

Ruth 4: Redemption Accomplished

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[0 : 0 0] and we can take as our text tonight verse 14 Ruth chapter 4 verse 14 then the woman 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 so we come this evening to our fourth and final series in the book of Ruth it goes without saying like any book of the bible that we could have spent many many sermons in this book but for various reasons we've kept it to four and there's much more that we could look at in this incredibly rich book now when we are raising our kids we don't start them off in difficult books at an early age we start them off with picture books and we point them to trees and to tractors and to cars and kids recognize in these pictures things that they see in everyday life and eventually we once they get older we bring them on to reading words pictures are useful teaching aids for the young and for the immature and very often in old testament times god was teaching his children about the way of salvation through pictures and through stories it was the time of their infancy it was the time of god's people's infancy when we think of things like the sacrificial lamb that was taken and killed and its blood was shed what did that represent it represented atonement it represented reconciliation it represented propitiation but initially god didn't use these words he used these pictures to show the children of israel all these great concepts and doctrines we can think of the robes of the priest we can think of incense we can think of so many different things in the old testament that were pictures of greater truths and although in the book of ruth jesus and his revelation were still three thousand years away we see in the book of ruth the stamp of redemption so clearly in the life of ruth that it is so much to teach us as christians today and we have been seeing in the book of ruth this incredible doctrine of redemption over and over again and over the last four months we've been seeing and all these deep and rich truths in the book of ruth the consequences of the consequences of rebellion the glory of redemption we've seen how naomi returned from moab to her covenant people and to our god and we saw we saw how that had a much deeper meaning than just a simple journey we've noticed naomi's dignity and suffering we've noticed that how ruth was probably converted through naomi's testimony in the way that she dealt with her suffering we saw in chapter two the importance of work and witness when ruth was gleaning in the fields we've seen the character of boaz and how when he was approached by ruth in the feshing floor how he was a man of integrity and we've seen these three themes coming throughout the book of ruth

over the last few months the theme of god's hesed or god's loving kindness to sinners particularly to the outsider and to the stranger like ruth was we've seen the theme of the kinsman redeemer time and time again in this book how boaz was the kinsman redeemer and we've seen the whole theme of how god is always at work even in the midst of tragedy and disaster we started our first study with that quote the lesson of the book of ruth is that there is a river running through all the events of history winding its way both to the mountain tops of blessing and into the valley of despair and desolation and you see ultimately the book of ruth is a picture of you and me ruth is lost she is needy she is helpless and she has no way of meeting the deepest needs of her soul and boaz is like jesus he is a redeemer he is a kinsman he is one who is able to do for this needy young woman what she was unable to do for herself and as we'll see tonight he was not only an able redeemer but he was a willing redeemer so in our final study tonight we just want to look at this this chapter under the title under the title of mission accomplished mission accomplished and let's just notice five short things from this passage before we tie up everything at the end first of all we notice from this passage that a redemption is a sovereign work of god a redemption is a sovereign work of god who is it that redeems ruth well boaz redeems ruth ruth ruth does nothing to redeem herself boaz does everything what were ruth's two greatest needs well her first her greatest need was that she wanted to preserve the name of her dead husband in those days there was no male heir it was a great tragedy in the family there was nobody to preserve the family name she wanted her husband and her family name to live on but she also needed an heir to inherit the family land and without a male heir of course she would have no portion in canaan she would have no portion in the promised land which again was a tragedy so ruth's need was for an everlasting name for her dead husband and a permanent and secure possession in the promised land and you remember back to chapter one where everything looks so bleak and dark and hopeless you might have asked the question how could god possibly redeem this desperate hopeless situation how on earth could god possibly possibly bring hope and life and blessing out of chapter one how could he bring life out of death and rebellion and tragedy but yet he does and he has done it again and again

over the years in chapter one there was no prospect of a redeemer there was nobody on the horizon there was nobody who could help ruth and naomi but eventually we read of boaz and eventually in chapter three remember in our last study ruth approaches boaz in the threshing floor and she asks him to cast his cloak over her a traditional way of asking for marriage he asks for boaz to redeem her and as we saw in the last chapter the last chapter we called the waiting chapter because in the final verse naomi says to her wait my daughter until you learn how the matter turns out for the man will not rest but settle the matter today everything is in the hand of boaz redemption is all in his hands he has to take the initiative he devises a plan he executes the plan and the whole plan of redemption is boaz's from beginning to end and surely that teaches us this great lesson that our salvation is all of god god is sovereign in our salvation and of course of course the great challenge down through the centuries has always been through religions that say that we have our part to play in our salvation deviations of christianity that say that there is some mixture of grace and merit and true christianity which says that salvation is a work of god from beginning to end and you see sovereign grace goes against our pride we want to think that something that we do contributes to our salvation we think that surely we can do something that something will contribute to our salvation perhaps our confession perhaps our penitence perhaps if we pray five times a day perhaps if we go on a pilgrimage all these things will somehow go towards our salvation many years ago

