

# Getting cold feet

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Preacher: Rupert Evans

[ 0 : 00 ] Our first reading is Genesis 38, verses 1 to 30, and that can be found on page 38 of the Church Bibles. It happened at that time that Judah went down from his brothers and turned aside to a certain Adulamite, whose name was Hera.

There Judah saw the daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shua. He took her and went into her, and she conceived and bore a son, and called his name Ur.

She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. Yet again she bore a son, and she called his name Shelah. Judah was in Chezib when she bore him.

And Judah took a wife for Ur, his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. But Ur, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord put him to death. Then Judah said to Onan, Go into your brother's wife and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother.

But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his. So whenever he went into his brother's wife, he would waste the semen on the ground, so as not to give offspring to his brother. And what he did was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and he put him to death also.

[ 1 : 26 ] Then Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, Remain a widow in your father's house till Shelah my son grows up, for he feared that he would die like his brothers.

So Tamar went and remained in her father's house. In the course of time, the wife of Judah, Shewa's daughter, died. When Judah was comforted, he went up to Timnah, to his sheep shearers, he and his friend Hera, the Adulamite.

And when Tamar was told, Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep, she took off her widow's garments and covered herself with a veil, wrapping herself up and sat at the entrance to Enam, which is on the road to Timnah.

For she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she had not been given in marriage. When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face. He turned to her at the roadside and said, Come, let me come in to you.

For he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. She said, What will you give me that you may come in to me? He answered, I will send you a young goat from the flock.

[ 2 : 38 ] And she said, If you give me a pledge until you send it. He said, What pledge shall I give you? She replied, Your signet in your cord and your staff that is in your hand.

So he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him. Then she arose and went away, and taking off her veil, she put on the garments of her widowhood.

When Judah sent the young goat by his friend, the Adulamite, to take back the pledge from the woman's hand, he did not find her. And he asked the men of the place, Where is the cult prostitute, who is at Enam, at the roadside?

And they said, No cult prostitute has been here. So he returned to Judah and said, I have not found her. Also the men of the place said, No cult prostitute has been here.

And Judah replied, Let her keep the things as her own, or we shall be laughed at. You see, I sent her this young goat, and you did not find her. About three months later, Judah was told, Tamar, your daughter-in-law, has been immoral.

[ 3 : 45 ] Moreover, she is pregnant by immorality. And Judah said, Bring her out, and let her be burned. As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, By the man to whom these belong, I am pregnant.

And she said, Please identify whose these are, the signet, and the cord, and the staff. Then Judah identified them, and said, She is more righteous than I, since I did not give my son Shelah, give her to my son Shelah.

And he did not know her again. When the time of her labor came, there were twins in her womb. And when she was in labor, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, This one came out first. But as he drew back his hand, behold, his brother came out. And she said, What a breach you have made for yourself. Therefore his name was called Perez. Afterwards his brother came out with a scarlet thread on his hand, and his name was called Zerah. Our second reading is from Ruth chapter 4, which you'll find on page 269 of the Church Bibles. [ 4 : 59 ] Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the Redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by.

So Boaz said, Turn aside, friend. Sit down here. And he turned aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, Sit down here.

So they sat down. Then he said to the Redeemer, Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech.

So I thought I would tell you of it and say, Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it.

But if you will not, tell me that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it and I come after you. And he said, I will redeem it.

[ 6 : 03 ] 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 the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging. To confirm a transaction, one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other.

And this was the manner of attesting in Israel. So when the Redeemer said to Boaz, Buy it for yourself, he drew off his sandal. Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Marlon, also 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.

[ 7 : 27 ] You are witnesses this day. Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel.

May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem. And may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah because of the offspring that the Lord will give you by this young woman.

So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. And he went into her and the Lord gave her conception and she bore a son.

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

He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.

[ 8 : 39 ] Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name saying, A son has been born to Naomi.

They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. Now, these are the generations of Perez.

Perez fathered Hezron. Hezron fathered Ram. Ram fathered Aminadab. Aminadab fathered Nashon. Nashon fathered Salmon.

Salmon fathered Boaz. Boaz fathered Obed. Obed fathered Jesse. And Jesse fathered David. Thank you very much, Charles.

And good morning, everyone. You joined us in the last week of a four-week series where we've been looking together at the book of Ruth. And I'm hoping we'll have a couple of minutes at the end for questions. So if there are questions you'd want to ask from the series as a whole of what we'll be looking at this morning, then hopefully there'll be time at the end.

