moab, would have been easier, wouldn't it? All of her friends, and her other relations, were back at Moab. She had no one in Israel, but Naomi. But Ruth understood, the future with Naomi, might be hard, yet she committed herself, to God.

She committed herself, to a new home, new customs, a new people, and a new faith. Ruth was dedicated, to Naomi, but what's even more important, she was dedicated, to the God of Israel. She had faith. Friends, that's a virtue, of a virtuous woman, faith in God. Amen? Faith in God. She had conviction. She chose to leave her people, to join the people of God, and by faith, she declared, thy people, shall be my people, thy God, my God.

She believed God. Amen? Faith. She trusted, in God, in his purpose for her. She had faith to believe, even though there was hardship, even though there was loss, even though she was turning her back, on the false gods, that she knew, that she knew that God, was the one she wanted, to be with, to provide for her.

And she says, verse 17, where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death, part thee and me.

[11:46] She said, I'm going to hang on, by faith, until death. And Ruth, it's interesting, in this context, she made this faith commitment, she said, I will, four times.

I will, I will, I will, I will. She was determined, her faith was resolute, she was committed, she was determined, to be faithful, to be a woman of faith.

And friends, the Lord loves this other quality, of faithfulness, or loyalty. We see that in verse 18. The Lord loves that quality, that virtue of faithfulness. Loyalty and love, are almost the same word, in the Hebrew I'm told.

Loyalty and love. If we love God, there's a loyalty there, it's intrinsic. And our God's love for us, is faithful love, isn't it? It's everlasting love, it's covenant love. So we see, the virtues of Ruth, was faith, and secondly, we see now, a virtue of Ruth, is faithfulness.

She was faithful. Verse 18, when she saw that she was, steadfastly minded, to go with her, then she, Naomi, left speaking unto her. So Naomi, got the message, look, she's not going to be, changed her mind, is made up.

[12:59] She's steadfastly minded. So it says, verse 19, so they too went, until they came to, Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come, to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved, about them.

They said, is this Naomi? When these two women, arrived back, in Naomi's hometown, they were destitute. You know, there's nothing, they were devastated, they were broken.

Verse 20, she said unto them, the villagers, call me not Naomi, call me Mara, for the Lord Almighty, hath dealt very bitterly, with me.

It says the name Naomi, means pleasant. She said, I'm not pleasant anymore. No more Mrs. Nice Guy. I'm not pleasant anymore. Call me bitter. Call me bitter.

You know, maybe she said it through, cleansed teeth. I don't know, there was tough things happening. And she was human, just like the rest of us. She says, don't call me Naomi, pleasant anymore. Call me bitter.

[14:00] Mara. It says, verse 21, Now friends, there's times, as a woman of God, as a man of God, life may not be also pleasant for you.

You might feel like Naomi at times, have those moments when you're feeling bitter, when you're feeling empty, when you're feeling hurt. There's much heartbreak here for Naomi. Understandably, she was feeling it.

Verse 22, So Naomi returned and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her which returned out of the country of Moab, and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest. So first, now we come to chapter 2. We see Ruth's new life and a new friend. In walks Boaz. Verse 1 of chapter 2.

Ruth 2 verse 1, And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech, and his name was Boaz. It's one of her relations, one of Naomi's relations.

[15:06] And Boaz enters the scene here. Now friends, as you could kind of reflect on pictures and symbols and what they call types or kind of shadows, prophetic symbols, we could reflect that Boaz is a prophetic symbol of Christ.

and of his redeeming work for us. And as he was a picture of Christ, Ruth was kind of a type, a picture of a sinner. He was Boaz, sorry, he was Boaz, he was a mighty man of wealth, right? Boaz, a mighty man of wealth. She was a poor widow. It's a picture, really, you could reflect on of our poverty and of the riches of God.

And the name Boaz, by the way, means strength. Boaz, the word, means strength. Boaz is a mighty man. And who is our Lord?