I had a mormon friend who was in the house and I said to him when you read the new testament and you read all about grace I said how do you how do you tie that in with the teachings of the mormon faith and he said to me well what grace is is he said I make all these efforts I try and bring other people into the mormon faith and he says but there's a gap there's a gap there and grace fills the gap that's not what the bible teaches the bible teaches that salvation is a work of God from beginning to end God planned redemption God the son accomplished it and God the holy spirit applies it it is God from beginning to end and the only way that we can be saved tonight is when we lay aside our own efforts our own filthy rags of righteousness salvation is when

God strips us of all our own merits as he did with Ruth and Naomi they were stripped of hope and they were stripped of confidence in themselves and it was only God's intervention that could save them and you see this is a lesson that we have to learn time and time again because we fall back time and time again on our own righteousness we think that it is our efforts that contribute to our salvation we fall back into thinking that it is our prayers and our efforts that save us sometimes we pride ourselves on our brand of Christianity we pride ourselves on our orthodoxy we pride ourselves in our love for the truth and all these things are good but none of them can save us only Christ and Christ alone can save us only the finished work of Christ on Calvary is our only hope for eternity none of us tonight have got anything to boast in we might have the most fantastic

[13 : 12] Christian pedigrees we might have well known parents in the Christian world but none of that makes the slightest difference to our acceptance with God our best deeds our greatest achievements our best moments our filthy rags in terms of making us acceptable before God and you see that is why the Christian teaching on salvation is so difficult to accept because all the glory and all the honour and all the praise is God's because God has achieved it from first to last but equally of course it's reassuring because if God has achieved it and God has accomplished it and God has applied it then we have nothing to fear we have his workmanship and if he has secured our salvation nothing can undo that salvation we are on a sure and certain foundation if salvation is all of God that's our first point our redemption is entirely a work of God's sovereign grace but then secondly we see that redemption is a work of God's free grace we touched on this in our last study in chapter 3 but Boaz as we've discovered in this story was under no legal obligation to marry

Ruth he did perhaps have a moral obligation but as we discover in the book of Ruth Boaz was not the nearest relative of course the law stated that it was a brother who had the absolute right to marry the widow but if the brother was dead as in the case of Malon and Kilion the closest relative had to marry the dead the widow sorry so the responsibility fell as we read in chapter 4 to another relative a closer relative other than Boaz it was his responsibility to buy back the land and to marry Ruth it wasn't ultimately

Boaz's responsibility he was a relative relative but he wasn't the closest relative in terms of the Levitical law so nobody could have found fault with Boaz if he said this is not my responsibility if he walked away and said there is another closer kinsman redeemer than me but the amazing thing about the book of Ruth is that Boaz chose to become the kinsman redeemer he devised a plan in chapter 4 to make sure that it was legal he made sure that the closest relative had the opportunity to be the kinsman redeemer but then when he refused Boaz steps in and what drove Boaz it was his love and it was his kindness for Ruth and it was his unflinching loyalty to God to see that this woman was not left destitute he didn't have to do it he did it out of compassion and love and free grace and in a limited degree to a certain extent this is a picture of God

God the father was not obliged to save us God the son was under no obligation to come into this world to redeem us and you see what this needs to drive from our minds is any sense in which God owes us that we have some right to something sometimes we hear people say things like how is it fair that God condemns people who have never heard the gospel how is it fair that God sends these people to hell but when we think about it that's the wrong question because it smuggles into theology somehow that we have an obligation to us that somehow human beings have some rights but we have no rights God has no obligation to us whatsoever remember in Exodus chapter 33 what

God says to Moses in verse 19 and he said I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name the Lord and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy God saves God redeems God loves because he loves he doesn't save or redeem because he has some obligation or some duty towards us as John Piper says God is utterly free from the constraints of his creation the inclinations of his will move in directions that he alone determines whatever influences appear to change his will are influences which ultimately he has ordained his choice to show mercy to one person and not to another is a choice that originates in the mystery of his sovereign will and not in the will of his creature we have no rights tonight we have no right to demand anything of

[19 : 38] God God saves because he so loved the world what he does he does because he chooses to do so because he is a loving kind and merciful God just like Boaz had no obligation to save Ruth as Ted Donnelly says the fact that you're a Christian today can only be attributed to the sovereign outflow of love from the heart of the great God why are you a Christian tonight because God is love because God is gracious that is the only reason that any of us are Christians tonight so we see that salvation is a work of God's free grace but then also we notice in this chapter that our redemption has been carried out at a great cost but there's a certain element in this chapter four of humor the conversation between Boaz and the kinsman redeemer there's a certain element of humor

