Our Great Redeemer (Ruth 2:14-23)

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[0:00] Last week, I was incredibly encouraged by a comment that someone made about the sermon, and they said,! You threw me off with the direction you went with your sermon.

Now, I say that I was encouraged by that because sometimes that's not always an encouragement what follows a statement like that. But this time, it was a real encouragement when they said this because what they went on to say was when we were, he said, when you were talking about the qualifications for being a Redeemer, especially when it came to a Redeemer's ability to redeem and also willingness to redeem, they said, I immediately thought you were going to Jesus, and I thought you were going to share with us about the connection there.
And I said, you're exactly, we're going there, we're getting there, we're teeing it up to get there. But I was really encouraged by the fact that they were already making those connections in their mind.
And one of the reasons I was encouraged, because this is what we always want to see when we study Scripture. We want to understand this, whether we're in the Old Testament, New Testament, in the Gospels, in the Epistles, wherever we are, we want to understand that it is about Jesus.
Jesus, Alistair Begg recalls how a Sunday school teacher that he had as a child really brought this to life for him. And before I share with what his Sunday school teacher told him as a child, I want to encourage you, all of you who are out there that work with our children, whether you're a Sunday school teacher, an RA, GA, Mission Friends leader, whether you've done it now or in the past or at any point in time, or whether you're a parent that embarks God's Word on their children and shows them the importance of God's Word, how it relates to us and appoints us to Jesus, whatever the case may be, I want to say thank you.
[1:56] Because what you do in the lives of these children, whether they're your children or somebody else's, is incredibly important. And what it shows is they also listen. There's going to be times, I feel it, where it feels like children may not be listening to you when you're speaking to them.

But they are, and the things that you teach them, the foundation that you help build for them goes a long ways. But Alistair Begg, who is now a gifted teacher, a world-renowned Bible teacher, theologian, he explained that he had a Sunday school teacher that told them the metanarrative of Scripture, how all Scripture comes together.
And he said that you need to think of it like this. In the Old Testament, Jesus is predicted. In the Gospels, Jesus is revealed. In Acts, Jesus is preached.
In the Epistles, Jesus is explained. In Revelation, Jesus is expected. And so what it reminds us of is the fact that the Bible is not a series of disconnected stories that we try to get bits and pieces from and bring together, but it's a single story, and it has Jesus as this focus from beginning to end.
And so we're going to be able to see that this week. We're going to highlight for us very clearly this week how this plays out in the book of Ruth. Last week, we finished with the first meeting of Boaz and Ruth.
[3:31] We learned that Boaz was a relative of Elimelech, that he was a man of means. He was a wealthy man, and he was wealthy financially, but he was also a great man of moral character, meaning that he was eligible to be a redeemer for Ruth, and ultimately through that, a redeemer for Naomi as well.

Then we got a glimpse of the ways that his character proved over and over again in the way that he treated Ruth. Even before there was a real connection there, he provided for her.
He provided safety. He provided nourishment. He provided encouragement and simply some kindness to someone who probably, at that point in her life, needed someone to show her kindness. Probably, at this point in her life, needed someone to come along and provide some encouragement. And we see Boaz doing this. And so this week, we're going to move into another

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scene of this story, a story that's going to start this week with a shared meal and end with a hard day of full labor.
And so if you have a copy of God's Word, I want to encourage you to open with me to Ruth chapter 2 and follow along as I read Ruth 2, 14 through 23.
[4:51] This is what the Word of the Lord says. It says, At mealtime, Boaz said to her, Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine.

So she sat beside the reapers and he passed her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied. And she had some left over.
And when she rose to glean, Boaz instructed the young man, saying, Let her glean among the sheaves and do not reproach her. And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean and do not rebuke her.
So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned. And it was about an ephah of barley. And she took it up and went into the city.
Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. And she brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied. And her mother-in-law said to her, Where did you glean today?
[5:51] And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you. So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, The man's name with whom I work today is Boaz.