He is the mighty God, isn't he? The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, the mighty God, the mighty God. Verse 2, And Ruth the Moabiter said unto Naomi, Let me go now to the field and glean ears of corn after him.

[16:23] In his sight I shall find grace. She said unto her, Go, my daughter. So here was Ruth. She immediately took on the responsibility to care and provide for Naomi.

And she went beyond the call, really. Boaz was, as you could picture him, as the master of the harvest field. Now again, it's a kind of, it could reflect on how one of the titles of our Lord is he is the Lord of the harvest.

Amen? When you go witnessing, he's the Lord of the harvest. You're just a vessel that he can use. He is the Lord of the harvest. So here was Boaz.

She was willing to go out into these fields in this land that was strange for her. And as this poor widow, she would come and she would glean the fields. Now this meant that it was taking those heads of grain that had fallen from the harvesters, that the harvesters had missed.

And it was hard work. It was stooping down, stooping down, constantly stooping, tiring work. It was hard work. And so we see another virtue of Ruth here, that Ruth was diligent.

[17:31] Ruth was diligent. Here she was gleaning and that way she could gather some daily food, maybe some extra for the future. It pictures the sinner finding grace, doesn't it?

How do we get grace? We stoop, don't we? We stoop and we trust in his provision. The sinner finding grace. Ruth was diligent.

Verse 3, And she went and came and gleaned in the field after the reapers and her hat was to light on a part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.

Friends, Ruth was a hard worker. As a Christian, we don't earn our salvation by works, but our Christianity works, doesn't it? Our Christianity is such that we are his workmanship.

We've been created to good works. And Ruth went above and beyond in her love for her mother-in-law, in her honour, in her respect of her, of her bitter mother-in-law.

[18:31] She worked from morning to evening, dawn to dusk, to meet the needs of her family. She was diligent. Verse 4, Behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you.

And they answered him, The Lord be blessed thee. Verse 5, Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this?

Boaz noticed Ruth. Wow! Who's this? Who's this woman? Who's this damsel? He'd seen her working hard. This was a woman with diligence. This was a woman with virtue.

And he saw that she was working to provide food for herself and Naomi. Boaz noticed Ruth. She was a woman of integrity. She was a woman of character. And he saw that God was to honour her. Verse 6, And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It's the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab. And at this point, everything was against Ruth.

[19:36] And here she was in this foreign land, a poor widow, childless in this, and she's from an enemy nation. You know, they would have looked at her as, Oh, she's one of them.

Oh, she's one of them, the enemy. That foreign land, that other culture, they're nothing like us. That's the, that's the enemy of God's people. And here was Ruth.

She had nothing. Zero, zilch, nada. She followed behind the harvesters here in the fields just to get a bit of the barley, just so she could survive.

And anyone who looked at Ruth, this foreign widow, would have never guessed that God would choose her bloodline as the line of the promised redeemer, our saviour.

You know, she would have looked so insignificant, this poor widow, a nothing. Yet she would become the great grandmother to King David and of course the son of David. God's strength is made perfect in weakness, isn't it?

[20:34] Friends, you might feel like you're a poor, lowly sinner, stooping in the harvest fields, sweating and, and, and under constraint. Yet God in his provision is the Lord of the harvest.

And he looks on you with favour, doesn't he? With grace. And you can be made perfect. God's strength is made perfect in weakness. The servant told Boaz about her and how she had said, verse 7, I pray you let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.

So she came and hath continued even from morning until now and she tarried a little in the house. So here she was, she's scarcely taking a break. She's working from morning till night, you know, from dark to dark.

And Boaz addressed Ruth in kindness and he showed tender care. Just as our saviour is kind, isn't he? Just as our saviour is kind and he's tender, isn't he?

We don't deserve it. We're from an enemy nation. We're enemies against God. Yet he is such that he would look at you with favour. Isn't that grace?

[21:41] Isn't that God's mercy? Verse 8, Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearst thou not, my daughter, go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here, fast by my maidens.

