

Covered [Ruth 3]

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Big Idea: No claim, just covered.

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// **INTRODUCTION** [Oskar Schindler]

- Oskar Schindler was a German industrialist during WWII and a member of the Nazi Party. He was a war profiteer who built connections with some of the most dangerous men in Europe during that time and was not a good man. His passion was money, women, and power. ***But then something happened in him.***
- He witnessed what was being done to the Jewish people around him... the brutality, the death camps, and the attempt by the Nazi Party to erase an entire existence of a people.
- So, Oskar began making a list. A list of names... Jewish workers, related family members, people he barely knew and most he'd never met personally. ***He put their names on a piece of paper and put his name over theirs.***
- He bribed officers and officials to keep the names of people on that list safe. ***He spent nearly 2.7 Reichsmarks [\$20 million today] to keep those names alive.*** And by the end of WWII, he had spent his entire fortune.
- ***It is estimated that Oskar Schindler saved around 1,200 Jewish lives.***

Consider this... those 1,200 people who were saved had no claim to Oskar Schindler. No family ties and no legal rights. They were a condemned people with no hope. They had no claim, but he covered them anyway. ***No claim, just covered.***

Hang onto that image... a name placed over people who had no right to ask for it. Because that's exactly the picture, we're going to see this week in Ruth 3. Ruth is going to boldly approach a man with nothing and ask him to cover her.

// **NAOMI MAKES A MOVE** [Ruth 3:1-4]

¹One day Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, "My daughter, I must find a home for you, where you will be well provided for. ²Now Boaz, with whose women you have worked, is a relative of ours. Tonight he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. ³Wash, put on perfume, and get dressed in your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has

finished eating and drinking. ⁴When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do.” [Ruth 3:1-4]

Look what Naomi is doing here. Remember her journey through this story. She’s suffered incredible losses and hardship. So much so she told people not to call her Naomi (pleasant) but instead, to call her Mara (bitter). She was empty and done.

But last week (chapter 2), we saw her heart begin to change as she experienced the hesed Boaz demonstrated toward Ruth. ***A love that went beyond what was required was doing something deep within her heart.***

Because of this, she’s no longer passive and giving up. We see her now being strategic. She knows what needs to happen and is now leading and guiding Ruth. She says... Wash and anoint yourself. Put on your best clothes. Go at night and wait till he’s eaten and lies down. Uncover his feet and lie there.

We’re seeing Naomi no longer as a woman in despair but one who’s begun to believe again. All because she’s experienced a love beyond limits... HESED.

// RUTH TAKES A RISK [Ruth 3:7-9]

⁷When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet, and lay down. ⁸In the middle of the night something startled the man; he turned—and there was a woman lying at his feet! ⁹“Who are you?” he asked. “I am your servant Ruth,” she said. “Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family.” [Ruth 3:7-9]

Some of you are sitting here wondering, “What exactly is going on here?” Biblical scholars have debated this scene for centuries, but here’s what the context of the entire book makes clear... *this is a proposal.*

Boaz lies down at the threshing floor. This was a spot where men slept during harvest season to guard the grain. For a woman to be there at midnight was socially progressive. This would have been incredibly assertive on Ruth’s part. Yet, she did it anyway.

Ruth intentionally lies at Boaz’s feet, not beside him. By lying at his feet, she’s taking a posture of humility and petition, not one of romance or seduction. ***She’s asking him to take the role of her kinsman-redeemer.*** The fact that the author waits to mention marriage consummation until chapter 4, after the wedding takes place, tells us everything we need to know about what did or didn’t happen on

the threshing floor. **Both Ruth and Boaz were people of noble character and moral strength, and their actions matched.**

Boaz wakes up with Ruth lying at his feet and immediately asks, “Who are you?” We need to spend some time diving into her answer because it’s one of the most theologically loaded sentences in the entire book.

“I am your servant Ruth,” she said. “Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family.” [Ruth 3:9]

The word used there for “corner of your garment” is the Hebrew word kanaf, which means “wings” or “covering.”

Here’s what I want you to see. If we go back to chapter 2, where Boaz first speaks to Ruth, **he prays this over her...**

¹²“May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.” [Ruth 2:12]

Under whose wings... that’s kanaf. Same word. Boaz prays for God to be her covering. For Him to spread His wings over her. Ruth is now back saying, *“Boaz, be the answer to your own prayer. You asked God to cover me. You’re the one God placed here to do it.”*

What a courageous woman Ruth is. That’s hesed meeting hesed. She had no legal claim on him. Yet she approached him anyway. No claim, just covered.