And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, May he be blessed by the Lord whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead. And Naomi also said to her, This man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers.
And Ruth, a Moabite, said, Besides, he said to me, Keep close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest. And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, lest in another field you be assaulted.
So she kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvest. And she lived with her mother-in-law.
Now as we look at this passage this week, there's a couple of observations that I want to bring our attention to that I hope we'll be able to see clearly today. To begin with, I want us to take a look at the compassion of Boaz.
[7:05] The compassion of Boaz. Verse 14 again says, And at mealtime, Boaz said to her, Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine.

So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over.
And when she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. And also pull out some from the bundles for her, and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her.
Now the way that verse 14 is introduced here, talking about this meal that is being had, it marks a bit of time that has passed from the first time that he saw her working in the fields that morning, and then now to this point where they're getting ready to take a break and enjoy a meal together.
Up to verse 13, we see Boaz's kindness and compassion over and over again for Ruth. But now we see that Boaz has not exhausted his compassion for her, but now he invites her to share a meal with them.
[8:20] Now the fact that this meal is taking place in and of itself with Boaz there shows us something a little about his character. That he's someone who enjoys spending time with his workers and those that he is around all day.

You see, at this time, meals were not only a time of providing nourishment or not only used as a means of filling empty stomachs, but it was also a time of coming together, and they had symbolic meaning and significance.
Meals were put on by a host to show their hospitality, to celebrate special occasions. In fact, all you have to do is look at the Jewish calendar and see all of the holidays that are on the Jewish calendar and realize that many of those have a feast that goes along with it.
You see, meals and experiencing these meals with friends and family was something that took on meaning for them. Meals were put on by a host to show this hospitality and to celebrate times.
At this meal, Boaz and his workers pause at noon to refresh themselves after a morning of hard work. And the fact that Boaz ate with a harvester says something to us about him and his character.

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[9:44] He doesn't see himself as better than others or putting himself in a lofty position, but he goes beyond what is necessary to show his kindness to others.

And Boaz does several remarkable acts of kindness here for Ruth that we see just in this meal that they are having together. To begin with, he invites Ruth, who is an outsider, who is a widow, who is a Moabite, to come and experience this meal with him.
Most likely, Ruth was standing on the outside, not sure what her place is going to be. Do I go there with all the workers or do I just stay out here? But he invites her to come over.
And not only does he invite her to come over, but we see he also shares this meal. He gives her of this meal that was prepared for Boaz and his workers. And all of this is significant, but Boaz begins to make it personal and go even a step beyond just the pleasantries of showing general hospitality.
And he invites Ruth to take her bread and dip it into the wine that he has there. Now, most likely, this was some type of sour wine that was used to flavor and to moisten dry bread.
[10:58] They had bread that would be brought out and it was mainly used as a condiment for them to be able to dip their bread in, much like you would go to a restaurant today and then they maybe bring some bread out and then also a little saucer of olive oil and some herbs and spices in there that you can dip your bread in.

This is most likely the case here where he was inviting her to enjoy what he was enjoying. Don't just give her this leftover dry bread, but if he's having something that is more pleasant, more tasteful, he's wanting to share that with Ruth as well.
Boaz himself served her the roasted grain. He didn't just have someone else do it. He did it himself.
Boaz was generous with his compassion. It says that Ruth ate until she was satisfied and then had some left over.
She ate and ate until she was full and then she had some left over, which she would go on to save and give to her mother-in-law, Naomi. One commentator, Daniel Block, reflecting on the significance of this meal, he said, the narrator hereby shows how Boaz took an ordinary occasion and transformed it into a glorious demonstration of compassion, generosity, and acceptance.
You see, many of us have gone to people's homes before and shared a meal with them and right away, as soon as you step into a home, as soon as you step into the presence of someone who's opening their home to you, you can tell pretty quickly if they really want you there or not.
[12:32] You can tell if they're doing this because they feel obligated to or if they're genuinely excited to have you. Catherine and I got to experience this a few years ago, probably five or six years ago now.