Boaz is telling Ruth, just stay here, stick with my workers. Boaz says, abide. You see that? Verse 8, chapter 2, verse 8, abide here.

What does our Lord say? Abide in me. John 15, 4, abide in me. Trust in him. Abide in him. Abide in Jesus.

Verse 9, Let thine eyes be upon the field that they do reap, and go thou after them. Have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? When thou art athirst, go unto the vessels and drink of that which the young men have drawn.

So not only did Boaz allow Ruth to pick up the grain, he instructed his servants to make it easier for them, to make it easier for her, and to ensure that she was protected, that she was safe, that she was able to drink and be sustained in that diligence.

[22:52] See Ruth, her faith, her faithfulness, her diligence. Another one is we see her humility now. A virtue of a virtuous woman is humility.

Verse 10, this is chapter 2, verse 10, Then she fell on her face and bowed herself to the ground and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?

Friends, she bowed her face to the ground. She bowed in humility. She had humility of heart, a humble heart, a servant heart, and she honoured Boaz.

And then Boaz honoured her. Verse 11, He said, It has fully been showed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband, how thou hast left thy father and thy mother and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people, which thou knewest not heretofore. Here was Boaz. He recognised she'd come from this pagan land of Moab. She'd come to this land she'd never been to before. Boaz recognised she'd left all that idol worship and she'd come to serve

the Lord God, the true and living God.

[23:58] Boaz commended Ruth for her trust in the true God, under whose wings she had taken refuge. Look at verse 12. Ruth 2, verse 12.

It says, The Lord recompense thy work and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.

This is a pivotal verse right here. The Lord bless you under whose wings you come under. You've taken refuge. You've come under those wings.

You've come to trust in his wings. You've come to trust in his overshadowing care. Ruth was here. She was poor. She was hurting. She was from an evil country. She was an outsider.

She was an alien, a stranger, you could say. She was an enemy of Israel, of God. She was an outcast, like a foreigner. She knew no one but her mother-in-law.

[24:54] She was a widow. She was childless. But God, but God, but God, in his mercy, can reach the most unlikely people.

Amen, can't he? God can reach the most unlikely in our world, can't he? People we might write off or discount or look down upon. Nobody is any greater or lesser in the eyes of God.

We're all equally, mercifully needing him to look with grace. And God looked with grace. Boaz looked with grace.

Verse 13, Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my Lord, for that thou has comforted me and for that thou has spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.

Here was Ruth. She did find favour in the eyes of Boaz. Now this word favour is the same as you, even in English you can reflect. Favour is the same word as favourite.

[25:56] She became one of God's favourites, if you like. And you know, if you're a brother, sister in Christ of mine, you're a son and daughter of God's and he says you're my favourite.

You've got favour. You've got favour. Glory. Verse 14, And Boaz said unto her at mealtime, Come thou hither and eat of the bread and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. She sat beside the reapers and he reached her parched corn and she did eat and was sufficed and left.

When she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves. Now this is where the gathered barley was. And reproach her not.

Let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her and leave them not that she may glean them and rebuke her not. Don't we see the generosity here of Boaz? Think of the generosity of your great God, the Lord of the harvest that he would deign to bless you, to give of his bounty, of his riches.

This mighty God, this wealthy, awesome God who owns the cattle on a thousand hills, he is your father. And he is generous, isn't he?

[27:10] That he lavishes his love on us. Here was Boaz, a generous man. He showed her care and grace. He said, leave plenty for her. God gives you plenty, doesn't he?

Blessing after blessing after blessing. Count your blessings, you can't. What God has done for you, God is generous. Verse 17, so she gleaned in the field until even, and feed out that she had gleaned.

And it was about an ephah of barley. So here was really, she kept on working hard, gleaning in the field until evening, then she threshed what she had gathered before going home.

Now an ephah, just to kind of quantify it, when the children of Israel gathered manna, just one day, this was, an ephah was ten times that.

So this was plenty, amen. The children of Israel, the manna they had for one day, their allowance, their daily food of the manna was, this was ten times that, what Ruth gathered in just one day.

