

God's People Reflect God's Character, Pt 3

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[0:00] Last two weeks, we've been looking at the book of Ruth. Two weeks ago, we looked at Ruth chapter 1. Last week, we looked at Ruth chapter 2.

And this week, we're going to look combined at chapters 3 and 4. And so as a result, we're going to move a little bit more quickly through these chapters and summarize some things.

Our natural tendency is to think only about ourselves. We tend to twist everything for our own benefit.

And yet, we want there to be good in the world. Everyone wants that. Everyone wants people to treat each other well. And we want to be good ourselves. We want there to be some basis for our ethics.

But why should we? We've been exploring the answer to that question in the book of Ruth over the last couple of weeks. And the answer that we've found so far is that God's people are good because God is good.

[1:06] That God's people reflect God's character. And in hard times when it's not easy to do the right thing, when our true character sort of comes to the surface, God's people treat each other like God has treated them.

And they reflect His character. So today, we're going to look at chapters 3 and 4. And the story is long, and we're not going to read the whole thing. So we're going to summarize some parts of it and then talk in detail about some other parts and draw some conclusions at the end.

So would you turn there with me? Ruth chapter 3 follows Joshua and Judges. It's a small book. And let's review where we are while we turn there.

It's the period of the book of Judges. It's a very dark time in Israel's history. In those days, everyone did what was right in their own eyes. There's a woman named Naomi.

She's from Israel, but she's traveled to the nearby enemy country of Moab with her husband and her two sons in a time of famine. And the sons married Moabite girls, and then all three of the husbands died.

[2:12] And that left three widows in a very, very vulnerable and precarious situation without any means of taking care of themselves. And not only that, but over the course of ten years, there were no children.

And so the family line is going to end, which is a great tragedy. When Naomi decides to go back to Bethlehem, because she hears there's food there, she urges her daughters-in-law not to come with her, because there's no future for them there.

There is no possible way that these two Moabite girls are going to find a husband in Israel. I mean, after all, who would ever marry a Moabite girl? And Orpah, one of her daughters-in-law, realizes that Naomi is right.

And so she heads back to her mother-in-law. But Ruth clings to Naomi, and she says, No matter what, I am with you, and we are going to die together, even if it's in the side of a ditch somewhere. And not only that, but she says, Your God is my God. It's nice for Ruth to come along, but by the time Naomi comes back to Bethlehem, she is angry.

[3:19] She's angry at God for all of the pain that she's experienced. She thinks that God is against her, and he has made her way very bitter. Back in Bethlehem, it's the time of the barley harvest, and Ruth goes out to the field to glean.

She's going to go after the harvesters to try and pick up some scraps of food left in the field. It's a very dangerous thing for her to do. She's a foreigner. She doesn't have any protection.

She's alone. And there's as good a chance as any that the Israelite men will sexually or physically assault her, or they just might kick her out and not allow her to get any food at all. But she comes to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, and he is kind to her. He protects her and welcomes her, and he gives her food and water, and he even, in an extreme act, tells his servants to just pull out some of the grain out of the bundles and just leave it in the field for her to pick up. And so as a result, she goes home with a huge haul, a huge bag of grain on her back, probably two weeks' worth of work after one day, and Naomi blesses Boaz for his kindness.

[4:28] And then we wonder, maybe there's hope for them after all. And now our story continues in Ruth chapter 3. This is the word of the Lord. Ruth chapter 3, verse 1.

