

Redemption is costly too

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 June 2020

Preacher: Rob Patterson

- [0 : 0 0] Okay, let's turn with me to Ruth chapter 4, verse 1. Now Boaz has gone out to the gate and sat down there.
- And behold, the Redeemer of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, Turn aside, friend, sit down here. And he turned aside and sat down.
- And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, Sit down here. So they sat down. Then he said to the Redeemer, Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relatives at the Malak.
- So I thought I would tell you of it and said, Bide in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it.
- But if you will not, tell me that I may know. For there is no one besides you to redeem it. And I come after you. And he said, I will redeem it.
- [1 : 1 0] Then Boaz said, The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth, the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance.
- Then the Redeemer said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it.
- Now, this was a custom in former times in Israel, concerning redeeming and exchanging. To confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to another.
- And this was a manner of attesting in Israel. So when the Redeemer said to Boaz, Bide it for yourself, he drew off his sandal.
- Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belong to Ademalek, and all that belong to Kilion and to Melon.
- [2 : 1 3] And also Ruth, the Moabite, the widow of Melon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place.
- You are witnesses this day. Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Dea, together build up the house of Israel.
- May you act worthily in Ephrata and be renowned in Bethlehem. And may your house be that house of Paredes, whom Tamar bought to Judah because of the offspring that the Lord would give you by this young woman.
- So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went into her, and the Lord gave her conception, and she bought a son. Then the women said to Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a Redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel.
- It shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.

[3 : 39] Then Naomi to the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, A son has been born to Naomi.

They named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David. Now, these are the generations of Pirets. Pirets, Father Hazron. Hazron, Father Ram.

Ram, Father Amidadab. Amidadab, Father Nishon. Nishon, Father Salmon. Salmon, Father Boaz. Boaz, Father Obed. Obed, Father Jesse.

And Jesse, Father David. Okay. Okay. I was getting a bit carried away in that song then, and really reflecting on how much it's, it reflects the, some of the themes that will come up in the, what I say on Ruth chapter four.

So, yeah, so sorry about that. I'm just kind of, yeah. So thanks for that song. Thanks for choosing that song, music team. And it's a really helpful one just to, to think through as we go into this last chapter, which, you know, the title of my talk, as you can see from your bulletins, is that redemption is costly too.

[4 : 53] We had at the beginning where we looked at, repentance is costly. We've got a flip end, the bookend to that, which is that redemption is costly too. So if you've got your Bibles, could you open them up to Ruth chapter four as we, because we're going to walk through the, the chapter as I speak.

But, and as I do, one of the things that I feel I really need to say at this point is that because, because we've had some conversations in small groups and then, and outside of that as well about the book of Ruth, it seems really hard to crack this, this perception of Ruth as a romantic kind of love story.

So what I want to say at the beginning is this, Ruth is not your typical love story. Now, after reading the final chapter of the story, you can be forgiven for thinking, and they all lived happily ever after. And we're conditioned to look for that kind of response.

I mean, we even have this sense that you can't be just friends with the opposite sex. And, and you kind of read this story and you think, well, here is an example of that, a romance that's turned out well. And, and, you know, and what we could all be moved on to then do is to, is to share our stories of our relationships for those who have had them.

And, and to, and to long for a particular kind of relationship that we haven't. So I could, you know, I could tell you my story of how I first met Joe and, and how, how many times I asked her out before she finally said yes.

[6 : 08] And then she finally did marry me. And, and, and how I, you know, I'm obviously punching above my weight and we could all have a chuckle about that, but really know that it's true, but, but still kind of, you know, try and keep it in that humorous area just for my own pride sake.

um, and then we could move on and hear, and I could hear your stories too, but the one that you dream of that, that one that you think is out there somewhere, if you're not yet married, um, or the, um, or, or the person, or the person that you are actually married to this, this isn't actually about, that may not actually fit the narrative that we desire for that relationship.