[28:13] Verse 18, so it was the generosity of Boaz. Verse 18, she took it up and went to the city and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned.

Wow, so much. She brought it forth and gave it to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed.

So she had some and then her mother-in-law had more and more yet to eat. And her mother-in-law said unto her, verse 19, where hast thou gleaned today? Where wroughtest thou? Blessed be here that did take knowledge of thee.

Now friends, our Lord says to us, really his workmen, his workers, but Matthew 21, 28, he says, go work today.

Go work today. If you're a Christian, there's work for you to do. Seek that. Seek his will. What do you want me to do, Lord? He'll show you this.

I could give you a list, believe me, seriously, I can, of things that could be done in this church that we need workers. And I just need someone to say, count me in.

[29:15] Our Lord says, go work today. And she showed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought and said, the man's name which I've wrought today is Boaz. Boaz.

Naomi's eyes might have opened wide there. Naomi said unto her daughter, blessed be he of the Lord who hath not left of his kindness to the living and to the dead. Surely our Lord has not stopped showing us his kindness has he?

Verse 20 there it says, the Lord has not left of his kindness. In other words, the Lord's not stopped showing us kindness. He's shown you kindness to save you. He's shown you kindness to sanctify you.

He's shown you kindness such that there will be glory one day for you. God's kindness is beyond measure, isn't it? And Naomi said unto her, the man is near of kins to us, one of our next kinsmen. So she's saying he's a very close relative. Now, friends, just to try to explain a little here, of the customs, of the laws of that time, it was expected that a male relative was obliged to act on behalf of a relative who was in trouble, danger, or need.

[30:26] And he was called a kinsman redeemer. It's a concept that might be quite hard for us to get our understanding around, but it was a common thing of that time, a kinsman redeemer, someone who acted to help to step in to supply, one who delivers or rescues or redeems property or people.

In other words, buys them out of slavery, makes them under his ownership. And some relative then had to take care of Ruth, because, in other words, to keep her husband's name and her line going. And so it came to light that Boaz was such a man. And so Naomi asked her to keep by the young men, to keep with them and to glean with them.

Now we'll go to chapter 3. We'll just skip a little here. Chapter 3, we see Ruth presents herself to Boaz, and she's accepted. Pick it up from Ruth 3, verse 1.

Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, my daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast?

[31:43] Behold, he winnoweth barley tonight in the threshing floor. Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment on thee, and get thee down to the floor. Make not thyself known unto the man, till he hath finished drinking and eating.

And it shall be when he lie down, thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down, and he will tell thee what thou shalt do. Now here was Boaz, he was at the threshing floor, and then he had some refreshment, and he was now taking his rest, and it says that Naomi urged Ruth to go to the place where he was lying down, and uncover his feet.

Now I don't know about you, but having cold feet, it makes you wake up, doesn't it? You had that experience? I can't get to sleep if my feet are cold. And I know it's basically she was gently waking him up by making his feet cold.

And here we see just another virtue of Ruth, is that Ruth was obedient, obedient. Verse 5, this is Ruth 3 verse 5, and she said unto her, all that thou sayest unto me, I will do.

Don't you just like it when you kind of suggest something and someone says, I'll do it, I will do it. She said, I will do it, I will do it. Naomi told Ruth to lie at Boaz's feet.

[33:10] Now this is again a bit of a strange kind of, it's not a familiar concept to us, why did she do that? It was a sign that she was asking him for his protection.

So it says there that she did so, she lay at his feet and then we see he's kind of startled. We're going to pick it up again, verse 9, and it's where Boaz was surprised to wake and find Ruth lying at his feet in the middle of the night.

Verse 9, said, who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth, thine handmaid, spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid, for thou art a near kinsman. She was saying, put the cover of your garment over me, when you cover your feet, cover me too.

Now what it was, there's nothing immoral or inappropriate here, but by lying at Boaz's feet, she was acknowledging his legal right to marry her.