Then Naomi, her mother-in-law, said to her, Here's the story from my daughter. finished eating and drinking. But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies, then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do. And Ruth replied, all that you say I will do. Now the barley and the wheat harvests are no longer than seven weeks, so it hasn't been any longer than two months since chapter two when Boaz had shown incredible kindness to Ruth when she first met him. And remember, we said last week that Boaz went way above and beyond even what scripture commanded, even what the law commanded in the ways that he had provided for Ruth. But gleaning will only get you so far. You can go out in the field and kind of pick up the scraps, and that will only get you so far. There is not a future in gleaning. And so Naomi decides to try to secure a long-term solution for Ruth. Back in chapter one, verse nine, if you remember, as Naomi was saying goodbye to Ruth and Orpah, she blessed them and she said, may the Lord grant you rest each in the house of her husband. Now in that society, their future depended upon them having a husband who would provide for them and anchor them in society. Now she uses that word rest again in chapter three, verse one. She says, should I not seek rest for you that it may be well for you?

She wants a secure home and a husband to provide for Ruth. And she has an idea that this husband could be Boaz. He's been very kind to her. He's been a relative, which means that he might feel some sense of obligation to take care of Ruth. And so Naomi hatches a scheme. She says in verse two, look, Boaz is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. Now a threshing floor was an area out by the fields.

It was a large area of very flat rock, often on high ground where there was a breeze or some wind going across. And the farmers would take their sheaves of grain after they had beat on them a little bit to loosen them up and they would toss them into the air and the wind would carry away the chaff and the stuff they didn't want and the heavier grain would fall back onto the smooth rock surface where they could sweep it up. Because the threshing floor was somewhat secluded and because that's where all the grain was that they had harvested, they would spend the night there and protect the grain. But because it was a place where there were a lot of men alone at night out there sleeping in a secluded area, that's also a place that was known where prostitutes would come and visit.

[7:50] Hosea chapter nine verse one says, you have loved the prostitutes wages on all the threshing floors. Yikes. So Naomi tells Ruth to wash and anoint herself with perfumed oil and put on her cloak. She probably wants Ruth to be as attractive as possible, but it also, this change of clothing, might be a signal that the period of mourning is over. Ruth mourning for her dead husband and it might be a way of saying, I'm available. She's supposed to go under the threshing floor, but she is not supposed to let Boaz see her until he is finished eating and drinking. Now, Ruth is a Moabite. Remember what we know about the Moabites? In Genesis 19, Lot's daughter got him drunk and had intercourse with him and the Moabites came from that act of incest. In Numbers 25, the Moabite women came and seduced the Israelite men. They whored with them and introduced them to false gods. So, I mean, at this point, we're getting a little nervous. Ruth is supposed to wash, put on perfume, go down to the threshing floor, which already doesn't have a great reputation, at night, but only after Boaz has been eating and drinking. Then Naomi gives her more instructions. She should uncover his feet. Now, if you're reading

this passage in Hebrew, that makes you even more nervous because the word uncover is often a euphemism in the Old Testament for uncovering someone's nakedness. And the word feet in Hebrew is often a euphemism for genitals. And then she is supposed to lie down. And just like in English, in Hebrew, to lie is often a euphemism for intercourse. And Naomi says at the end of her instructions, he will tell you what to do. Yeah, I'll bet. I'll bet he will. So, are you feeling nervous yet?

I mean, what is Naomi asking Ruth to do here? Here is Ruth, a typical Moabite. They have their reputations of their own. And she's, you know, we're just assuming, okay, it had to happen sooner or later. Her true character had to come out. Sooner or later, here we go, a Moabite woman, once again, going out to seduce a good, upstanding Israelite man. Here it is, Numbers chapter 25, all over again. The question is, how is Boaz going to respond to this? It seems like he has two options. He can either wake up sort of groggy and then treat her like a prostitute, or he can wake up and maintain his own integrity and sort of kick her out and say, get out of here. We don't want your kind, right? That would be better, I guess. So, Ruth goes down to the threshing floor and she does exactly what Naomi had told her. She waits until Boaz is in a good mood and has gone to sleep. She uncovers the place of his feet, the lower portion of his legs, and she lays down nearby. And as the night goes on, the air gets cooler and his legs are uncovered and he gets cold. And so, he wakes up. Oh. Turns out that whole uncovering the feet business was just like an alarm clock, right? You uncover his feet, he gets cold down there in the night air and he wakes up. At midnight, it says in chapter 3, verse 8, the man was startled and turned over and behold, a woman lay at his feet and he said, who are you?