// **BOAZ RESPONDS** [Ruth 3:10-13]

¹⁰“The LORD bless you, my daughter,” he replied. “This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. ¹¹And now, my daughter, don’t be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All the people of my town know that you are a woman of noble character.

¹²Although it is true that I am a guardian-redeemer of our family, there is another who is more closely related than I. ¹³Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to do his duty as your guardian-redeemer, good; let him redeem you. But if he is not willing, as surely as the LORD lives I will do it. Lie here until morning.” [Ruth 3:10-13]

Boaz blesses Ruth. **He calls what she did kindness; he calls it HESED.** He affirms her as a woman of noble character and says he’s going to do all that she’s asked. He does acknowledge there’s a closer guardian/kinsman, and he can’t just bypass

this ancient eastern practice. But his intent is clear, and before he goes, he covers her.

Boaz then gives her more grain to take with her. ***Last week, we saw Boaz go beyond what the law required of him as he gave Ruth roughly 30lbs of grain for her work.*** Now, we see him giving her twice as much, 60lbs of grain.

But the difference here isn't just the amount... In chapter 2, Ruth earned the grain by working/gleaning. Here, in chapter 3, the grain was a gift from her kinsman redeemer. She didn't work for it. She didn't earn it. She came to Boaz with nothing but a request, and he sent her home with twice as much.

The grain was a down payment on a promise. The covering came before everything was settled. The gift came before the legal process was complete.

// COVERED

Ruth 3 is a chapter about covering. Not earning, negotiating, or proving... covering. Ruth came to Boaz with no legal claim. She came in the middle of the night to a place she had no business being. She lay at his feet in a posture of humility and submission and asked him to put his name over her. To cover her, and he did.

That's the whole chapter. She came with nothing, and He covered everything.

No claim, just covered.

Boaz is a pretty remarkable man. He's one of the most beautiful pictures of love/hesed in the entire OT. But Boaz is just a picture. He's a preview. ***He's a shadow of someone far greater.***

Boaz had limitations. He could cover Ruth, but he could not cover you or me. He couldn't cover every broken, empty, and bitter person. ***He could not cover every uncovered person throughout every generation.*** Boaz had limits. Every human redeemer does.

But there is a Kinsman Redeemer with no limits, and His name is Jesus. Boaz is an OT picture of Jesus. He was a preview of who was to come. Someone far greater.

- Boaz could cover Ruth, but Jesus covers every person in the world.
- Boaz covered Ruth at personal cost... his grain, his resources, his reputation, but Jesus covered us at the cost of his own life.

- Boaz's covering was confined by time and law, but Jesus' covering is eternal and unbreakable.
- Boaz made a promise and said he wouldn't rest until it was settled, but Jesus went to the cross and said, "It is finished."

Oskar Schindler spent his life's fortune and covered 1,200 people. He died nearly broke. Jesus spent Himself and rose from the dead. ***And His list of names? It has no limit.***

// INVITATION

Ruth didn't wait for a better moment or until she had more to offer. She didn't wait until she had earned a better reputation or standing to make her request reasonable. She came with nothing. She came in humility and submission to the feet of the one who could redeem her. ***To the one who could COVER her.***

I want to give you that invitation right now. To come to THE KINSMAN REDEEMER, Jesus. The only One who can COVER your past, your mistakes, your shortcomings, your sins.

Let me show you a promise from the very last book in the OT... ***watch for the one whose "kanaf" carries healing.***

²***"But for you who fear my name, the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in his wings. And you will go free, leaping with joy like calves let out to pasture."***
[Malachi 4:2]

Here we see the NT fulfillment...

²⁰***Just then a woman who had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding came up behind him. She touched the fringe of his robe, ²¹for she thought, "If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed."***

²²***Jesus turned around, and when he saw her, he said, "Daughter, be encouraged! Your faith has made you well." And the woman was healed at that moment.***
[Matthew 9:20-22]

She is doing exactly what Ruth did at the threshing floor...

If you have never brought your needs to Jesus and asked Him to COVER you, you can do that right now. Bring your nothing and receive His covering.