What she was effectively symbolically saying was, marry me. The law said, as I talked earlier, that a married man who died before his wife had children, the closest available relative should marry the widow, carry on the family name.

[34:26] So Boaz had this right, this power, this entitlement and not only that, but he was willing to exercise it. He was willing to accept and cover and protect Ruth in marriage.

Now reflecting on the kind of symbols of this, the symbology of it, Ruth was a type of a sinner, as I say. She was poor, she had nothing. And then it pictures how this, as Boaz pictures our Lord, that our Lord accepts us, he covers our sin and he brings us into his family.

He's not willing that any should perish, but we must be as Ruth and come unto him. As a sinner, we can appeal to the right and power of our God to redeem us, to save us, and he does not fail.

Amen? Verse 10, he says, Boaz says, blessed be the Lord, my daughter, for thou hast shown more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followest not young men, whether poor or rich.

And now, my daughter, fear not, I will do to tell, I will do to thee all that thou requirest, for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.

[35:43] He says, bless the Lord. He's accepting her appeal to him and he's saying, fear not. Doesn't our God say, fear not?

Here she was, she was fearful. He could have refused. He says, fear not. And our Lord says to you, doesn't he? Fear not. And notice, Boaz says, all the city of my people know, thou art a virtuous woman.

Now, this is unlike one of the women I was talking about lately, Rahab. All the city knew that she was not a virtuous woman, but all the city knew about Ruth, she was a virtuous woman.

What a blessing, that her character, her integrity was such that she was known to be of virtue. And Boaz praised Ruth in this fashion.

Verse 12, and now it is true, I am thy near kinsman, albeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. So here was Boaz, he recognised he had a right, a power, a legal obligation, entitlement, but there was an older relation, who was technically one who had first call, he had the right to fulfil that legal duty.

[37:06] So Boaz was saying, in effect, as long as it's okay with my older brother or older relation, then I will marry you. But Ruth trusted in the Lord in all of this. He says to her, fear not, I'll take care of it.

Just had to trust. Her faith had to kick into gear again, as it were, she had to trust, to exercise that faith again. And we see how her story turns from tragedy to great blessing.

Here was God, as it were, taking a poor, hurt, outcast, and he healed her, he provided for her, and he showed great love. He brought her great love with Boaz.

Friends, Naomi urged Ruth now to rest in the Lord. She told her mother-in-law what had happened. We'll pick it up, Ruth 3, verse 18.

Go to Ruth 3, verse 18. Naomi urged Ruth to rest in the Lord, to do the work. Friends, with your salvation work, with your sanctification work, it's his work.

[38:12] His work, not ours. Mind you, we can be receptive to his working, but ultimately and absolutely, he is the one who works.

And she says this, Ruth 3, verse 18, she said, sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall, for the man will not be in rest until he have finished the thing this day.

She says, sit still, my daughter, rest, rest, take rest, be still, trust. It's his work, and he will finish it.

Don't you know there's a finished work? Hallelujah! A finished work! It is finished! And it wasn't a cry of despair, of defeat, it is finished!

Bang! Done! Triumph! We believe in the finished work of Christ. Everything was finished back there, back there, at the cross.

[39:19] he will finish the work. God does a redeeming work for us, friends, no matter what we've come from, where we've been, what we've

been through, even if we feel bitter like Naomi, even if we feel hurting and lonely as Ruth, as a foreigner, as a stranger, as an alien, as a pilgrim, through this valley of trial and trouble, and it reads how Boaz then went off to the judges in the game.

So this was the place of trade, of business, and Naomi wanted to sell some land that had belonged to Elimelech, and this meant also that the buyer of the land would acquire Ruth's hand in marriage. So she wasn't just selling the land, she was selling the hand of Ruth, as it were, in marriage to maintain the name of the dead with his property. And Boaz addressed the man who had the legal right.

He was the closest kinsman. So it turned out this man, he had the first call, he had the first legal right to marry Ruth, but he declined.

