

Ruth 4

1. Introduction.

A. Today we will continue with the last chapter of Ruth, Ruth 4. Again, I won't be using slides; I really want us to picture what is going on as the story-teller paints the scenery and tells us what is going on in a his artistic style.

(1). **Read Ruth 4** – give context. Then separate out by verses.

(2). **History**: Look at it like a movie:

- a. Scene 1: Famine, loss of husband and sons, (weary of life) God has abandoned Naomi. All tragedy.
- b. Scene 2: Opens with a ray of hope. They've come back to Bethlehem: Ruth goes to glean. The foreigner from Moab meets Boaz, Ruth and Naomi have food. The author subtly shows the sovereignty and providence of God in the circumstances of life. And the story-teller introduces a goel, a kinsman-redeemer. The movie captures your attention, what will happen between Ruth and Boaz? Is there romance involved?
- a. Scene 3 – As Bret taught last week, Naomi has a plan for a husband for Ruth. The hot dating method of going to the threshing floor to get a husband creates a tense moment for two people of exceptional character. Will they resist the temptation? They do.
- b. Now scene 4 – Background music is from Indiana Jones, dah-dah duh daaa, duh duh duhhh, dah-da-duh daaa, duh-duh-duh duh duh. **“Boaz”** goes up to the town gate. Here he faces the villain, resolves the tragedy from the beginning of the movie and everyone lives happily every after. This is not Hollywood, so we don't have all of the background music and drama, but there is drama nevertheless. Let's look at chap 4.

2. Start with verses 1-2.

A. Boaz goes to the town gate.

(1). **Culture** - function of the town gate.

- a. Primary entrance to the town, to provide safety. See the movie “Lord of the Rings”, people are trying to defend the gate from attack. See this with castles in Europe and Asia; Western pictures of forts have a main gate. Gates would be closed at night for safety.
- b. Center of city/town life. Find out what the current gossip or news is. Boaz in chapter 3 said that all the

townspeople knew that Ruth was a noble character. Here is where these things are passed on.

- c. Center of town is where people are going to talk about their problems. If Samuel, King David's son Absalom goes up to the city gate, finds out who has grievances with the King and steals the hearts of the people.
 - d. This is where prophets might preach or nobles make proclamations.
 - e. If someone committed manslaughter, the person would flee to a city of refuge and plead his case before the elders at the city gate.
 - f. The princes and nobles meet here. Business is conducted here. Legal transactions are made. It is the courtroom; the judges would sit here.
 - g. Boaz is looking to make a business transaction here.
- B. Boaz gets the kinsman-redeemer he had just spoken to Ruth about in chapter 3.
- (1). **Repetition** – the author says “suddenly, or behold”, the kinsman-redeemer, the next of kin that was closer than Boaz, went by. Again, just by chance, as in chapter 2, in case God wasn't involved the whole story.
 - (2). NIV says that Boaz calls him, “my friend”. New English Translation actually calls him “John Doe”. The **Hebrew** really says “a certain one, or so-and-so”. The person is not named. The question here is whether the author is trying to make a point by not giving the individual's name, or just doesn't think it is important. We'll come back to that shortly.
- C. Next Boaz gets 10 elders. How many elders are there? One place in Judges references 77 leaders or elders. Picture here - in the congregation we'll have some elders (some of the older ones, who look wise, have beards, give good advice), and the rest of you are witnesses watching what is going on. See the picture in front of your bulletin. The stage is set.

3. Verses 3-4.

- A. Boaz introduces his concern. He talks about Naomi selling a piece of land.
- (1). We've discussed already that poor people might sell their land and later need to have it redeemed.
 - (2). The land belonged to Elimelech, so it should stay in the family as inheritance. We discussed in previous weeks that land is part of covenant with God. God gave the land to families in Israel. Kinsman-redeemers are there to keep that land in the family, or the year of Jubilee comes and the land is returned.

