

Ruth part 4

Ruth chapter 3

Good evening everyone.

We come to chapter 3 in our series in Ruth.

INTRODUCTION

In **Chapter 1** we saw the bitter providence of God in the life of Naomi as she left her land, and lost her husband, her sons, and one of her daughters-in-law.

But there was sweet providence as well.

The famine ended in Judah
Naomi could go home
Ruth committed herself to care for Naomi.

In **chapter 2** we saw the mercy of God break through, to the degree that even Naomi could see it...at last.

The apparent coincidences – Ruth arriving in the field of a relative – no coincidence at all but rather something that occurs by God’s authority something God brings about according to his perfect plan, a manifestation of God in her life.

We met Boaz, a man of God, and a relative of Naomi's late husband.

We saw protection of and provision for Ruth through Boaz.

We saw Naomi bounce back from her despondency as she says in v20 *"The Lord bless Boaz, he has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead."*

Chapter 2 has ended on a high note.

LET'S READ the next part of this great story.

Ruth ch 3

[1] One day Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not try to find a home for you, where you will be well provided for? [2] Is not Boaz, with whose servant girls you have been, a kinsman of ours? Tonight he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. [3] Wash and perfume yourself, and put on 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. [4] When 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." [5] "I will do whatever you say," Ruth answered. [6] So she went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law told her to do. [7] When 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. [8] In the middle of the night something startled the man, and he turned and discovered 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 kinsman-redeemer. "

[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. [11] And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character. [12] Although it is true that I am near of kin, there is a kinsman-redeemer nearer than I. [13] Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to redeem, good; let him redeem. But if he is not willing, as surely as the Lord lives I will do it. Lie here until morning." [14] So she lay at his feet until morning, but got up before anyone could be recognized; and he said, "Don't let it be known that a woman came to the threshing floor. " [15] He also said, "Bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it out." When she did so, he poured into it six measures of barley and put it on her. Then he went back to town. [16] When Ruth came to her mother-in-law, Naomi asked, "How did it go, my daughter?" Then she told her everything Boaz had done for her [17] and added, "He gave me these six measures of barley, saying, 'Don't go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.' " [18] Then Naomi said, "Wait, my daughter, until you find out what happens. For the man will not rest until the matter is settled today."

PRAY

MAIN SECTION

There are 2 Old Testament terms that we need to understand as we come to ch 3 - they are the *Levir* and the *Goel*

The levirate. (The noun is levir) is a Latin word which translates the Hebrew for brother-in-law.

Levirate marriage takes place when two brothers live together and one dies leaving behind his wife with no future generations especially a son.

The Levir (the husbands brother) is to marry the widow and perform the duty of a husband – especially fathering a son on behalf of the deceased brother, so that the deceased brother's line would be continued and ultimately that family would not be blotted out of the book v6.

That first born son is considered to be the son of the dead brother. When this son grows up he will inherit the property of his deceased father.

Now Levirate marriage was not compulsory and there were actually many possible reasons why not every husbands brother could commit to this duty.

If this was the case, the Levirate would not or could not fulfil his duty to the widow, the widow was to take her complaint to the elders of the city (Deut 25:7) usually at the city gate.

The wife of the deceased was to shame her husband's brother in the presence of two or more elders.

The elders would take the husbands brother and explain his duty to the widow.

If he persisted in his refusal to take the widow to be his wife he would be shamed with the ceremony of the sandal and the spitting in the face.

Let's read those verses

Deut 25:7-9

[7] However, if a man does not want to marry his brother's wife, she shall go to the elders at the town gate and say, "My husband's brother refuses to carry on his brother's name in Israel. He will not fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to me." [8] Then the elders of his town shall summon him and talk to him. If he persists in saying, "I do not want to marry her," [9] his brother's widow shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, take off one of his sandals, spit in his face and say, "This is what is done to the man who will not build up his brother's family line." [10] That man's line shall be known in Israel as The Family of the Unsandaled.

This whole process would be embarrassing not only to him but to his deceased brothers family too.

That's the Levir and Levirate marriage.

(PAUSE)

Now to the goel

Kinsman redeemer is a translation of a Hebrew word 'goel' which is a verb that simply means to recover or to redeem.

“The kinsman redeemer” is the closest relative, (the next of kin). His duty is to redeem in a number of ways on behalf of the dead relative.

There are four basic things a kinsman-redeemer must do. The first two are found in Leviticus 25.

- i. **The first is buying back land or Property.**
Leviticus 25:25-28

The kinsman acts on behalf of a deceased relative to purchase and return to the family the land that once belonged to the deceased relative.

Perhaps when times were hard the deceased relative sold some of his land, the kinsman redeemer had the task of getting it back or buying back the land so that it might continue to provide for the deceased mans family for generations to come.

- ii. **To provide an heir for a deceased brother by marrying that brothers wife and producing a child with her.** This particular function of the kinsman redeemer is like the Levir but it is not the same as Levirate marriage. (Leviticus 25:47-55)

A kinsman redeemer redeemed the land of the deceased man and with that land came the redeeming of the widow (in this case Ruth) so that he might have a son with her and bring about one who would then inherit the land he

had redeemed on behalf of the deceased man.

Thirdly the Kinsman redeemer would need to...

iii. **...buy back a family member who had been sold into slavery due to poverty** (Lev. 25:39-43)

and he would also need to

iii. **...redeem or avenge blood.** Numbers 35:16-21, 31.

If the deceased husband had been murdered, the Kinsman redeemer would need to avenge his blood, harming or perhaps killing the perpetrator. The only place the murderer or manslayer was safe was in a city of refuge and you can read about those in Numbers 25:12

So the kinsman's redeemer's role was different to the role of the Levir.