And to read the story through this kind of, um, modern love story lens actually would sell this story short. So I want to stop us at this point and say, Ruth story isn't just another love story.

It's not your typical love story. It's a proper love story. And it's a proper love story in every sense. There's love, there's commitment from the heart, there's genuine affection, there's risk at all kind of sacrifice, there's redemption.

And an outcome to die for. But at each of these points, there's something bigger, bigger than our own imagination settled for. There's a promise that transcends life and death.

[7 : 28] There's a love story that spans eternity. And if you see the story from the right perspective, you'll see these things. So let's delve into the final chapter, uh, finish off the book of Ruth and, and we'll actually start, hopefully start to see these things.

And we'll take it up at the point where Ruth has asked Boaz to redeem her, but redemption is costly. Even as we start this first, um, this, this final chapter, sorry, we face a dilemma.

Boaz is a redeemer. He's the redeemer that, um, Ruth has approached, but there is another redeemer. And he has first rights and first responsibility.

These are things that Boaz respects. You see the first redeemer is a redeemer by nature is Boaz. Um, this is Boaz. And we follow up in chapter four, verse one.

This is the first part of it. We read this. Now, Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. What's happening here. Well, while Ruth is busy telling Naomi what happened last night, Boaz is already at the town gate waiting for the other redeemer to pass by.

[8 : 34] True to his name, Boaz, which literally means quickness. Boaz has sprung into action. He rushes to resolve Ruth's future for her, just as Naomi said he would, because Boaz is a redeemer by nature.

But then there's another redeemer, a redeemer by name. And if we finished that first verse, we keep reading in it. We find this and behold, the redeemer of whom Boaz had spoken came by.

So Boaz said, turn aside friend and sit down here. And he turned aside and sat down. And ironically, this redeemer by name is never named in the story, except as the redeemer.

And behold, the redeemer passes by, we read. Just as Ruth happens upon Boaz's field in chapter two, Boaz happens to meet the redeemer here.

And it's another key moment in, in God's providence. As we understand this story where God doesn't overtly act in, in every scene, but he's very much there governing what happens. And so now what we have is there's two redeemers.

[9 : 40] So which one, the question is, which one will actually redeem Ruth and Naomi and the family name? Well, it turns out the redemption is not a simple thing because it's costly. And ultimately who will be redeemer is resolved by redemption's cost.

So let's look at redemption's cost here as it unfolds. Boaz calls together 10 elders as witnesses. So this redeemer knows that he's, he's, he's come into a significant moment. All eyes were on them.

And Boaz spells out the situation. He says, Naomi is selling a limelight's land. This was a big issue. The land was God's.

He gave possession of it to his people. It was an expression of their stake in God's kingdom for it to pass into the hands of even another clan was significant. So God in Leviticus chapter 25, verses 25 to 27, you can look that up later.

He required that the redeemer returned the lands to the possession of a close member of the clan. So the redeeming feature that we're seeing here around the land is to get that land back into the hands of another clan of a close clan member.

[10 : 47] So that when the time of Jubilee comes by every 50 years, it can return to that family. God in Leviticus required that the redeemer return the lands to the possession of the clan.

And redemption here is seen as a community problem that needs to be resolved by the people and before God. So Boaz offers the redeemer, the opportunity for what on the surface appears to be gain.

And he's open that he will, if the redeemer doesn't, well, the redeemer jumps at the opportunity. And we see that in these verses, he'll gladly add the lands to his portfolio, but then Boaz discloses the risk.

In verse five, we take it up again and we can read these words. Oh man. Boaz said the day that 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.

And the redeemer said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take the right of redemption yourself for I cannot redeem it.

[12 : 07] What we need to bear in mind here is that this redeemer has so far ignored his duty to Naomi. And now we get the sense of why the redeemer's role is not primarily about the land. It's about the family it returns to on the year of Jubilee.

