

**Ruth: The Story of a Faithful God - Part 2**  
**UBC March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

Intro:

Last week we saw the tragic beginning to the powerful short story of Ruth.

Naomi is hit with three hard blows – losing her husband and both her sons.

One daughter-in-law chooses to return home to Moab, the other, Ruth, chooses to come with Naomi and join herself to the people of Israel and the Lord.

Endure suffering by looking for ways God is at work and always trusting His character.

Saw some light as Ruth was converted and identified herself with the true God rather than the false gods of her people.

But they didn't know how the story would end at that point. And neither do we in our lives.

Cindy with cancer

Macy in the hospital three years ago.

This morning we will see how the story of Ruth ends.

The loose ends are tied up. God's plan is seen in greater clarity – not just for what he was doing in Ruth's life, but how she fit in with His big picture plan of salvation.

**I. Boaz Shows Kindness To Ruth In The Harvest (2:1-23)**


- a. Boaz is introduced into the story as the kinsman of Elimelech (Naomi's late husband and Ruth's late father-in-law) and a man of great wealth (2:1)
  - i. Just like in any movie or novel, when a character is introduced early on, you know he will play a role, even if you aren't sure what that role will be yet. Clearly he will be key to the story.
- b. She requests to go glean in the field
  - i. **Glean:** \*☼★
    1. Israelite landowners were required to leave the crops in corners of their field and the grain and fruit that fall on the ground for the needy and stranger. It was a type of welfare system to provide for the needs of the poor.
      - a. **Leviticus 19:9-10** 'Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. <sup>10</sup> 'Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the LORD your God.
    2. Ruth was certainly needy so she asked to go utilize this system to provide for their needs.
    3. Although the law directed landowners to leave the gleanings, the landowners might not have always followed it out of a desire to yield a larger harvest.
    4. That Boaz followed the command was indicative of his character.

- c. Ruth **“happened”** to come to the portion that belonged to Boaz (2:3)
  - i. ☒ . . . ☉ what happens by itself without any assistance or wish of person involved, without any known originator.
    - 1. “As it happened,” “as it turned out” or lit. “she happened to happen upon.”
    - 2. In light of the frequent mentioning of the Lord’s providential guidance, this phrase stands out.
      - a. 1:6 – The Lord provided food in Israel
      - b. 2:20 – The Lord shows kindness through arranging the circumstances
      - c. 4:13 – The Lord enabled Ruth to conceive
    - 3. From Boaz and Ruth’s perspective, their meeting was by chance. From the Lord’s perspective, it was not.
- d. Boaz greets his reapers and asks about the identity of Ruth (2:4-7)
  - i. Behold!
    - 1. Look! See! Pay attention! Keep your eyes glued to this man!
  - ii. Boaz takes notice of her and asks about her connection. (2:5-7)
    - 1. Don’t take the phrase “Whose young woman is this?” as demeaning to women.
      - a. He was asking about her relationship, connection, employment status, connections, etc.
    - 2. The workers describe Naomi – apparently Boaz had heard of her already because when they said, “She is **the** young Moabite woman . . . ,” he knew who they were referring to (vs. 11).
- e. Boaz meets Ruth and immediately shows kindness to her (2:8-16)
  - i. Encourages her to stay in his field and drink water as needed (2:8-9)
    - 1. Perhaps he is interested in her or perhaps he is just showing kindness.
      - a. Ruth doesn’t know he is related to her late father-in-law; only the audience does at this point.
    - 2. Goes beyond the letter of the law by offering her protection and water.
  - ii. She responds with surprise and gratefulness (2:10)
    - 1. Bows on her face, clearly indicating that he was showing special favor to her and she was very grateful.
    - 2. Why would he take notice of her as a foreigner?
  - iii. Boaz knows about Ruth’s faithful service and loyal love to Naomi and prays for the Lord to reward her (2:11-12)
    - 1. Left father, mother, and land of her birth to come to an unknown people.