It's dark. And she answered, I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer. And Boaz said, may you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first, in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. [11:41] And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do all that you ask, for my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. Boaz wakes up in the middle of the night. He feels around down there for the covers and instead he finds a girl and he doesn't know who it is. It's pitch dark. And he says, who are you? And she says, I am, first of all, Ruth. Notice this time she does not say the Moabite. We keep seeing that through the book, but not this time. She says, I am your servant.

Remember last week in chapter 2, when she said, I am not one of your servants, she used the word for servant that is the lowest, bottom rung of society, the women that were only used for manual labor. But now she uses a different word for servant. Now when she says, I am Ruth, your servant, she uses a word for servant that could become a wife. It's a different status. And she says, spread your wings over your servant. The word wing could refer to the edge of his cloak. And if so, then it would have a triple meaning. First, she might be saying, it's cold, please cover me too. Second, she might be saying, protect me. Because remember in chapter 2, Boaz said, you have come to take refuge under the wings of the Lord. Now she's asking Boaz to be a means of that protection. And number three, she's asking him to marry her. Because in the ancient world, when a man spread his garment over a woman, that was related to marriage. And then she says one more thing in verse 9. She says, for you are a redeemer. This was an official role that a member of the family took on behalf of needy and vulnerable relatives. There are several passages in the Old Testament law that explain what a redeemer is supposed to do. Number one, he might purchase land to keep hereditary property in the family. Number two, he might buy back relatives who have been sold into slavery. He might track down and execute someone who had murdered a family member.

In other words, the redeemer was supposed to deliver a needy relative from any kind of harm or misfortune. And so when Naomi sent Ruth to the threshing floor, she did not say anything about a redeemer. That's Ruth's word. Now Ruth is asking Boaz to function as a redeemer by marrying her, which will restore the broken family line of her dead husband and take care of Naomi as well. So Ruth isn't seducing Boaz at all. She's not acting like a typical Moabite woman. And Boaz says to her, may you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter. Boaz doesn't treat Ruth like a prostitute. He blesses her and he calls her my daughter. And I think what is happening here is that the author is choosing words that are intentionally playing on our stereotypes of Moabites. He's intentionally

making us a little bit nervous. He's making us think, oh, here we go again.

[14:48] We know how these Moabites are. And then he turns those expectations on their head because these people are good. Ruth is not trying to seduce Boaz. She's trying to take care of Naomi and the family line. And Boaz isn't trying to take advantage of Ruth. He's impressed that Ruth is showing kindness to Naomi by her request. And Boaz says something very interesting in verse 10. He says, you have made this last kindness greater than the first one. This word kindness is the word *chesed*. It's the same word that we saw in chapter 1 and in chapter 2. The first time Ruth showed *chesed* or kindness, it was when she sacrificially decided to come back to Israel with Naomi, even at the cost of her own future.

Now, Boaz says that by asking him to marry her, she is showing a kindness toward Naomi that is even greater than the first one. How can that be? The first kindness was a sacrifice of Ruth's future. So how can Ruth asking Boaz to marry her be an even greater kindness than that? I mean, he seems like a great catch. He's rich. He's established. He's kind. He's been good to her. He's got a great reputation.

He follows the Lord. Why wouldn't he be the greatest catch in town that she can think of? I think there's possibly two reasons why he thinks that this is sacrificial on the part of Ruth. First, he says, you could have gone after the younger men, but you didn't. You came after me. I think that's because Boaz is probably quite a bit older than Ruth. Remember, he keeps calling her my daughter.

And second, the reason that she is pursuing Boaz rather than the young men is because he's a relative and because she wants it to be a marriage of redemption, which will raise up a child for Naomi's family. When Ruth asks Boaz to marry her, he says, wow, I thought you were kind to Naomi before.