He was not willing. Now the one we know, he is not willing that any should perish. This one was not willing to save, as it were. He was not willing to redeem.

[40:36] He was not willing to take Ruth. Now some reflect how this nearer kinsman, there's different views but some reflect it might have been the law, for example, that we could liken it to the law.

Some commentator has put it, that the nearer kinsman was the kinsman condemner. Because the law condemns us, doesn't it? Guilty.

You can't make it. You can't keep the Ten Commandments. You're lost. Guilty, condemned, damned. The closest kinsman said, I'm not going to do it.

But the kinsman redeemer, Oaz, was willing. Kinsman condemner. The law cannot save the sinner. You've got to keep it in every part, every minute detail. Miss one, just one. And you're guilty of all. So, that freed up Boaz to claim this right. In a way, you can reflect it's the law, it's works, it's anything other than the grace of God, isn't it?

[41:52] We need the kinsman redeemer. In other words, we need Jesus, our Lord, as the redeemer, as the saviour. God so, friends, he was willing, the other man refused, but Jesus says, all that come to me, I will receive.

I will be no wise cast out. If you come to him, he will not cast you out. And Ruth came to Boaz, we come to Christ, and he says, it's done, finished, the deal was done, it was confirmed, he did the legal requirements with the shoe, whatever, he made the legal sign, and no one else can redeem you, friends.

No one else can redeem you. No religion, no philosophy, no law of man, not even the law of God can save you. It's got to be the saviour that saves you.

You know, I was talking with a Muslim guy of late, and they've got no saviour. Basically, there's no saviour in that religion. We need the saviour. We must have the saviour.

Nothing else can save, nothing, not the law, not works, nothing, nothing but the blood of Jesus. Now, Lord paid the price, didn't he? The ultimate price of our redemption, his precious blood, his precious blood.

[43:12] It is finished. Naomi said, just rest, trust, have faith, be still, sit still, he'll finish it.

Yes, he has. Jesus has finished it, our Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ, paid the price. Verse 9 of chapter 4, we'll pick it up again. Chapter 4, verse 9, so we see that the witnesses there acknowledged the work.

Verse 10, Ruth of Moabitess, the wife of Malon, have I purchased to be my wife. Friends, he paid the price. He paid the blood price, as it were.

Our precious Lord paid the price for your ransom for your saving, for your soul. Boaz says, I paid the price, I purchased her to be my wife.

And this is the picture again of the purchase price, isn't it? You're a purchased possession. Now, don't ever think, oh, I'm not worth much, I'm not worth anything, I'm worthless.

[44:14] Maybe Ruth thought that, she was a poor widow. I'm not worthy, I'm worthless. Some people think they're worthless. That's a lie from the devil, isn't it? You're not worthless, you're worth more than this world.

One soul. You're worth the very precious blood of Christ. Don't tell that lie to yourself. You are worth the precious blood of Jesus. You're very precious.

And he paid the price. And then it goes on how verse 11 of 4. He says, the people prayed for Boaz and Ruth now as they approached marriage for God's blessing.

The Lord make the woman that has come unto thy house like Rachel and like Leah. He says, let the Lord bless you with his grace, with offspring. And so we see now, just to wrap up, another virtue of Ruth was Ruth left a legacy.

She really did. She left a legacy. A virtuous woman leaves a legacy. People will remember you for the character, for the virtues of your life. She made an impact on people's lives, whether as a friend, as a wife, as a sister, as a mother, the whole village.

[45:30] Ruth is virtuous. Now we see God blessed with son, verse 13. The Lord gave her conception. She bare a son. And the women said, verse 14, blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel.

Verse 15, the people gave praise. He shall be a restorer of thy life, a nourisher of thine own age. Doesn't he love and cherish you?

As a husband would cherish and nourish his wife, our Lord cherishes and loves his church, his people. And we see that then, verse 16, Naomi took the child and laid it in her bosom and became nurse unto it.