2. Ask the Lord to reward her (2:12)
  - a. A beautiful prayer that indicates his character as well as the hope that Ruth was trusting in – the God of Israel under whose wings she has come to seek refuge.
  - b. **Psalm 36:7** How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings.
- iv. Ruth expresses her gratefulness for his kindness (2:13)
  1. He comforted her and spoke kindly when undeserved
- v. Boaz shows even greater kindness to Ruth (2:14-16)
  1. Boaz invites her to eat with them (2:14)
  2. Boaz commanded his servants to let her glean with them and even drop some extra grain on purpose (2:15-16)
    - a. Don't insult (humiliate, rebuke, embarrass)
      - i. Might feel humiliating to depend on the kindness of others.
- f. Ruth gleaned until evening and then returned to Naomi who rejoiced in the God's provision (2:17-23)
  - i. About an ephah of barley (2:17)
    1. About half a bushel – 30 pounds – enough food for many days – quite a bit for one day's gleaning
    2. Mac – enough food for 5 days.
      - a. Shows in some ways the desperate situation they were in. She gleaned all day to provide enough food for five days, and that was a good result! How would they provide for the whole year?
  - ii. Naomi prays for God's blessing on the man who took notice of Ruth (2:19)
    1. Clearly this was an exceptional amount of barley for her to bring home because someone must have taken notice of her for there to be such a large amount of grain.
    2. Ruth identifies the man who showed such kindness as Boaz
      - a. You can hear the background music to emphasize this statement – Ruth is going to learn the truth about this man that we already know about from 2:1.
  - iii. Naomi rejoices because Boaz is their relative (2:20)
    1. The Lord has not withdrawn his kindness after all!
      - a. To the living (Naomi and Ruth) and the dead (deceased husbands whose legacy can live on through the provision of a kinsman-redeemer)
      - b. Again, the Lord is working through ordinary circumstances to show kindness to those in need.
  - iv. Naomi encourages Ruth to follow Boaz's invitation (2:22)
  - v. Ruth gleaned with them in Boaz's field until the end of the barley and wheat harvest (2:23)

1. Several week period
2. Tension – what would happen to the widows after the harvest?
  - a. Should have enough food for several months at this point, but still in very difficult and impoverished circumstances.

## II. Ruth Appeals To Boaz To Act As Her Kinsman-Redeemer (3:1-18)

- a. Naomi suggests a plan to ask Boaz to fulfill the role of the kinsman-redeemer (3:1-5)
  - i. Arranged marriages were the norm at this time however this situation is certainly unusual.
    1. Don't try this at home.
    2. Ruth would essentially propose marriage to Boaz, although in a somewhat unconventional way.
  - ii. Asking Boaz to act as the kinsman-redeemer
    1. He is her  (2:20) the noun form of the verb "to redeem" – translated as close relative, kinsman, redeemer, or kinsman-redeemer.
    2. The kinsman-redeemer bought back family land that was sold
      - a. **Leviticus 25:25** 'If a fellow countryman of yours becomes so poor he has to sell part of his property, then his nearest kinsman is to come and buy back what his relative has sold.
      - b. A way to keep the property within family lines
    3. The kinsman-redeemer would marry the childless widow of a deceased brother
      - a. **Deuteronomy 25:5-6** "When brothers live together and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be *married* outside *the family* to a strange man. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her to himself as wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. <sup>6</sup> "It shall be that the firstborn whom she bears shall assume the name of his dead brother, so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.
      - b. Act of grace on Boaz's part because he was not within the immediate circle of responsibility. He was not a brother of the deceased Mahlon.
  - iii. He will be winnowing at the threshing floor
    1. A place outside, typically on a hill, where they take the grain after the harvest to beat it (thresh it) to knock the grain loose and toss it in the air (winnow) to allow the evening breeze to blow away the chaff. The grain could then be collected from the hard floor.
    2. He will be there all night working and then sleeping by the grain to protect it.
  - iv. Ruth is to look and smell her best and keep her identity hidden
  - v. Uncover his feet and lie down and wait for him to tell you what to do.
    1. Is this unwise? Immoral? An attempt to tempt him and thereby secure his protection? A recognized local custom requesting him to act as her redeemer and marry her?

2. Probably not an immoral act but a cultural act of some sort that they both would understand.
  3. Ruth is consistently held up as a woman of noble character in the story.
    - a. The scene probably took place in the dark so that Boaz would have the opportunity to reject her proposal without the whole town knowing about it.
  4. Whatever the custom or situation, Boaz gets it, as we're about to see. He isn't confused by what she is doing.
- b. Ruth follows the plan and Boaz eagerly agrees to act as her kinsman-redeemer (3:6-13)
    - i. Boaz is startled to see a woman lying at his feet in the dark (3:8)
      1. See the humor in this!
    - ii. Ruth identifies self and invites him to act as her kinsman-redeemer (3:9)
    - iii. Boaz asks for the Lord's blessing because of her kindness and agrees to act as her kinsman-redeemer if a closer relative is unwilling (3:10-13)
      1. Closer relative exists and Boaz wants to follow all the appropriate steps.
      2. Invites her to stay until morning – no immorality is implied
  - c. Boaz shows continued kindness to Ruth in the morning (3:14-17)
  - d. Ruth reports to Naomi and they wait for Boaz to act (3:18)