I think Boaz was a pretty shrewd businessman and I think in many ways he entrapped a little bit this man Boaz says to him you are the closest relative of Naomi it is your responsibility to buy back this land and this man gets very excited at the thought of getting some land he responds positively he says I'd be delighted to buy this land of course I'll buy it back I wonder what this guy was thinking at the time perhaps he was thinking well this Naomi she's elderly if I redeem the land she'll die in a few years I'll get the land when she dies he'll get all the credit in the village for helping this old widow and when she dies he'll be a rich man so he says I'd be delighted

I'd be delighted to buy this land back and that's when of course Boaz plays his trump card he says the day you buy the fields 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 you can almost see the colour draining from the poor guy's face as he realises that he's not actually going to get the land because he's got to marry Ruth who will no doubt then have an heir a male heir potentially that will inherit the land and suddenly he changes his tune suddenly he's not so keen and there in verse 6 he says 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 and then we have this strange custom where in the time of the judges he took off his sandal as a kind of receipt and said it's almost like saying

I will never walk on this land and Boaz goes on to buy the land and to marry Ruth and you see Boaz he buys the land but in buying the land he is giving away his inheritance because the person that's going to inherit the land is going to be the child of Ruth so in many ways in the process of redemption Boaz loses everything he pays the money he gives it away he loses the land why well because of love and surely this is a great picture of how costly our own redemption is in the Lord Jesus Christ as 1 Peter 1 says knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers not with perishable things such as silver and gold but with the precious blood of

Christ a lamb without blemish or defect think what it cost the Lord Jesus Christ to cure your salvation and my salvation he came from the glory of heaven he came into a sinful world surrounded by sin he suffered hunger and thirst he was despised he was rejected he was ill treated he was slandered and finally he was murdered he bore on himself all the sins of his people and think what it cost God the father God the father laid on his son the iniquity of us all God bruised his son and when God the son cried out to his father the father turned his face away shouldn't this humble us when we think of the cost of our redemption the cost of the

[25 : 38] Lord Jesus Christ in our redemption and surely the words of the psalmist are so appropriate that we've just sung then say I what is man that he is remembered by thee and shouldn't this stir us up to a holy hatred of the sin that we fight against on a daily basis when we think of the cost of the Lord Jesus Christ in securing our salvation and Christ has redeemed us with such a cost surely we cannot sin with a high hand and a stiff neck so we see that our redemption was secured at a great cost and then fourthly we see our redemption is the gift of life and blessing Ruth is going to marry Boaz and her whole life is going to be transformed she's going to be transformed from a penniless widow with no land she's going to be married to somebody she's going to be able to secure the land of her father-in-law and remember we said at the start this was the wedding chapter

Ruth will finally be redeemed by a close relative Boaz how happy she's going to be and why is she getting married well we see it in verse 10 the very heart of why she's getting married to Boaz also Ruth the widow of Malon I have bought to be my wife to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance and 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 whole point of this marriage is to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance Malon's name is going to continue in perpetuity it's not going to be blotted out it's not going to be forgotten his piece of ground his holding in

Canaan will be secure his membership of God's people and God's land will continue and this is what Naomi and Ruth had always wanted throughout this whole story they had wanted the memory of their dead husbands to continue and you see the great tragedy that had overtaken these two women was not just that they'd lost their husbands but they were going to lose their place in the land of Israel and now through the marriage of Boaz this was going to their name was going to continue his name was going to endure his inheritance was safe and it's the same with our own salvation isn't it we think of all the blessings that we receive in Christ we think of the love that we enjoy we think of the joy we think of the peace we think of the assurance all these things are wonderful things that come with our salvation in Christ but above all else in the salvation of

Christ we have everlasting life we have a place in heaven forever and you see all these things they come and go peace comes and goes assurance comes and goes our joy goes up and down but there is one thing that can never be taken from us and that is that we have a place with Christ forever he gives us a place in heaven we have the security of everlasting life one day we will be with our saviour in the everlasting promised land let's never forget that the very heart of the gospel is this promise of life everlasting all the other things that we enjoy all these things like joy and peace they can come and go but the great assurance we have is that we have a place and a stake in heaven and then lastly we see that our redemption is absolutely sealed and secure when we read this chapter 4 of Ruth there is nothing informal about it it's full of legal language right from the very start we're introduced to this idea of the town gate we keep hearing these references to witnesses there's lots of legal language in this chapter they meet at the town gate where decisions were made the registry office of the day the place where proper decisions were made you see the reference to ten witnesses and of course in

Jewish times in the synagogue there was a minimum of ten men were necessary to have a worship service that's why there is this reference to ten witnesses you see the transaction that Boaz wanted to carry out he wanted it in public he wanted lots of witnesses he wanted it to be ratified he wanted it to be sealed he wanted there to be absolutely no doubt about this decision nobody was going to call into question this decision to redeem this land and to marry this woman that's why this chapter is taken up with so much legal language that's why Boaz is so shrewd in taking this to such a public place nobody could question it it was absolutely signed sealed and secure and as we go on to look at the final few verses of Ruth we see the family tree of