That's every 50 years. It was just a moment ago. The land is simply their place in God's people. Well, when, you know, as, as even as we bear in mind that this is reconciliation week, and we think about the implications of that and the, the indigenous people of Australia, the first people of Australia who have such a bond to their land.

It's, it's not a direct Israelite to land bond. It's a bond to the land because it is their, their inheritance, their possession given to them by God.

It symbolizes their link directly to Yahweh. And that's why it's reflected in the law. God gave them laws concerning the land and laws to keep their names alive as well.

Redemption preserves the family and their place in the land. But redemption is costly. Someone has to pay. And it's a significant cost to what's at stake here is that the redeemer would have to firstly have to buy the land out of his own pocket, perhaps even mortgage his own land to do it.

[13 : 21] Perhaps even remove a foreigner from that land, considering it's a time of the judges and things were kind of pretty messed up at that time. Then he'd have to take the widow as his wife and weddings are expensive.

Now they were expensive. Then to the whole town would have been a whole town affair. If he didn't. And if, and then if he didn't have an heir, the woman that he marries, that widow's child could actually inherit, not just Naomi's estate, but his own estate as well.

And finally, he'd have to marry a Moabite. Notice that Boaz says here, Ruth, the Moabite. And this wasn't an easy thing to do. Like Boaz, he knew this redeemer knew he was a redeemer to Naomi.

Likely he had ignored Naomi as an older woman, as a lost cause. But here, Boaz was not allowing him to ignore Ruth. He was publicly declaring Ruth, the Moabite to be a legitimate widow through whom the family name could be redeemed.

And this changed things drastically. Redemption of Elimelech's name was costly, costly on so many levels. And the redeemer just wasn't prepared to pay the price.

[14 : 35] He didn't even need time to think. He just walked away from the deal. And Boaz, knowing that he risked everything, stepped in. So what moved Boaz to do this?

What was his goal? What was the redemption? This is the point, redemption's goal. If you're looking at where you're up to in my outline, why would he risk everything? Was it really for love? Well, we get told by in the next verses, and they show us, definitely show us the orientation of Boaz's heart.

If you turn with me to verses nine and 10, we can take up there. Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, you are witnesses this day that I have brought from the hand of Naomi, all that belongs to Elimelech and all that belong to Chilean and to Marlon.

Also, Ruth, the Moabite of Marlon, why Ruth, the Moabite, the widow of Marlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place.

You are witnesses this day. The words I have bought might as well read, I have redeemed. And Boaz spells it out carefully, not just the part that benefits him financially.

[15 : 49] He takes on the land and the widow. And what we see here is something, something reflected in a word called a word that's occurs as kindness in Ruth chapter two and chapter three, where Ruth describes Boaz as kind.

And Boaz describes Ruth as kind in turn in chapter three. And that kindness is a translation of the word hesed, which can be translated in two ways, covenant faithfulness or steadfast love.

They mean the same thing, but the word actually kind of involves such a breadth of meaning that it actually involves both things, a faithfulness to a covenant, to a promise and an actual genuine affection, a love for the people, between the people involved in this covenant.

And look at how Boaz describes what he's doing. He's careful to spell out what he's doing as covenant faithfulness. It's an act, therefore, that's directed primarily toward God.

Boaz did the right thing because it was the good thing to do. And because it was the good thing before God, he did it willingly, despite the cost.

[17 : 06] The Redeemer, he does walk away from the deal, but he walks away with one shoe off and one shoe on. It's an out-of-date custom, even at the time that the story of Ruth was actually told.

It's an out-of-date custom. And it's probably described for comical effect. Look at the man who turned it down, his covenant responsibility. People were probably thinking, walk in a way, one shoe off and one shoe on, like diddle diddle dumpling, if you know the nursery rhyme.

Well, while Boaz willingly takes on that, while this is happening, Boaz willingly takes on that same covenant faithfulness. So there's covenant faithfulness.