This kindness is even greater than the first one. And Boaz agrees. He says, I will do for you all that you ask for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. He calls Ruth a worthy woman.

[17:18] This is amazing because remember in chapter two, the narrator said that Boaz was a worthy man. He was significant. There was *gravitas* to him. He had character. Two months ago, Ruth was a destitute woman from Moab, scavenging around in the fields, looking for food to keep from starving. And now Boaz says to her, you are a worthy woman. She doesn't have wealth or any kind of social standing. It's because of her character and her reputation that has impressed him so much. But unfortunately, there's a complication here. There is someone who is a nearer kinsman, a relative who is first in line. And Boaz tells Ruth that he is committed to helping her. And in the morning, he's going to see if that nearer redeemer will redeem Ruth. But if not, he'll do it. So in the morning, Boaz goes to Naomi, goes home to Bethlehem. And meanwhile, Boaz goes to the city gate. This was the front of the town, the busiest part of the town. And this is where the official business was conducted. Boaz sat down and the nearer redeemer comes wandering by. We're not told his name. And Boaz calls out to him. He comes over and they get 10 of the town elders and they all sit down and they begin to have this conversation.

Look with me at chapter 4. Let me skip ahead a little bit here. Chapter 4, verse 3. Boaz says to the nearer redeemer, to so-and-so, that's what they call him, that Naomi has put land up for sale. She's allowing it to be transferred to a relative who will function as a redeemer. Widows couldn't own property. See how Boaz says in verse 3, the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. That was Naomi's husband. The nearer redeemer is first in line. So he says in verse 4, okay, I'll redeem it. I'll redeem the land. And it's just kind of like, oh, you know, that's not what we were hoping would happen.

But Boaz responds in verse 5 with a statement that we can understand in two different ways. He says, 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. Now, most

English versions say, on the day you acquire the field, you also acquire Ruth in order to perpetuate the name of the dead.

But I don't think this is the right translation. There's two reasons for that. First, actually, there's three reasons for that. First of all, this is a type of leveret marriage. A marriage when a man marries a widow of his brother.

A man marries the widow of his brother and they have a child to carry on the family name of the dead brother. That's in Deuteronomy chapter 25. But that was not required for any relative. It was only required for the brother of the dead man. So it seems funny here that Boaz would be telling him he has an obligation to do this. I don't know why that would be true. Second, in verse 6, that seems to be new information. That's something that the other guy doesn't know about. That seems strange. How could he not have known about Ruth and her status in such a small town? Third, the nearer Redeemer says that marrying Ruth would impair his own inheritance. But why would that be? There's another version in the Hebrew text, another tradition that reads, on the day you acquire the field, I am taking Ruth as my wife.

[21:08] And I think that is actually the correct translation. These are two separate acts. There's a field and there's a girl. Two separate acts. The Redeemer can buy the land if he wants. He can redeem Naomi's land, but Boaz is going to marry Ruth. And that might produce an error for Elimelech's family. In fact, that's the whole point. And then the Redeemer says, eh, no thanks. I can't redeem the land because that would damage my own assets. I think he's worried that if he pays all that money to redeem the land, and then Ruth and Boaz have a son, and that son grows up, then he'll be the heir. And then that land will revert over to them, and then he'll be left with nothing. So why would he pay good money only to have the land go to somebody else's heir? He would damage his own estate. So Boaz is going to do both.

He's going to redeem the land, and he's going to marry Ruth. Look at chapter 4, verse 9. You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech. He has redeemed the land. And, verse 10, also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Machlon, I have acquired as my wife to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance.

He is marrying Ruth to continue the family line of Elimelech. And now Boaz has taken care of everything. He has, just like he did in chapter 2, when he went above and beyond, he has gone above and beyond here and given Ruth and Naomi more than they could have ever hoped for. Why are the people in this book so good to each other? Why does Naomi look out for Ruth and try to get rest for her? Why does Ruth show concern for Naomi first, even when she's trying to secure her own future?