We were going up to North Carolina. I was helping officiate a wedding for a former youth, and all of a sudden, when we got to the reception, we realized we were about five minutes away from some dear friends of ours.
Friends that we made as soon as we moved to North Carolina, Daniel and Sharon Hooks. Daniel was the Sunday school teacher of the class that we attended, and Daniel and Sharon and their whole family just became dear, close friends to us.
And so we were not going to be able to stay long. We had to get back. We were driving back to Georgia that night. It was going to be a long night, but we realized we were so close, and so we called them and said, Daniel, Sharon, we were just about five minutes away from your house and wanted to know if we could just stop by and say hey.
We don't have to come in. We can meet you in the driveway there. We just want to say hey. And so you could tell on the phone a genuine excitement.
[13:41] They said, please come over. And not only did we go over there and not only did we meet them in the driveway, but they made sure that we came inside. They reintroduced us to all of their kids as it had been quite some time, and they had grown up pretty significantly in that time that we were gone.

But you could tell they were offering us food, drink, all kinds of things. You could tell there was a genuine excitement to have us there as their guest. And it blessed our hearts because of it.
It went above and beyond to love on us for just that brief moment, moment, last minute decision to go by and see them. But this is the kind of genuine love and compassion that Boaz not only has for Ruth, but he has for his workers.
There doesn't seem to be a romantic motivation to his hospitality at this point, his compassion. Boaz simply loves the Lord, and out of that it spills over into his interactions with others.

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This is something that I love to experience here at this church, especially on Sunday mornings. Our church genuinely loves people. Well, at least most of you do.
[14:53] No, I'm joking. But no, we genuinely love people. And so we are excited to see a guest come in. We're excited to see somebody come in. And it's a beautiful thing to get to see that genuine excitement and love as we show that hospitality and welcome people in.

But let's be honest, it's a whole lot easier to do that here when we're surrounded by a lot of other believers than it is in our everyday lives.
What we see in Boaz's life, and hopefully is an encouragement to us, is to have the same kind of compassion to those we encounter in our everyday lives.
He was intentional to see the needs that were around him and intentional to meet those needs. And he met them with generosity. It wasn't just the bare minimum.
He met them with generosity. He didn't give others his seconds or his leftovers, but gave his very best. And it's my hope and prayer that we will love the Lord so much, we'll be amazed by who he is, we'll stand in awe of who he is and what he's done for us so much that his love for us and our love for him will spill over into the way that we interact and see needs that are around us and ultimately and hopefully point them to one whose love is even greater than ours.
[16:21] Not only do we see the compassion of Boaz, but we also see the blessings of this, the results of this compassion. It says in verse 17, so she gleaned in the field until evening.

Then she beat out what she had gleaned and it was about an ephah of barley. Now does anybody know how much an ephah is? I didn't either until I was studying this, but it's about six gallons or 22 liters or so of barley that she was able to gather.
And so it was a significant amount and she took it up and went into the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned and she also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied.
Remember that extra grain that she had after she ate all that she could and was satisfied. She took that and now is giving to her mother-in-law. And her mother-in-law said, where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you. And so she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, the man's name with whom I work today is Boaz.
[17:26] Think about the difference this act of compassion made not only in Ruth's life, but now in Naomi's life as well. As you read Naomi's words, there's a sense of excitement about it.

You can clearly see there's a change of demeanor in the way that she's talking to others. Old Mara has now started to sound a lot more like Naomi.
Bitter is starting to sound a lot more like pleasant. And we're able to see this hope that she has for others. We're seeing this over and over again.
And Naomi said to her in verse 20, it says, Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, may he be blessed by the Lord whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead. And so there's this significant change that is taking place in her life.
There's this hope that she's beginning to have. And so the final observation that I want us to see this morning from this passage is the first direct mention of the hope that we've been hoping for.
[18:34] This is the first direct mention of the hope that we have been hoping for up to this point. You see, for the early readers, their ears would have perked up when we got to chapter two, verse one, where it talks about this man who was a relative of Elimelech, of the clan of Elimelech.