And Boaz is showing his steadfast love. You see, he seeks to receive a redeem the family name through Ruth. The land is just real estate. Boaz knows that.

Boaz shares God's heart for his people. So on the surface, it can almost sound like a property and livestock deal. I have bought, I have bought, but the context here is redemption. It's about taking Ruth under his wing, as she asked in chapter three, and protecting and providing for her.

[18 : 13] In reality, covenant faithfulness and steadfast love, are two ways or two facets of the same thing. But do we see them that way? When there's a cost to being a Christian, do we pay it willingly?

Have a think for a moment. What are the decisions that you struggle over? Because they're most likely the ones that have a cost for you, even if you haven't realized it. Maybe it's a hidden cost to you, but it's one that you don't want to pay.

Would you turn your love life over to God's will, like Boaz has done? Would you let him determine exactly who you marry without any choice of your own?

Would you do that? Or are there other things in your life that you really struggle with? Are there things in your life that you know that are so difficult to control, and you want to draw them into that area where you can control them?

Is there a hidden cost that you don't want to pay in certain aspects of the obedience that God demands of us? Well, maybe there's a gain you see that God doesn't see as gain and that he warns us away from.

[19 : 23] And yet you're still tempted to go in that direction. Think about Boaz. He had no idea if the financial outlay that he was about to make would bankrupt him.

They'd just seen out what was probably a 10 year long famine. Was this the best time or place to be investing in land? And he had no idea if Ruth would have a child, let alone a son.

We know from chapter one that Ruth was married to Marlon for up to 10 years. And all that time she was childless. Maybe she was barren. Well, even as these things may well have been circling through the minds of the crowd, what it did was it made them realize what was happening.

They were amazed by what Boaz was willing to do, his costly obedience. And so they pray, they were moved to pray some big things over them in chapter in verses 11 and 12. So let me read these out.

May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily, worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem.

[20 : 34] And may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bought a Judah because of the offspring that the Lord will give to you by this young woman. Wow.

May the Lord bless Ruth. Well, with children, obviously, but Rachel and Leah are more than that. They're, they're calling on God to make a Moabite, a matriarch of Israel.

Interestingly, spoiler alert, it's a blessing that's actually realized in Matthew chapter one. When you look at a certain other genealogy, may the Lord bless Ruth. They pray. May the Lord bless Boaz with righteousness and a reputation as a worthy man, a blessing that is actually realized in Solomon's temple in one Kings chapter seven, verse 21, where you'll discover that the right hand temple at the entrance, the right hand column at the entrance of Solomon's temple was called Boaz.

Surely it was after his great, great grandfather. And then may the Lord bless Boaz's house. And this is an interesting one because this is Judah's line, which was the kingly line.

Boaz was descended from Judah through Perez and Perez was the, the offspring of the first recorded lever of marriage that we have in the Bible. And it was a disaster in so many ways.

[21 : 57] But as we start to see this one unfold, we discover not such a disaster anymore. Well, certainly God was at work in that mess. Their hope as a crowd was that the Lord would achieve his purposes through men and women as righteous as Boaz and Ruth.

They were delighted to see what was happening, but they were awed too. And as the story unfolds, we begin to see this plan of redemption as it unfolds through the Bible.

We get glimpses of God's plan of redemption at different points. And we're seeing it now through Ruth and Boaz. Boaz does as he promises. And the Lord does bless them.

In verse 13, we read, 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. This verse stands out in the storytelling because it's only the second time that the Lord is said to overtly act.

The other time is in Ruth 1.6, where the Lord provides his people with food. The Lord gave her conception. And both times that God is overtly acting in Ruth, he's providing for his people as a whole.

[23 : 14] Here, the Lord gives Ruth a child, redemption for Marlon, for Chilion and for Elimelech, redemption for Naomi and Ruth as well. God uses Boaz's redemptive act to provide a son for Ruth.

