

Ruth, Chapters 3-4

Wednesday, 12/19 – 11 AM & 7 PM

Third Wednesday in Advent – 2018

Sunday, 12/23 at 10 | Christmas Eve at 6 | Christmas Day at 10

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: This sermon is the third of five in what I am calling *The Bethlehem Series*.

Summary of Chapters 1 and 2: Naomi's family left Bethlehem full – *a husband and two sons*, but, 10 years later, came back empty – *those three had died*; only Ruth, *her devoted daughter-in-law*, returned with Naomi. When Ruth went to find food by gleaning in a field, the LORD brought her into contact with Boaz – *a wealthy relative of Naomi's husband*; Boaz was attracted to Ruth.

Chapter 3: Ruth Seeks Redemption from Boaz:

1. Naomi, the matchmaker: She said to Ruth: ¹ **“My daughter... shouldn't I try to find a home for you [thus, a husband] and make you happy [thus a son]?”** Then Naomi shared this plan with Ruth: ² **“...You know, Boaz is going to winnow barley on the threshing floor tonight. ³ Wash and anoint yourself, put your garment on, and go down to the threshing floor. Don't let the man know you're there till he finishes eating and drinking. ⁴ When he lies down, notice the place where he lies down. Then go in, uncover the place at his feet, and lie down there. He'll tell you what to do.”** *A bit different from our culture – regarding dating and getting engaged!*
2. Reasons for Ruth to agree to the plan: ♣ Boaz had been kind to her, ♣ she knew he was a close relative, ♣ she needed a husband, and ♣ she hoped for a son, *so she said to her mother-in-law:* ⁵ **“I'll do everything you say.”** Then she did. *Wherever we have fallen short on our commitments, we are forgiven in the Christ of Christmas! Now, let us go forward with the power of the Holy Spirit!*

3. The execution of the plan: ⁸ **at midnight the man was disturbed. Turning over, he saw a woman lying at his feet.** ⁹ **“Who are you?” he asked.** It was certainly dark – *at midnight*, but he could tell she was a woman. **“I am Ruth, your servant,” she said. “Spread your garment over your servant [which means: Marry me], because you are a relative who can redeem us [which means: you can marry me, I can have a son, and he can get Naomi’s property].”** So there marriage could have *many positive results!* Also, *the woman pursued the man* – are you surprised?
4. Boaz’ response: He was very happy and said to her: ¹⁰ **“The LORD bless you, my daughter... This last kindness, that you didn’t go after the young men, whether they were poor or rich, is better than the first.”** Apparently both then and today, many are looking for someone the same age or younger, not older. Boaz may have been much older, *since he called her daughter*, but they were *both attracted to each other and could be a special blessing to each other*. Even though Ruth deserved nothing from Boaz **and** we deserve nothing from the LORD, *love moved both of them to redeem!*
5. A potential problem: Boaz said to Ruth: ¹² **...I’m really not the nearest relative, but there’s another relative who is the nearest relative, one closer than I [which means: he has the first opportunity to redeem you, marry you].** ¹³ **...if he will redeem you, good, let him redeem you. But if he doesn’t want to redeem you, then, as the LORD lives, I will redeem you.”** Hmmm, *quite a dilemma – for Boaz!*
6. Naomi explained to Ruth: ¹⁸ **“Wait here... till you know how the matter turns out. The man will not rest but will settle this thing today.”** Think about our legal system in America, *such a matter could take years*; yet, back then, *Boaz would settle it that day!*

Chapter 4: Ruth Is Blessed with Marriage and a Son:

7. Boaz followed the proper procedure: At the city gate ¹ ...he saw the relative he mentioned passing by. “You there,” Boaz said, “come over and sit down here.” He came and sat down. ² Then he took 10 elders of the town and said, “Sit down here.” And they sat down. Now that the appropriate people were assembled, he could talk business in a legal manner with his relative. No matter how much Boaz may have wanted to marry Ruth, *he was determined to follow the law*. When it comes to God’s law, it cannot save us, *but it is a wonderful guide for our lives* (Deut. 6:24)!
8. This is what Boaz explained: ³ “Naomi... is selling the piece of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. ⁴ And I thought I’d tell you about it and say, ‘Buy it in the presence of these men sitting here...’ If you want to redeem it, redeem it. But if you don’t want to..., tell me...” The nearest relative had the first opportunity.
9. The relative of Boaz quickly answered: “I’ll redeem it.” Then, explaining the rest, Boaz said: ⁵ “The day you buy the field from Naomi, you’ll also be getting Ruth, the Moabite widow of the dead man, in order that the dead man’s name may continue with his inheritance.” The man wanted the property, *but did he also want Ruth, the Moabite widow of the dead man?* The deal may have also included taking care of Naomi. Also, Boaz did not reveal *his desire for Ruth!*
10. The relative answered: ⁶ “I can’t redeem it [the land] for myself. If I did, I’d ruin my own inheritance. You take over my right to redeem it, because I can’t redeem it.” Can you see Boaz smiling, at least on the inside? *He wanted Ruth!*
11. The deal was sealed: ⁷ ...it was done this way, that a man took off his shoe and gave it to the other person.... ⁸ So when the relative said to Boaz, “You take it,” the relative took off his shoe [and gave it to Boaz]. ⁹ Then Boaz told the elders and all the people: “You are witnesses today that I’ve

bought from Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to [her sons]. ¹⁰ I'm also marrying Ruth, [the] Moabite widow... Once the deal was made, Boaz spoke freely about all of his plans! He was wise by waiting; let us also be wise *by making good application of our knowledge!*

12. A blessing spoken by the witnesses to Boaz: ¹¹ **...The LORD make the woman who's coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the family of Israel. May you be mighty in Ephrath and famous in Bethlehem [apparently both words referring to the same place].** ¹² **From the children God will give you through this young woman [again implying she was much younger than Boaz] may your family grow...**
13. The order of events: ¹³ **Then Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. He lay with her, and the LORD had her conceive, and she gave birth to a son.** That order is still God's plan for today, *even though many are unaware or don't care!*
14. The women said to Naomi regarding the son of Ruth: ¹⁴ **...“Blessed is the LORD, who today hasn't left you without a relative to redeem you. Let the child's name be proclaimed in Israel.** ¹⁵ **He'll renew your life and nourish you in your old age. He's the child of your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons.”** The tragic events in Naomi's life – *the deaths of her husband and sons* – have now been overturned by the LORD's great blessing!
15. The genealogy from Abraham to David: Abraham > Isaac > Jacob > Judah (*with Tamar*) > Perez > Hezron > Amminadab > Nahshon > Salmon (*with Rahab*) > Boaz (*with Ruth*) > Obed > Jesse > David (*who was the seventh son of Jesse*).

Let Us Pray: Father in heaven, by a strange path, *which included unlikely women such as Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth*, You brought David and, eventually, Your Son into the world; though we have all sinned, *we give You thanks for redeeming us!*

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