### III. Boaz Fulfills His Role As Kinsman-Redeemer (4:1-22)

- a. Spoke with the city elders and the closer relative (4:1-12)
  - i. **The gate** (v. 1)
    1. Alcoves in the gate where important matters were discussed.
  - ii. Involved the **elders** so that the matter was official. (v. 2)
  - iii. Invites the man to act as the kinsman-redeemer of the land and the man agrees to redeem it until Boaz adds the caveat that the man must also redeem Ruth to raise up descendents for her deceased husband (4:5)
  - iv. The man refuses to redeem, claiming that it would jeopardize his own inheritance (4:6)
    1. Apparently the inheritance would then be split up
  - v. Boaz agrees to redeem the land and Ruth (4:7-10)
    1. The custom of confirmation explained (4:7)
    2. The man tells Boaz to redeem and follows the custom (4:8)
    3. Boaz proclaims that he is acting as the kinsman-redeemer (4:9-10)
  - vi. The people affirm the transaction and pray for God's blessing on the marriage (4:11-12)
- b. **Redemption: The Joyful Conclusion (4:13-22)**
  - i. Boaz and Ruth are married and she gave birth to a son (4:13)

- ii. The women declare God’s goodness to Naomi (4:14-15)
  - 1. He did not leave her without a redeemer
  - 2. Requested that Boaz’s name become famous – which it did through this book and his legacy.
  - 3. Requested that he restore Naomi’s life and sustain her in her old age – which he did.
  - 4. ***Better to you than seven sons***
    - a. 7 sons may just seem like a lot of food to buy but in this culture it symbolized the supreme blessing that could come to a family.
- iii. Naomi now cared for this young child as if he were her own (4:16-17)
  - 1. From proclaiming that she was too old to bare children (1:11ff) to now caring for this little grandson. What a remarkable turnaround of events.
  - 2. Obed means “worshipper”
- iv. Obed was the grandfather of David. (4:17b-22)

#### IV. Truth From Ruth

- a. God’s **providence** often works through **ordinary** means.
  - i. **Proverbs 16:33** The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD.
    - 1. The Lord directs even the casting of dice.
  - ii. Like we talked about last Sunday, from our perspective we can’t see how God is at work sometimes (and sometime we never understand it fully) but we can trust in His character and goodness.
    - 1. It may seem like they just “happen.”
  - iii. The events of your life are not by chance
    - 1. Your marriage
    - 2. Your work
    - 3. Your neighborhood
    - 4. Your classmates
      - a. Aaron on the basketball team with me
      - b. Jaren in English class small group
  - iv. Difference between providence and miracle
  - v. Faithfully working out His plan through the fragile line of human history – fragile from our perspective but never in doubt from His perspective.
    - 1. Boaz and Ruth → Obed → Jesse → David - - - > Jesus
- b. What is desirable in a man is his **kindness**.

- i. **Proverbs 19:22** What is desirable in a man is his kindness, And *it is* better to be a poor man than a liar.
  - ii. Boaz showed kindness to Ruth in many ways.
    - 1. Kind words (2:13)
      - a. He comforted her and spoke kindly when undeserved
      - b. **Proverbs 12:18** There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, But the tongue of the wise brings healing.
    - 2. Protecting her from dangerous people she might encounter in other fields (2:8-9; 22)
    - 3. Protecting her from even the accusation of unrighteousness (3:14)
    - 4. Gives generously to support Ruth and Naomi (2:14-16; 3:15)
  - iii. Boaz showed kindness to his reapers by greeting them with a prayer for the Lord to be with them. (2:4)
    - 1. Typical Israelite greeting but again it gives insight into his character.
  - iv. **Colossians 3:12** And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, **kindness**, humility, gentleness and patience
  - v. Growing up as a man doesn't mean increased freedom to do what you want. It means taking loving responsibility for people around you.
    - 1. Showing kindness to meet their needs.
    - 2. Kindness doesn't equal weakness.
- c. We Need A **Redeemer**.
- i. Boaz as a great illustration of Jesus as our kinsman-redeemer.
  - ii. Like Ruth, we are unable to redeem ourselves.
  - iii. Like Boaz, Jesus acted as our redeemer.
    - 1. Becomes our human Brother
    - 2. Jesus redeemed us from evil and the penalty of sin with His own life.
      - a. **1 Peter 1:18-19** knowing that you were not **redeemed** with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,<sup>19</sup> but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood of Christ*.
    - 3. Jesus restores all that was lost because of our sin
      - a. Ruth went from being a childless widow to having a kind husband and a child – she finally had a home.
      - b. We go from spiritual poverty and alienation from God to adoption as His children with a righteous standing. From on our own to loved.

- c. **Galatians 4:4-5** But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, <sup>5</sup> so that He might **redeem** those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.
  - d. **Titus 2:13-14** looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, <sup>14</sup> who gave Himself for us to **redeem** us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.
  - e. **Psalm 103:2-4** <sup>2</sup> Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits; <sup>3</sup> Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases; <sup>4</sup> Who **redeems** your life from the pit, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion;
- iv. Your family background does not have to control your life.
- 1. **Matthew 1:5-6** Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse. <sup>6</sup> Jesse was the father of David the king. David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah.
    - a. Boaz's was in the line of Rahab, a converted prostitute.
      - i. Not the son but a compressed timeline in which key generations are named.
      - ii. Boaz's wife was Ruth, a converted Moabite.