- (3). We don't know that what controls Naomi had over the land. When she came back from Moab, why didn't she sell it right away? Had they left it when they went to Moab and someone else may have controlled it?
 - B. The kinsman-redeemer says, okay, I'll buy it. Why not?
 - (1). There is no loss toward redeeming it. The relative gets more property for his own inheritance. Naomi has no children to take it, and she may be too old to have more. It's a win-win for him.
4. Verses 5-6.
 - A. Boaz now modifies the situation. It is not only Naomi selling the field. The kinsman-redeemer is buying it from Naomi and Ruth the Moabitess. Oh, by the way, you will have to have a levirate marriage with Ruth to maintain his name with his property.
 - (1). We don't know why the kinsman-redeemer didn't see this coming. He will have to sacrifice. This is the whole point of being a kinsman-redeemer. It costs; it's not free. This will be discussed in a future week, when look at themes.
 - (2). He would buy the field, but have to give it back to a child from Ruth. Ruth replaces Naomi as the one to raise a child to carry on the name of Elimelech.
 - (3). If he has no children or his children die, the child from Ruth could take his property. We don't know if Naomi had a big property or not, but if he has a lot, he stands to lose more.
 - (4). This highlights again the character of Boaz. He is willing to make the sacrifice. Almost like a courtroom drama. A piece of evidence is given, you figure all is lost, then the extra information is given, and the momentum changes.
 - (5). So we see the kinsman-redeemer opt out to Boaz. Mr. So-and-so allows Boaz to be the kinsman-redeemer. There is a reason why he allows this so easily. We'll see this as we examine the next couple verses.
5. Verses 7-8.
 - A. The story-teller then describes the custom to make it a legal transaction. (Take off my shoe.) Anyone want my shoe? Some question about which person gives the shoe; but most appear to say Mr. So-and-so. Now you as a listener to this story start to think about another custom with a shoe. **Culture** - In the law (Deut 25) if in the case of a Levirate situation where the brother-in-law of a widow whose husband dies, does not marry her so she can have a child and carry on the dead man's name, the woman goes to the city gate and lodges a complaint to the elders. The elders talk to him, and if he doesn't change, she takes off one of his sandals,

spits in his face, and says “his name will be known in Israel as the family of the unsandaled.”

- (1). The unnamed one is escaping humiliation by allowing Boaz to take the role of kinsman-redeemer.
- (2). The story-teller may be intentionally leaving out the individual’s name because he was unwilling to make the sacrifice for Naomi and Ruth.

6. Verses 9-12 – Boaz proclaims his intent to buy the property, acquire Ruth.

- A. **Repetition** – in chapter 3, the story-teller has Naomi telling Ruth that Boaz will not rest until the matter is settled, **today**. The story-teller reiterated the timeframe with Boaz’s declaration – today.
- B. Boaz declares his intentions to acquire the land and Ruth the Moabitess as his wife.
 - (1). FYI - Order in chapter one, Mahlon and Kilion as word order. It says they married Moabite women, one Orpah, the other Ruth. Word order places Kilion with Ruth, but here Boaz tells that she was the wife of Mahlon.
 - (2). Boaz not just interested in having a child for Elimelech, but having Ruth as his wife. Judah who had a child with Tamar, his daughter-in-law did not marry her. Boaz is giving everything he has. No prenups.
 - (3). Boaz reciprocates openly what Ruth did in private. He was honored by Ruth approaching him at the threshing floor; he declares his desire for her in the city gates.
- C. The elders and witnesses give a blessing to the marriage.
 - (1). **Culture** – there is an importance for recognizing marriage in society. Our culture says it is between two people; so marriage can be dissolved by two people. Their culture saw marriage within their society. They were of the tribe of Judah. They were of the town of Bethlehem. There was a heritage to be a part of.
 - (2). There is a blessing.
 - a. If marriage is only between two people, then only two step in to make it work. If marriage is a part of society, society has extra resources to help make it work. Our culture lacks in its support from other members in the society. We need to bless each other, be part of each other’s lives, to encourage each other to live life with God’s favor.
 - b. Notice how much blessing is given in this book.
 - Blessing from Naomi to Orpah and Ruth to leave Naomi.
 - Blessing from Boaz to his workers and they back to him.
 - Blessing from Boaz to Ruth while in the field.