And in his goodness, he weaves that into his larger redemptive plan. Look at what we read in verse, what we see in verse 17 and 18, as the story goes on. And the women of the neighborhood gave this child a name saying, a son has been born to Naomi.

They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. Obed, which means to serve or to worship. This child would be the grandfather of the great King David.

This is a glimpse of the Lord's plan. The story begins with the last verse of judges echoing in our ears. If you remember, I spoke about that in, when we spoke and when we looked at Ruth one in verse 25, or judges 21, in those days, there was no King in Israel.

Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. And now we have the story of Ruth. And now we have the story of Ruth finishing with an answer to this problem. The genealogy of the great King David, a King who would deliver his people from their enemies.

[24 : 31] Here we have our King. But we still have a problem. The problem of the second part of that verse. There was no King in Israel.

And everyone did what was right in their own eyes. There's a problem that not even David could resolve. The problem of the human heart.

David is a redeemer, certainly. But in Matthew, we discovered that even he is only a foreshadowing of the true redeemer. The genealogy of Boaz resurfaces in the genealogy of the true King.

And, and what we see here is the birth of the King. It just, I should also mention to you that David actually means beloved. And what we see in the genealogy of Matthew. And then in, in Jesus baptism scene, where God says, this is my dearly loved son with whom I am well pleased.

We see this, this new King in King Jesus, the King who is beloved of the Lord. And this King who actually can redeem us from the problem of our own human hearts.

[25 : 38] Another costly redemption, a redemption that requires Jesus to lay, lay down his life for us so that we can actually return into relationship with our, our savior.

I want to say at some, at this point as well, that as we look at this genealogy in Matthew, you get a glimpse of how Boaz knows God's heart so well.

And I'm hoping it's something that you can, you can share in common with him too. You see, when we look at the genealogy in Matthew one, four and five, we discover that Boaz himself is the son of Rahab, a prostitute.

Rahab was the woman who protected the spies, lowered them out the window of the city of Jericho. And that was a city that was dedicated by God to complete destruction. Only Rahab and her family escaped.

She was spared because she helped the spies and she then became a part of Israel's history. Rahab is Boaz's mother. Boaz knows what it means to be rescued from destruction.

[26 : 47] He knows the kindness of God's covenant faithfulness that opens out that, that, that's centered on Israel, but opens out to all nations. As we saw in, as we see in Genesis chapter 12, verses one to three, the promises to Abraham or Abraham, as he was then, that God desired to, to bless all nations through Israel.

Boaz knows that he knows what it means. He knows the kindness of God's covenant faithfulness himself. He knows the warmth of God's steadfast love in his life. So even as we see God is weaving the story of Ruth into his eternal plan, we look at the story of Ruth and we see, and we want to see a love story.

And in one sense that's there, but what we see that is that the love of Ruth and Boaz is first and foremost directed Godward. This is the love story, a God who delights in rescuing his people and two people who are thoroughly aware of how rescued they are, delighting in reflecting God's character in the world.

Something that plays out fully and, and completely in the life of our savior, Jesus Christ, when he comes and, and redeems us personally. Let me pray.

And then we'll, I'll hand back to Adam. Father God, we're, we're guilty in so many ways of wanting to make any narrative we come across about us to find some way of identifying.

[28 : 22] And, and I pray Lord that we would in, in Boaz's life and Ruth's life, find the right way of engaging with this story to recognize it as a story of redemption that patterns the redemption that you planned through your son from before time began.

And a redemption that, that, that we actually experience just as Ruth and Boaz experienced a redemption that we know we just didn't deserve.

And yet you graciously and lovingly planned out and executed our salvation. You brought us into your family and you call us your own precious children.

Lord, I thank you and praise you for that. And I pray that through this story, we might have an even deeper understanding of the steadfastness of your love toward us, of the faithfulness of the covenant that you've made with us.

And pray these things in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.