And they were saying, verse 17, there's a son born to Naomi. Of course, she was the grandmother, but effectively, she had the blessing too. Amen. And they called his name Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Friends, God blessed this poor widow, gave her a husband, now she had a son. Obed, it means servant or worshiper.

[46:38] I'd imagine she had a worshipful heart when Obed was born. She said, worship, worship, worshiper. And Ruth, by the grace of God, became the great-grandmother of King David.

That's a legacy, isn't it? That child of Ruth and Boaz was a blessing, not only to Ruth, but to her grandmother Naomi, and friends, to us, because from that line came the Lord Jesus, the saviour of the world.

It hadn't been an easy life for Ruth. She'd come from a wicked nation, she'd suffered the loss of her husband, she followed Naomi to a foreign land, lived in poverty, yet the Lord was at work all the time.

Hers was a long and difficult journey, but it ended with redemption. And friends, the book of Ruth connects Joseph's ancestors with Bethlehem, where the Lord Jesus was born. Now how can the Jews miss this?

That Ruth was part of God's salvation plan, leading to the Messiah, that from that very line was Joseph's ancestors, and such that the legal requirements were fulfilled of the line that the Lord Jesus came from.

[47:47] God's redemption plan was all part of Ruth's journey too. And for us, friends, he extends his care and grace even to the Gentiles, because what's more, Ruth was a Gentile, such that we've got no claim really in the world.

And the first plan, as it were, that we were outside, that God has wrapped his arms around us too, hasn't he? He's extended his redemption such that he's extended his grace and care to the Gentiles, that people from Australia can get saved.

Amen? For whatever nation, praise God. So friends, look, just to wrap up, God is at work in your life, and we can all identify with Ruth. She was very human and very real.

It was raw, wasn't it? At times of loss, of love, of heartache, and yet of a faithful hope and trust. Ruth experienced being married as well as being single, having children, being barren.

She knew loss, yet she found fullness. And Ruth was a widow turned into a wife, a servant, turned an heir, as in that bouncing of Boaz.

[49:01] This childless foreigner was now turned a mother. Born in Moab, she now found a home in Israel. Friends, this is astonishing stuff, isn't it? The mercy, the tender mercies of God.

Just to reflect, as a recap, again, the virtues of Ruth. Who can find a virtuous woman at prices above rubies, isn't it? Think of these virtues, and these are virtues, men and women.

We can claim these, we can aspire to these. She had faith. She left the idols, turned her back on the false gods. She had faith. My God.

Your God is my God. She had faith. She had faithfulness. She stuck with Naomi. It meant hardness and hardship and tests and trouble. She was faithful. She was diligent.

She was laboring in that field, dawn till dusk, dawn till dusk. Diligent. We can be too, can't we?

Show some diligence with your salvation. She was humble.

[50:01] She bowed before Boaz. We should bow before our almighty God, the Lord of the harbour, shouldn't we? As humble servants. She was obedient. Her mother told her what to do and she said, yes ma'am.

We can say yes Lord, can't we? Yes Lord. Have the obedience before him. She had a legacy.

Friends, you've got a legacy. When you're gone from this planet, there'll be something you'll leave behind.

There'll be the souls that you've touched while you've lived, while you've had breath. You're leaving a legacy, whether you know it or not, whether you contemplate that fact or not. But when you're gone, there'll be something of you behind.

Leave a legacy for God. Amen. Your children, your grandchildren, your friends, your family, people you can touch for Christ. Leave a legacy as Ruth did and what a legacy, a saviour of the world.

Praise him. Let's pray. Dear Lord, we praise you for the example of Ruth, for her virtues. May we likewise aspire to them. Lord, as we as a poor sinner would come and fall at your feet and you would deign to show grace before us, for us, that you would do a finished work for us, that you would purchase us, that you would redeem us, that you would love us such unworthy, yet you've made us your own.

[51:21] Lord, we praise you. Lord, help us, help the women to aspire to be a virtuous woman with these lovely virtues and likewise all of us, Lord, to find some meaning here that can be applied in our own lives.

In Jesus' precious name. Amen. Thank you.