[23:10] Why is she prioritizing Naomi like that? Why does Boaz spring into action when he sees a need, working not only to be a redeemer for Naomi, but also to marry Ruth in order to raise up an heir for someone else's family line?

It's because they follow the Lord. It's because the values of God have shaped their values, and this is just what they do. It's simply in their nature to care for each other and redeem each other, because that is also God's nature.

The word kindness, *chesed*, occurs three times in the book of Ruth. We keep saying this over and over. It describes how God acts toward his people because of who he is, and it's his faithfulness, it's his mercy, it's his grace, his loyalty, his benevolence, his goodness.

God acts on behalf of his people, not because they deserve it, and not because he's going to get anything in return, but because that is his nature. He wants his people to treat each other that way as well.

And so in chapter 1, verse 8, Naomi blesses her daughter-in-law, and she says, May the Lord deal kindly, that's that word, kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me.

[24:32] Naomi links good character with God's character. Ruth is sacrificially going to care for Naomi. And the second time the word appears, in chapter 2, verse 20, Naomi blesses Boaz this time.

She says, May Boaz be blessed by the Lord whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead. When Boaz accepted Ruth and protected her and welcomed her and gave her food, Naomi

says that was the kindness of God.

And the third time, in chapter 3, verse 10, that we read today, Boaz blesses Ruth, and he says, May you be blessed by the Lord. This last instance of your kindness is even better than the first, because you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich.

Here it is Ruth again showing chesed. She is asking to marry Boaz not only because it will secure her own future, but because it will help Naomi as well and the entire family line of Elimelech.

And Boaz interprets it as a sacrifice. In his view, Ruth is acting in some way, even though it sounds crazy to us, in some way against her own interests here in order to help Naomi again.

[25:50] So here, I think, is the main point of chapter 3 and 4. God's people act redemptively because God is a redeemer.

People in this story just go around redeeming each other. Naomi is destitute, but she doesn't even mention her own need for a redeemer. She sends Ruth to the threshing floor so that Ruth will find rest.

And Ruth agrees and chooses Boaz instead of a younger man in the hope that he will rescue Naomi as well. And Boaz redeems the land for Naomi and he'll marry Ruth and raise up an heir for Elimelech.

Everything these people do is kindness. They just keep redeeming the broken and the hurting and the helpless because their values have been shaped by God.

Let's stay on this for just a minute. Look at the way that these three people have been redeemed. First of all, Ruth has been redeemed. Look at chapter 4, verse 13.

[26:50] We're going to keep going here. 4, verse 13. 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.

If we recall back in chapter 1, verse 11, Naomi told Ruth and Orpah that they would never possibly find husbands in Israel. In fact, she said, What? Do I have husbands in my womb right now that they're going to grow up and become husbands for you?

No, of course not. This is the same wording, except they're reversed. It says, Ruth became his wife. And the Lord gave her conception.

Remember in chapter 1, verse 4, Ruth had been married to Machlon for 10 years and they had never had any children and now the Lord graciously intervenes. Deuteronomy 23.3 says that no Moabite will ever be allowed into the assembly of the Lord because of how they had treated Israel. But now Boaz calls Ruth worthy. She is significant in Israel. She has a good reputation and Boaz marries her.

[28:07] Moabites were the enemy. Moabite women were associated with idolatry and all kinds of deviant sexual immorality. Isn't it interesting that Boaz would marry her and bring her into his family?

Why would he do that? I think it's because he was acquainted with grace. Do you remember Tamar in the book of Genesis?

After Tamar's husband died, she was cast aside and isolated with no future. She waits and she is not going to be taken care of and so finally she's desperate.

She dresses up as a prostitute and tricks her father-in-law Judah into coming in and having intercourse with her and she gives birth to a child named Perez.

And that child, Perez, is Boaz's great, great, great grandfather. Which means that Tamar is one of Boaz's great grandmothers.