[32 : 36] David of course nobody could question then of course the lineage of the great king of Israel and of course the greater king the Lord Jesus Christ and of course in a very real sense this is true of our salvation absolutely signed and absolutely secure we think of Christ at the river Jordan the seal of approval that he had as God's servant this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased Christ said of God he said I have brought you glory by completing the work you gave me to do in John 17 and of course the resurrection itself was God the father's authenticating stamp on the person and work and redemption of his son by raising him from the dead he was putting a stamp of approval he was accepting the payment made that justice had been satisfied and that redemption had been achieved and if all that is true then of course what we use in

Romans chapter 8 is true who shall bring any charge against God's elect it is Christ who justifies who is to condemn Christ Jesus is the one who died more than that who was raised who is at the right hand of God who is indeed interceding for us nobody can question your salvation tonight it is signed and sealed and secure nobody can pluck us out of the father's hand our salvation was formal it was official it was authorized it was legal it was signed and it was sealed and we can see of this chapter redemption accomplished and applied that's the great message of the book of Ruth this woman needed redemption she needed a redeemer she was weak and helpless and unable to meet the greatest of her needs and she found a redeemer and this redeemer was able to not only secure herself salvation but to complete it and tonight our greatest need is that we need a redeemer we need a redeemer and the wonderful thing that

God and Christ has provided one for us and as we come to the end of our study in Ruth we come to the final few verses and in many ways we think it's an anticlimax this incredible story of tragedy and redemption ends with a family tree with a genealogy it feels like such an anticlimax to finish this book with a dusty dry family tree tree but you see what we see in the book of Ruth is that this is so much more than just a journey and a marriage this book was about a king and you see the book of Ruth teaches us that our lives are so often about so much more than what we are experiencing from day to day so often our lives are about so much more that lies beyond our lifespan that's what

Ruth could never have understood and that's why sometimes our lives feel so untidy because God has not finished his work there are so many loose ends the tapestry is only partially complete and the Lord has much weaving to do to bring the loose ends together probably long after any of us are here on this earth and you see Hebrew 11 makes it so clear that it's a genuine mark of faith to look beyond our own day to the time when God will fulfill his promises and where does this family tree reappear again in the Bible well it reappears again in Matthew chapter chapter 1 and this time it's in the genealogy of an even greater king the Lord Jesus

Christ and you see this wasn't just part of the family tree of King David it was part of David's greater son the Lord Jesus Christ and in a very real sense without Ruth there would be no saviour there would be no messiah Ruth Ruth Ruth was used in the purposes of God to bring about the saviour of the world the Lord Jesus Christ let me just finish with this quote from St.

[38 : 12] the Ferguson which sums it all up for us what God was quarrying out of the suffering of those two women Ruth and Naomi was nothing less than his purpose to bring his son into the world in Bethlehem he had in view not only providing literal bread in Bethlehem for a gentile woman and her Jewish mother-in-law but the coming of the bread of life broken not just for Israel but in order to provide salvation for men and women in every place God was quarrying for diamonds in these two women but in quarrying for diamond he was bringing about the bread of life to eventually come in the village of Bethlehem and the great question for us tonight is do we know this kinsman redeemer Ruth did nothing to contribute to our salvation but she did say that she was in need of salvation and the only ground of faith tonight is your need your only qualification for salvation is your need and the great question for us is if we gone to

Christ have we said that we are in need of salvation and have we accepted the finished work of our kinsman redeemer the Lord Jesus Christ the great comfort for us tonight is those great words from the cross it is finished Christ's work is finished he has secured our salvation in him we have redemption accomplished and applied have we received that salvation tonight that is the great message of the book of Ruth well let's pray our gracious God we thank you for this short study that we have had in the book of Ruth we thank you oh God that you have secured our redemption for us we thank you oh God for these great stories these great pictures in the old testament that point us towards our great kinsman redeemer we thank you oh God that you used an outsider a stranger a pagan to bring about your great purposes in bringing the Lord

Jesus Christ into this world Lord bless to us this story we pray that Lord you would help us as we go through our own suffering to remember that very often though Lord your purposes are beyond even our lifespan and that Lord perhaps you are calling us even in this day to keep the gospel light burning for a future generation help us oh God to understand that we will not always have the answers in this life to the many questions that we have but Lord help us to rest in your sovereignty and in your grace and in your great purposes thank you Lord for your word help us oh God to be steeped in it help us to be comforted by your promises and thank you oh God for this great redeemer that you have given to us and may our faith and our trust be in him this night bless us then Lord we pray for all we ask is in Jesus name Amen Amen