(PAUSE)

On their way to Bethlehem, Naomi had warned Ruth that there was no Levir –

“Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? [12](#)Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons— [13](#)would you wait

until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters.

But it seems she had forgotten there was a kinsman redeemer...at least up until now – since Ruth has met Boaz in the field by the providence of God.

It's got Naomi thinking!

And in verse 1 of ch 3 Naomi said to Ruth,

My daughter, should I not try to find a home for you where you will be well provided for? Is not boaz, with whose servant girls you have been, a kinsman of ours –

There was no levir, but there was a goel.

He can redeem Elimelek's land which became his sons land when he died but is now nobody's and due to their death and a lack of sons and when He doe that he will also have to redeem Ruth.

So Naomi in V3 makes a plan.

So she tells Ruth to make herself as clean, as attractive and as beautifully scented as possible, go to the threshing floor of Boaz, and after he has laid down for the evening, sneak in, lift up his cloak, and lie down at his feet.

I don't think there's anything suggestive happening here. For Ruth to uncover Boaz's feet and lie at them

was a customary way of asking a man to provide protection in marriage.

It's certainly foreign to our culture - and here's the thing - remember it was strange to Ruth as well! She wasn't used to the customs and practices of the Israelites, she was a Moabitess.

Nevertheless Ruth in v5 says:

"I will do whatever you say,". ..so she went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law told her to do.

Again we see something of the character of Ruth, her ready willingness to obey her mother-in-law, doing all she had been asked to do.

She goes to the threshing floor where Boaz has been working and apparently eating dinner, too.

And V7

When 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.

During the night he was understandably startled when he rolled over, and realized that there was a woman lying at his feet.

Who are you? He asked (in V9). I am your servant Ruth,

“She said. Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are my kinsman redeemer (or close relative)

In verse 12 of chapter 2, we saw last night, Boaz saying to Ruth, *“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.”*

Well the same word that’s translated wings in 2:12 is translated corner of your garment in 3:9. It’s a shame the English doesn’t keep the same word...it’s easy to miss it.

Ruth was taking refuge under the wings of God and now she asks Boaz to provide this shelter and protection for her.

It’s a beautiful gesture.

Having identified many godly qualities in Boaz, she asks him to take a position of great importance in her life, entrusting herself to his protection as she has done already to the protection of God, the true and living God.

And in v10 Boaz is blown away by this:

“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. And now, my daughter, don’t be afraid. I will

do for you all you ask. All my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character

APP

What do those who know you say about you?

(PAUSE)

There is a slight and only potential glitch in this plan – Boaz is willing but there's a relative closer to Ruth than Boaz and he has the right to take on the role of kinsman redeemer for Ruth before Boaz does.

Boaz in v13 will go to him to see if he wants to redeem, *“if so good – let him redeem”* says Boaz. *But if not I am willing as surely as the Lord lives I will do it. Lie here until morning.*

So she lay at his feet until morning, but got up before anyone could be recognised and Boaz said “Don't let it be known that a woman came to the threshing floor.”

Boaz didn't want anyone to know that Ruth had been to the threshing floor. Why? Nothing had happened that was improper, but since when do the facts matter to gossipers? In order for her reputation not to be tarnished Boaz sent her away but not before giving her a gift.

Boaz gives Ruth six measures of grain to give to Naomi.

If we're not amazed at that statement it's only because we don't understand the colossal amount of grain that Ruth had just been given! It was a bout 80pounds in weight –more than 36kilograms! He put it in her shawl/her cloak and somehow she carried it back to Naomi.

Here's another thing we have learnt about Ruth – she's incredibly strong!!

She reaches Naomi and Naomi in v16 asks

“Well how did it go, my daughter?” Ruth told Naomi everything Boaz had done for her and added, “He gave ne these six measures of barley, saying “Don't go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.

And finally we see Naomi encouraging Ruth to do something she ought to have done a long time ago – in fact right back at the beginning before she left Bethlehem for Moab - wait patiently for Boaz to work things out. He will not rest until the matter is settled today. Will Boaz redeem?

CONCLUSION

From what we have learnt regarding the role and responsibility of the kinsman redeemer this evening, we can say Boaz was able to redeem.

These were the requirements:

- i. He had to be related by blood.

- ii. He had to be able to pay the price.
- iii. He had to be willing.

Boaz was all of these.

It's the greatest foreshadow in the book of Ruth.

It's a picture of Christ.

The Kinsman redeemer had to be related by blood:

1. Jesus took on flesh becoming man,

The Kinsman redeemer had to be able to pay the price:

2. He was able to pay the price for the sin of the world, the price was high – it would cost him his perfect life.

The Kinsman redeemer had to be willing:

3. And even though the price was high – Jesus was willing to give himself up. He was willing to die that all who believe in Him would not perish but have everlasting life.

While Ruth waits for her kinsman redeemer all of mankind waited for theirs.

Ours has now come.

Jesus is the great Redeemer.

There is a redeemer,
Jesus, God's own Son,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy One,

Jesus my redeemer,
Name above all names,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Hope for sinners slain.

When I stand in Glory,
I will see His face,
And there I'll serve my King forever,
In that Holy Place.

There is a Redeemer,
Jesus, God's own Son,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy One,

Thank you oh my Father,
For giving us Your Son,
And sending Your Spirit,
'Til the work on Earth is done.

Do you know your redeemer? Have you found Him?
He's able and willing to redeem you if only you would
go to him just a Ruth went to Boaz.

(PAUSE)

Will Boaz be granted to opportunity to redeem Ruth?
We'll find out next time – for now

LET'S PRAY.