[29:21] and Perez is in the promised line of God, the line of David. Do you remember Rahab in the book of Joshua?

She was a Canaanite woman. She was also probably a prostitute. She was devoted to destruction. The Israelites had been given explicit instructions to kill her when they entered Jericho.

No one was allowed to be left alive. But she converted to the Lord. She hid the spies. She joined Israel and Israel's God. And so instead of being killed, the Canaanite woman joined the promised line of God's salvation in the line of David.

And Rahab is Boaz's mother. Rahab is Boaz's mother. So imagine the conversations that Boaz had around the dinner table as a boy.

of God's grace shown to sinners. Of God's grace shown to outsiders and foreigners who did not belong.

[30:31] Of God's grace shown to desperate women. It's no wonder he married Ruth and took care of her because he knew in his own family history that God had done the same thing again and again.

Boaz married a Moabite because God had saved his mother and she was a Canaanite. It's trickle-down grace. It's trickle-down grace.

Captured by God's incredible mercy it just spills into Boaz's life and he can't help himself he's just acting like God. We might ask ourselves who are the Ruths in our society?

Who are the people who are tainted? They're associated with a particular sin that is just not going to work around here. They have a certain reputation.

We don't want that to rub off on us. They're from a certain ethnic group. They're enemies of the church.

[31:41] That's okay. Because if we've been captured by God's grace then we love and accept and include people. That doesn't mean we change our mind about their sin. We love them no matter who they are and we love them tangibly.

Because we understand that it isn't the healthy who need a doctor but the sick. It isn't the righteous who need the gospel but sinners. Second, Naomi has been redeemed.

Do you remember how bitter and angry she was back in chapter 1? She had lived through famine in an enemy country. Her husband had died.

Her sickly sons had died. She had no grandchildren. She was a destitute woman with no future.

She told Ruth and Orpah, look, I just have this big target on my back.

God just keeps striking me down. He keeps hurting me. You better leave and get outside of the blast radius. But in his providence, the Lord has been working and just as Ruth has been faithful and Boaz has acted as her redeemer, God is using those things to redeem Naomi.

[32:54] Look at chapter 4, verse 14. Then the women said to Naomi, blessed be the Lord who has not left you this day without a redeemer. See, now it's Naomi's redeemer.

May his name be renowned in Israel. The Lord has not left Naomi. He has restored her. Back in chapter 1, Naomi said to the women of Bethlehem, I went away full and the Lord has brought me back empty.

He brought me back without my sons. But now the women have seen a change. These same women, the same women of this little town of Bethlehem say, blessed be the Lord who has not left you this day, without a redeemer.

In chapter 1, verse 5, when her sons died, the narrator said, the woman was left without her two children and her husband. And now the narrator uses the same word, child, here in chapter 4, verse 16.

Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. Things have come full circle in a beautiful character arc. She had lost her sons, she had been intensely bitter, and then she began to hope and God had worked and at the end of the story, she takes her child and she lays him on her lap that God had given to her.

[34:18] Finally, in chapter, the third way that someone has been redeemed is a limeleek. Or maybe we should say the family line of a limeleek. If we go back a couple of verses, we're in 4:16, if we just go back a couple of verses to chapter 4, verse 12, the people at the gate say, the people at the gate of Bethlehem, 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 woman.

This word, offspring, is an important word in the Old Testament. It's the word that we sometimes translate seed. The word seed or offspring is a very important word in the book of Genesis because it describes God's promised plan of salvation through a particular line.

It's going to be Abraham. It's going to be Isaac, but not Ishmael. It's going to be Jacob, but not Esau. It's going to be Judah. It's going to be Perez from Judah and Tamar.

God has been preserving this special line of redemption throughout the book of Genesis and Exodus and Numbers and Joshua. And it's through this line that he's going to bring about his final promised solution to the problem of sin.