And then their ears would have perked up even more when you realize this was a man of means. He was a wealthy man. And they really would have gotten their hopes up when they realized that this close relative, man of means, was a man of good character.
Because all of a sudden, they would have realized maybe, just maybe, he's the redeemer. Maybe, just maybe, he's going to be the one who comes in to help.
But for those readers at the time who maybe needed things to be spelled out for them a little bit more, and especially for us today, who doesn't live in this context, who isn't familiar with all of the customs that they would have experienced, now we get to see what they were hoping for.
So our final observation for this morning is I want us to see the hope of redemption. The hope of redemption. Again, starting in verse 20, it says, And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, May he be blessed by the Lord, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead.

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[19:58] Naomi also said to her, This man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers. This is where the excitement is coming in Naomi's voice.

Yes, she was excited about this ephah of barley that came in. She was excited about the food and the provisions that came in with that. She was excited about the roasted grain that Ruth had brought leftovers from.
But more than that, her hope is in the fact that there is a potential redeemer that has shown great kindness to Ruth.
You see, redeemer is a word that we often use in Christian settings. It's not a word that's uncommon in the church or as we come to Bible reading or study or any of those things.
But redeemer is a word that we typically don't use in our society today very much. But that would not have been the case here. During this time, there was certain scenarios that would call for a redeemer.
[21:02] In Leviticus, if someone became poor and had to sell their property, a close kinsman was to redeem it back on their behalf, to buy it back on their behalf.

If someone fell into slavery because they weren't able to repay their debt or anything like that, then that meant there could be a redeemer who bought them back from their owners.
A redeemer could be a brother, an uncle, a cousin, or a close relative. But in addition to this, there was another type of redeemer mentioned in Deuteronomy, referring to a widow and marriage.
The instructions for a liberate marriage were, when a man died, his brother was obliged to marry his widow and raise their children. If a brother died, or if a man died, his brother was to take on his brother's widow, marry her, raise his children, and in fact, when they had a child together, to name their first child after the dead brother.
And so there was this redemption redemption that was put in place to carry on family names, to carry on and make sure families took care of families. But the situation that is unfolding in Ruth is similar to these scenarios, but it's different.
[22:25] It doesn't exactly fall into these categories. To begin with, Ruth and Naomi were not in debt or enslaved to someone. They were not in debt or enslaved.

And so it doesn't fall exactly into this. They were poor, no doubt about it, but they did not need to be bought back from someone. In addition to this, although Ruth was a widow, the law didn't give very specific instructions on how a liberate marriage was applied to a foreigner like Ruth.
But even more relevant is the fact that Boaz was not a brother to Elimelech or to Malon or to Kilion. Now he was a relative. He was of the clan of Elimelech, which meant that he had a right to act as a redeemer, but was not expected to or obligated to in the same sense that a brother was.
Tony Morita notes, he says, there was plenty of excuses Boaz could make in order to be absolved of the responsibility towards Ruth and Naomi. He says, but Boaz, as we have seen, is a man of grace.
not a man who looks for loopholes or the minimum requirements. He will be motivated not merely by the law, but by love.
[23:45] And so we love stories like this, right? We love stories where there's someone that we can emulate, someone we can be like, be like Boaz, someone who leads his family well, who leads his business well, who looks out for the needs of others, who sees those needs and steps in and meets those needs as best as we can.

So in a sense, we are to be like Boaz. We are to be like him. But we also need to remember that yes, we are to be like Boaz, but also very clearly remind ourselves that we are already like Ruth. We're already like Ruth in need, in desperate need of redemption, to be redeemed. This is where we begin to see how this story fits into the larger story.
The book of Ruth shows us some characteristics of redemption that are true in this story and in our story with Christ. To begin with, the first characteristic is seeing the need, understanding our need. We spent almost three weeks sharing the fact that Ruth was in need of redemption. She was broken. She was helpless. She was voiceless. She was without hope.
[24:59] And those same things could be said of us and our condition apart from Christ. That we are broken, that we're helpless, that we're voiceless. We are without hope. The second characteristic is understanding the price.