[ 9 : 45 ] We won't pray again because John led us in prayer earlier, so we'll dive straight in. But I think you'll find it to help to turn back to page 269 to Ruth chapter 4. And you'll also find a very

simple outline on the backs of the server sheets.

Now, I wonder if you know the ancient tale of King Kofetua and the beggar maid. Kofetua was an African king of immense wealth. He had everything except he'd never met a woman he loved enough to marry.

His people loved him and longed that he'd find a wife to become their queen. But no suitable lady could be found. Until one day, Kofetua was looking out of his window and observed a beggar maid of indescribable beauty.

Despite her rags and bedraggled appearance, he observed in her eyes a beauty that captivated him. And so he rushed outside, threw some coins to the ground to attract her attention, and asked her to be his queen.

And so this impoverished girl went from begging on the streets to living in the luxury of the royal palace. We all enjoy a good love story, especially a rags-to-riches one.

[11:05] And the book of Ruth is a great example of such a story. In chapter one, we met Ruth, a destitute Moabite widow, whose remarkable loyalty to Naomi, her mother-in-law, and to Naomi's God, the God of Israel, had led her to return with Naomi to Bethlehem.

And from the beginning of chapter two, the book becomes a quest for a husband for Ruth. You see, without a husband to provide for them, Naomi and Ruth's future was perilous.

Ruth was the beggar maid, if you like, surviving on leftover ears of corn that had been discarded by local farmers. More than that, the family line of her dead father-in-law, Elimelech, was facing extinction, a tragic occurrence in the ancient world.

She desperately needed a new husband. Her situation seemed hopeless, but pulling the string throughout even the lowest moments had been the Lord, the God of Israel.

Ruth just so happens, we were told, to stumble across the field of a godly and wealthy man who takes pity on her. More than that, this man, Boaz, was a kinsman, a relative of Ruth's dead husband.

[12:20] And we saw last week that that was very significant, because the convention had arisen in Israel that if a man died without a son, his closest male relative was to redeem his estate and family line by marrying his widow.

The practice was known as Levirate marriage, and the man in question as a kinsman redeemer.

And you'll remember the writer raises our hopes when he tells us as soon as we meet Boaz that he was a kinsman of Ruth and Naomi.

So from that moment, like a Hollywood romance, the direction of the plot line is set. We're yearning for Boaz and Ruth to get together. And then last week in chapter three, we were given further hope. The harvest was coming to an end, and Ruth, facing a winter without food, boldly approaches Boaz at night in the hope he'll redeem her. Boaz wants to do so right away, but yet again, there's an obstacle.

It turns out another man is a closer relative and has a prior right of redemption. And so we left the story last week in suspense once more, while Ruth was left with a sleepless night.

[13:31] What would the new day bring for her? Would it be a wedding to Boaz? Or would the romance take a disappointing twist? How would Ruth be redeemed?

That's the cliffhanger question we're left with when the credits roll on the end of chapter three. But it's not the only question they pose. Because throughout Ruth, we've been seeing how this episode involving one little family points forward, as time and again the Old Testament does, to a more glorious redemption and a more glorious Boaz, to another man from Bethlehem, Jesus Christ. And so Ruth 4 addresses the same question for us also. How can we be redeemed? What will it take for us to be rescued?

See, Ruth and Naomi's situation echoes ours. Theirs is a picture of our poverty, not material, but spiritual. Like them, we're hopeless, without any rights before God, facing death because we've turned away from God and gone our own way.

We too need a redeemer who will show us mercy. And our passage teaches us two truths about that redemption. Here's the first.

[14:55] The costly nature of redemption. The costly nature of redemption. Apparently, the average cost of a wedding today in the UK is over £20,000.

Getting married is an expensive business. It's costly. And so it would prove for whoever wished to marry Ruth. Let's pick up the story in chapter 4.

As soon as the sun rises, Boaz is on his way to the city gate. The city gate was the stock exchange, the town hall, and the Starbucks of the town all rolled into one. Where people met to do business, catch up on gossip, and make decisions about local government.

It's obvious from the account that Boaz was greatly respected and influential in the town. And he arrives having planned his strategy very carefully. He wants to do what's right.

There's protocol when it comes to lever at marriage. But he also wants to marry Ruth. Now, two weeks ago, we commented on God's providential control over circumstances in chapter 2.

[15:59] And once again, here in chapter 4, his divine fingerprints are stamped all over proceedings. Just look with me at verse 1. The meaning is that's slightly obscured in the ESV, but another translation puts it like this.