- Blessing from Naomi toward Boaz from the fruit of Ruth's gleaning.
 - Blessing from Boaz to Ruth in the threshing floor - her willingness to offer marriage to him.
 - Blessing from the townspeople toward Boaz and Ruth for their marriage. This blessing is skillfully used by the story-teller to say that the story is not over. Don't leave the theater.
 - Example of the church toward each other. Bridget with communion, know people, bless.
- c. In that blessing, we see how they townspeople recognize Boaz and Ruth as persons. Go back to Proverbs 31. about the woman of noble character - **cha-iel** from two weeks ago.
- Proverbs 31:23 her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land. Here is Boaz at the city gate.
 - Proverbs 31:31 Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

7. Verses 13-17.

- A. What do you know; God enables Ruth to conceive. After all this time, it looks like God becomes part of the story. His providence continues. Boaz and Ruth do their part; God provides his blessing.
- B. We see the story-teller comes back to Naomi. Naomi had no food; she came back and had food from Boaz. She was no longer a foreigner in Moab, but redeemed in Israel. And now she had family, a child to carry on the family line. The child could take care of her in her old age.
- C. Praise again for Ruth – better than seven sons. **Culture** – seven sons – an Israelite ideal.
- D. Naomi has a son. Tragedy from the beginning of book has been closed. The story-teller is closing up all the loose ends. Naomi went away with a husband and two sons. She came back empty, with a Moabite daughter-in-law. She had been redeemed; she is not empty anymore. Chapter one saw God's hand against her, her life was bitter. Now there is praise to God by those around her for all that Naomi has received. Naomi has a son. This is Naomi's crowning moment. Not mentioned anywhere else in scripture.
- A. The name of the son is Obed – means servant. He will be the grandfather of David. We see more in the following genealogy.

8. Verses 18-22 – we read the genealogy, the family line from Perez, the one whom the elders mentioned in their blessing of Boaz, to Jesse, the father

of David. Perez was the noted twin from Judah and his situation with Tamar, his daughter-in-law. The people of Bethlehem find their heritage in Judah. Boaz is now an important part of that heritage. But this genealogy is important for many reasons:

- A. It points to the line of David, a line of kings.
 - B. It points to Solomon, son of David, author of Proverbs 31, to which we keep referring. Was Solomon reflecting back to his Great-great grandmother Ruth?
 - C. **Micah 5:2-5a** which Jim Rulach read earlier says: **But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me, one who will be ruler over Israel.** It is a prophecy about the coming King, the Messiah. It is a fulfillment of the blessing given in verse 11, having standing in Ephrathah and being famous in Bethlehem.
 - D. The Davidic line eventually carries over to Christ, from the tribe of Judah, born in Bethlehem, King over all. God is the kinsman-redeemer example for Boaz. Jesus becomes the kinsman-redeemer for us. This will be covered more in the coming weeks as we discuss themes from the book of Ruth.
9. The conclusion of this little book.
- A. Is it just a story about some people struggling through life's circumstances in a little dusty town in Israel?
 - B. Or is it a very articulate story about God's involvement in people living through life's circumstances in a little dusty town in Israel?
 - C. It supports the scripture on the bulletin, **And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28.**
 - D. God's purpose was to allow his son to be carried through a kind older Israelite and a young Moabite woman. They were faithful to him and he delighted to show his faithfulness to them. Example for finding a husband or wife; build character. Emphasis on looks.
 - E. It's an encouragement for you and I to live lives that show character, **cha-iel**, and his kindness, **hesed**.
 - F. This is a book about Christ. There are some very evangelistic messages to share.
 - (1). How will people on other side of world hear about God?
 - (2). How is Jesus a kinsman-redeemer for us?
10. Benediction.
- A. **I Cor. 2:9-10 However, as it is written: No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him. But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit**
 - B. Go in knowing God has a purpose for you, and be a blessing from the kindness God has shown you.