I don't think it's hard for us to realize the fact that Ruth had very little to offer to Boaz. In fact, in order for Boaz to redeem her, it would cost him something. But what we often fail to realize is or at

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least fail to think about is the fact that our redemption, our forgiveness calls something very great. Many people will try to make the argument, well, why doesn't God just forgive? If God is all-powerful and all-loving, why doesn't He just forgive? Why does He need the cross?
Why does He need the suffering? Why does He need to send Jesus to the cross to forgive us? If He's God, why can't He just forgive? And the simple answer is there is no other way.
You see, oftentimes, people will try to make this argument, why put Jesus through the cross if He is so loving? The cross not only speaks about our sin, but it also speaks about God's holiness.
[26:11] Not only does it speak about God's love, but it also speaks about His justice. God does not exalt His love and His mercy at the expense of His justice and holiness.

So there's a cost that goes in with it. But what we also see is in the book of Ruth and in our lives, the third characteristic is having a worthy redeemer.
Last week, we mentioned that not only did Boaz have the means to redeem, but he was also willing to redeem. You see, Jesus is the only one who is worthy to redeem us.
He's the only one who has the capability and willingness to do that. You see, in order for us to have redemption, it would require the incarnation. It would require Jesus to be fully God and fully man.
You see, the infinite chasm between us and God would require an infinite sacrifice, one that only God could provide. So it required Him to be God, but it also required Him to be man.
[27:13] He needed to experience the same things we experience, to be tempted through the same things that we're tempted. and to prove Himself perfect through all of it. And so what we see as the qualifications for us to receive redemption is that someone would need to pay the price who was both fully God, fully man, and perfect.

There's only one that meets these requirements, and His name is Jesus. And so that's why we have to see that Jesus, and Jesus alone is uniquely qualified to act as our Redeemer, the only one worthy to be our Redeemer.
And the fourth characteristic, the final one here, is being redeemed meant that you're redeemed into a family. Throughout Scripture, the idea of redemption and family are almost always tied together.
We see it in the Old Testament, we see it in the book of Ruth, but we also see it in our relationship with the Lord. We're not simply redeemed and isolated, but we're redeemed and placed into a family.
My favorite Christmas passage is Galatians chapter 4, verses 4 through 6. In 4 through 5, it tells us, it says, But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, under the law, to redeem those under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons.
[28:41] So we're redeemed, but we're not redeemed and isolated. We're redeemed and placed into a family where we get to call God our Father, and where we get to have brothers and sisters in Christ that will be there for us, that encourages us.

And so you and I have an opportunity to be redeemed into God's family. What an incredible gift. The conditions are we have a need. Check.
We understand that there's a price. Check. We have one who is worthy, that is able and willing to pay the price. Check. We have this. We have an opportunity to be redeemed into His family. Absolutely. So the question that we must ask today is this. Have you been redeemed? Have you been redeemed? And if so, praise God, let us serve and love others and point them to Jesus.
Let us be like Boaz and look around and see the needs that are around us and meet those needs with compassion, with grace, with humility, with generosity. But I want you to truly answer that question.
[29:48] Have you been redeemed? Because I'm not asking, are you a member of this church? church? I'm not asking, have you come to church most of your entire life?

I'm not asking, do you pray before every meal? I'm not asking, do you read your Bible every single morning or do any of those things? What I'm asking is have you placed your faith and your trust in Jesus?
Have you given your life to Him and received His gift of redemption? redemption? Because that's the only way that any of us can be saved.
Father, we thank You so very much for Your Word. We thank You for the story of Ruth. We thank You for a story that reminds us of the greater story, that You are at work in this world, that You have always been at work and that You've been, and You have made a way for us to receive redemption.

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And so, Lord, I pray that You be with us today. Help us to think clearly about our condition, where we are, and our relationship with You. And Lord, I pray that if there's someone here today that needs that gift of redemption, Lord, that You would give them the boldness and courage to step out today.
[31:04] We love You. We thank You for Jesus. And it's in His name we pray. Amen. I'm going to invite you to take your Baptist hymn and turn to hymn number 458, near to the heart of God.

If God is speaking to you this morning, won't you respond as we stand together and sing?

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