But the problem is that when Elimelech and his two sons died, that cut the line. And when Boaz raised up the dead man's name over his inheritance, then there's a new offspring and that seed, that offspring continues the promised line.

[36:04] So look at 417. The women of the neighborhood gave him a name. They named the child and they said, a son has been born to Naomi. That's an interesting way of putting it. They named him Obed.

He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. And then, this very interesting story with all the fascinating characters and events concludes with the genealogy.

And that means it's important. Look at 418. Now these are the generations of Perez. Perez fathered Hezron. Hezron fathered Ram. Ram fathered Aminadab.

Aminadab fathered Nashon. Nashon fathered Salmon. Salmon fathered Boaz. Boaz fathered Obed. Obed fathered Jesse. And Jesse fathered David. The book of Ruth ends by pointing forward.

Ruth's son is King David's grandfather. And King David, most of all, represents God's promised plan of salvation.

[37:12] Even in these days of the book of Judges, of despair and all kinds of immorality, God's promised plan of salvation going through King David into the New Testament is still intact.

He is working to bring about his Messiah who will ultimately redeem his people. Amazingly, Ruth's chesed and her decision to seek refuge under the wings of God has played a part in God's redemptive program.

In time, God's Messiah would come to save people just like her. The destitute, the needy, the poor, even foreign people who come from outside the land of Israel and come to take refuge under the wings of God.

This is the gospel of the book of Ruth. God's redemption in history, in the lives of these nobodies, in the lives of these people in a little backwoods community, peasant farmers that nobody knows about, God's redemption in history, in their lives, is a pattern and a picture of a spiritual redemption that he offers to all people everywhere in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

He brings people from hopelessness to hope. He brings people from a death sentence like Ruth and Naomi to a life of flourishing.

[38:45] He restores the poor and heals the brokenhearted. The people in this story act in chesed, in kindness, because they are like a mirror that is reflecting who God is.

And we are learning what God is like with this picture that's been presented to us. God is sacrificial and that is why Naomi and Ruth were sacrificial toward each other. Because God is sacrificial, he was willing to provide his own son, Jesus, as a payment for our sin at a great cost to himself.

God provides for the needy. We saw that in chapter 2. That's why Ruth, that's why Boaz provided for Ruth in the way that he did in chapter 2. God does for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

He forgives our sin because Jesus has died for us and gives us the gift of mercy even though we're completely helpless. And God is a redeemer.

That's why Boaz redeemed Ruth and Naomi and the family of Elimelech. He finds people like us who are broken and needy without any hope and he brings us into his family forgiven and free with nothing to look forward to but a glorious future with him.

[40:10] This is a God worth following. He has what we need. He's the only one who has what we need and he has the one thing we really need.

God if you don't know him if you have not committed your life to him let me tell you he's worth it. He is a good God. If he has not redeemed you the way that he redeemed Ruth or if you're not sure then I encourage you when the service is over to come down here and talk to Pastor Mike or myself or Brian or someone else we want to talk to you and pray with you and introduce you to this God who is so good.

Come this morning whether you're just getting to know him or have known him for a long time come to him this kind and redeeming God who we've been reading about in the book of Ruth.

Let's pray. Father at the end of a book like this there's nothing to do but to praise you for who you are reminded once again of your great grace the the power that created the world mixed with the kindness and the care that you show toward the people who are broken and needy and Lord we know that it isn't the broken and needy that you pick up along the way as leftovers but they are of

considerable concern to you we know that's us we're helpless without your grace lost in our sins
headed for nothing but destruction and death and pain but at the right time you sent
[42:25] Christ to die on the cross for our sins and rise again in victory
and we pray that you would help us anew to understand the implications of
what you have done for us help this story to be an encouragement to us
that the God that we follow is worth following that we can trust you that
we can commit our lives to you and that it's also worth reflecting your
character in the lives of the people around us we worship you this
morning great God and King in your name we pray Amen to have you on the on
the amazing I