No sooner had Boaz gone up to the gate and sat down there than the next of kin, of whom Boaz had spoken, came passing by. You see, at the very moment Boaz arrives, who should turn up but the man he wishes to see.

What a coincidence. Except with God, there are no coincidences, of course. From the beginning of the book, God has ordained every detail to ensure his plan of redemption, not just for Ruth and Naomi, but as we'll see, for his whole world comes to pass.

And of course, he's the same God today. What a comfort it is to know that he orders events to bring redemption. It ought to motivate us to share the gospel because we can be confident that God will be pulling the strings as we do so.

Well, back to the story. The nearer kinsman turns up and Boaz immediately gets to work with his lawyers. They summarise the deal on the table. Verse 3. Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative, Elimelech.

[17:26] So I thought I would tell you of it and say, buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people. Again, we're reminded here of Naomi's plight.

She'd lost so much and now the plot of land owned by her dead husband, perhaps all she still had must also go. She's selling up. And this man with whom Boaz is negotiating has first refusal.

Well, at first, it's a no-brainer. The offer looks too good to refuse. The man gets out. He's a fountain pen ready to sign the deal. But first, he just checks the small print. Verse 5. 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.

Whoa, steady on, the man now thinks. A piece of land is one thing, but a wife, and not just a wife, but a foreigner and a widow and an impoverished widow. There'd be no dowry, no expensive wedding gift from the bride's father.

And there was more in the terms and conditions. It wasn't just a free wife that was being thrown in as part of the package, you see. Because, by the way, this woman, Ruth, comes with her cranky old mother-in-law also.

[18:47] A woman who, incidentally, used to be called Naomi, but recently changed her name to Bitter because she's also penniless. Imagine it. Buy one field to get two widows free.

And it was just too much for the man. He issues a press release in verse 6 to explain why the deal's off. I cannot redeem it, he says, lest I impair my own inheritance.

Take my right of redemption yourself. Now, this is where we need to remember how Leveret marriage worked. In becoming a kinsman redeemer, you were redeeming the family line of a dead relative.

So any children you had by the widow you married would receive a share of the inheritance, a share that would belong not to your family line, but to the line you were redeeming. So being a kinsman redeemer involves sacrifice.

And it was a sacrifice too far for this man. But not for Boaz because he was only too willing to do his duty.

[19:53] And he loved Ruth. So in verses 7 to 10 he signs the marriage register. Or to be more accurate, the other chap gave him his sandal which was how business deals were completed in those days.

Well, the moment we've been waiting for is here. The happy ending to the love story. But remember that Ruth is far more than just a love story.

Or rather, it teaches us about a far greater love story. The love story between God and his bride, the church. And the book teaches us that redemption is costly.

For Boaz it meant sacrificing his own family line and estate and taking an outcast as his wife which would have raised eyebrows. It's King Cofetua all over again.

The beggar girl entering the palace. And yet of course it's nothing compared to the cost of redemption for Jesus Christ, our bridegroom.

[ 20 : 58 ] because our redemption cost Jesus his life. Boaz risked his family line to redeem the estate of a dead man. But Jesus became a dead man himself, cut off to redeem you and me.

As Mark 53 tells us, who can speak of his descendants for he was cut off from the land of the living? Redemption is costly. So Jesus is our kinsman redeemer.

He became our kinsman by taking on flesh and blood and he became our redeemer by shedding that flesh and blood on the cross. He sacrificed everything for us.

Just as King Cofetua took pity on a penniless beggar and Boaz on a destitute foreigner, so Jesus chooses the most surprising and undeserving people to be his bride.

Sinful people like you and me. In fact, we're not even like the beggar maid Cofetua chose because there's no beauty about us, nothing attractive. Our redemption is all of grace.

[ 22 : 12 ] And so our hearts ought to be filled with gratitude and wonder that Jesus wasn't like the man in Ruth fault for whom the cost was too great. And if we've understood that, I guess we'll want to offer our whole lives back to Jesus in response.

In verse 9, Boaz says, have a look, you are witnesses this day that I have bought, literally redeemed, from the hand of Naomi, all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Kilian and to Marlon.

When Boaz redeemed Ruth and Naomi, everything that belonged to them became his. And Jesus has also purchased us. And so we must say to him as a bride says to her husband on her wedding day, all that I am, I give to you.

Every part of our life is to belong to Jesus, the one who was redeemed, purchased us. Our family lives and social lives, our finances and our futures, our holidays and our homes are to be used in his service.

After all, our redemption first cost him everything. He gave everything for us. Well, let's move on and consider secondly, the surprising source of redemption.

[ 23 : 34 ] The surprising source of redemption. I wonder what you made of the people's words after Boaz signs the marriage register. These are, if you like, the prayers that follow the wedding vows in the wedding service.

Verse 11. Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, we are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah who together built up the house of Israel.

May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem. And may your house be like the house of Peres whom Tamar bought a Judah because of the offspring that the Lord will give you by this young woman.

Now various Old Testament characters are named here and they each get a mention for a reason.

So Rachel and Leah were the wives of Jacob from whom the twelve tribes of Israel came.

So the prayer here is the big one. A prayer that from this couple a new people of God would emerge. And if we look on to verse 13 the prayer about Ruth being like Rachel starts to be answered because just as Rachel gave birth to her son Benjamin in Bethlehem so here in Bethlehem Ruth gives birth to a boy named Obed.

[ 24 : 55 ] And the parallels perhaps don't end there because Rachel had been barren like so many of those in the line of promise that led to Jesus parents including Rachel's mother-in-law Rebecca and her mother-in-law Sarah.

And it seems likely Ruth had also been unable to conceive given chapter one tells us she'd been married to her previous husband for ten years and yet not had children. But just look at verse 13.

We're told the Lord gave her conception and she bore a son. God made it possible for Ruth to conceive. And it seems these miraculous births that we get again and again in the Old Testament are hints of the miraculous means by which our ultimate redemption would come.

Because of course Jesus himself was also born miraculously in Bethlehem to a virgin who was a descendant of Ruth and Boaz. The source of our redemption is also very surprising.

Not the son of a poor Moabite widow born in Bethlehem but the son of a poor carpenter's wife born in that same town. So Ruth did become like Rachel and Leah because through one of her child's

descendants a new people of God was formed.

[ 26 : 16 ] A people that includes us if we're Christians. But that's not the only surprising thing in these verses. Have a look at verse 14.

We're told then the women said to Naomi blessed be the Lord who has not left you this day without a redeemer and may his name be renowned in Israel.

He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age for your daughter-in-law who loves you who is more to you than seven sons has given birth to him. Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse.

And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name saying a son has been born to Naomi. They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Notice first of all that the women say a son has been born to Naomi, not Ruth. You see although the book is traditionally called Ruth, in a sense it's the story of Naomi and how her fortunes as one of God's people are restored through unlikely means.

[ 27 : 23 ] In a sense Ruth and Boaz provide her with a child to replace the two sons she'd lost and continue her family line. But more than that, as the women say in verse 14, this baby boy himself was also Naomi's redeemer.

When they say the Lord has not left you without a redeemer, we at first assume they must mean Boaz, the one who's been described as a redeemer throughout the book. But actually the end of verse 15 shows it was Obed they were describing.

The book ends, you see, with a hint that redemption, whether for Israelites like Naomi or Gentiles like Ruth, would come not through Boaz himself, but his offspring.

And I think that's why the book ends with a genealogy, the genealogy of the royal line ending in David, the greatest king of Israel, who rescued Israel.

And so I want us to finish by noting two things about this genealogy. First of all, it's curious that it begins with a chap called Perez. Did you spot that?

[ 28 : 36 ] He's already been mentioned in verse 12. And once again, the mention there was rather surprising. Remember, the townsfolk pray that Ruth will build up a house like Rachel and Leah.

And so when they then turn to Boaz in verse 12, we expect them to say, may your house be like the house of Jacob, since Jacob was Rachel and Leah's husband, the father of Israel.

But they don't. Instead, they pick one of Jacob's grandsons, this rather obscure character named Perez. And the mention of Perez in verse 18 is also rather unexpected.

I mean, why does this genealogy go back to Perez, rather than either starting with Boaz, or going back further to Perez's dad, Judah, or granddad Jacob, or great-granddad Isaac, or great-great-granddad Abraham, all of whom are much more famous Bible characters?

Well, turn back with me, please, to that first reading we had earlier, from in Genesis 38, where we learn about Perez. Because the people actually had good reason to mention Perez in their wedding prayers.

[ 29 : 48 ] Genesis 38 was a rather sordid chapter, wasn't it? And I want us to notice the similarities, though, between Genesis 38 and the book of Ruth. So Genesis 38, page 38.

In verse 1 of Genesis 38, Judah, one of Jacob's sons, does an Elimelech. In fact, what Judah does is worse, because not only does Judah, like Elimelech, find a foreign and therefore unbelieving wife for his older son, he marries a foreigner himself.

And they have a son, verse 3, named Ur. This always amuses me. You can imagine the scene at the registry office as Judah and Mrs. Judah go to register the birth of their son.

They're a little unsure what to call him, so when the registrar asks what name to put on the certificate, they hesitate and say Ur, and before they can get their preferred name out, the name has stuck. Well, they have two more sons, Onan, and not being good with names, they call boy number three Sheila.

Perhaps they just really wanted a girl by then. Anyway, Judah has this Elimelech moment, and he marries Ur to Tamar. But as with Elimelech's sons, Kilian and Marlon, Ur dies before having a son.

[ 31 : 06 ] So Tamar is left a widow. Verse 8, Then Judah said to Onan, Go into your brother's wife and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother.

It's this idea of leveret marriage that we've been thinking about. But Onan refuses. He had similar hesitations to the man in Ruth 4, and because of that the Lord puts him to death.

Judah's now worried. He's married off sons number one and two to Tamar, and they've both died. He doesn't want to risk number three, Sheila, getting involved with this woman. So being a chip off the old block, Jacob, he plays a trick on Tamar, and sends her back to her parents until Sheila grows up.

But he never intends to give her to Sheila in marriage. So Tamar gets her revenge. She pretends to be a prostitute, seduces and sleeps with Judah, and becomes pregnant by him.

And of course, as her father-in-law, Judah becomes in a legitimate, if unusual way, her kinsman redeemer. Nine months later, Judah discovers Tamar's real identity and confesses his sin.

[ 32 : 23 ] Verse 26, she is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son, Sheila. Tamar, having been redeemed in the surprising way by Judah, gives birth to twins, and Perez is born.

Can you see all the parallels with Ruth? Sinful marriage to non-Israelites, a kinsman redeemer who refuses to do his duty, and a leveret marriage that leads to the birth of a son who was actually one of Boaz's ancestors.

The people of Bethlehem certainly spotted the similarities. And the point is this, redemption occurs in surprising ways.

The instruments God uses to redeem his people aren't the ones we'd expect. And we see that again in Boaz's genealogy, because the genealogy that Ruth ends with is picked up by Matthew in the opening verses of the New Testament.

So turn with me this time to Matthew chapter one, and this is where we'll finish. Matthew chapter one, page 973.

[ 33 : 43 ] Matthew chapter one, page 973, and I'll read from verse one. Matthew begins in this way. The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nashon, and Nashon the father of Salmon, this is just reciting what we get at the end of Ruth, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king, and David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and on it goes.

So notice that the family tree that came from Boaz and Ruth's marriage not only includes King David, but reached its climax in the birth of Jesus in verse 16 of Matthew 1.

And that totally changes the way we read the book of Ruth, doesn't it? Because it absolutely isn't simply a nice love story about one family in ancient Israel.

It concerns something far bigger than that, God's great plan of redemption for the whole world.

Through the unlikely marriage of Boaz and Ruth, God was preserving the line of promise through which he'd rescue you and me.

[ 35 : 15 ] even in the dark days of the judges, he was pulling the strings to ensure his promise to redeem his people through a king from the tribe of Judah would one day be fulfilled.

But it's also striking that aside from Mary, only four women are mentioned in Matthew's genealogy, and they're all Gentiles. Tamar, a Canaanite prostitute, Ruth, a destitute Moabite, Rahab, another Gentile prostitute who noticed was Boaz's mother.

Fascinating that, isn't it? Maybe that's why Boaz was so compassionate to Ruth, because his own mother was a Gentile who'd been shown grace. And Bathsheba, who committed adultery with Boaz's great grandson, King David.

So again, God brings about his plan of redemption through a surprising line, including some very unlikely and sinful people. people. And it's a reminder to us that nothing, not even our sin, can thwart God's plans.

It's not even in spite of, but through the sin of Judah and Elimelech in marrying their wives to foreigners, of Tamar in deceiving Judah, and Judah in lying with a prostitute, that God accomplishes his redemption.

[ 36 : 33 ] God works through all things to rescue his people. What a great, sovereign, and merciful God we have, who like Naomi, has not left us without a redeemer.

Let me lead us in prayer. 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.

We thank you so much, our Heavenly Father, for our Redeemer, the one to whom Boaz and Obed point. We thank you for their descendant, the Lord Jesus, and we thank you that he was willing to pay such a great cost to make the ultimate sacrifice in order to redeem us. And we pray that you would help us to be those who trust in him, our Redeemer always, and then give everything that we have back to him in response. And we ask it for his namesake. Amen.