Good morning, Family. Today, we conclude our series on the book and life of Ruth. Let me first ask this question: How’s your week with the Lord been? Intimate? Intimate! Remember when we first introduced Ruth’s mother-in-law Naomi. She is broken, bitter, poverty-stricken, and has lost her husband and her sons. She is empty. We conclude today with seeing her fullness (Ruth 4:11). The story is one of contrasts: From funerals to wedding, from bitter to sweet, from idolatry to faithfulness, from poverty to riches, and in the tale’s conclusion, from barrenness to birth. All these good changes occur because of Ruth’s decision and her proclamation to Naomi that “Your God will be my God.” And now we “see what God can do!”

For many of us, our testimony is much the same—troubles and blessings from our redeemer and His mighty work in our lives. John Piper has said, “The life of the Godly is not a straight line to glory.” Isaiah 54:4-8 confirms this truth for us:

4 “Do not be afraid; you will not be put to shame.

Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated.

You will forget the shame of your youth

and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood.

5 For your Maker is your husband—

the Lord Almighty is his name—

the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer;

he is called the God of all the earth.

6 The Lord will call you back

as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit—

a wife who married young,

only to be rejected,” says your God.

7 “For a brief moment I abandoned you,

but with deep compassion I will bring you back.

8 In a surge of anger

I hid my face from you for a moment,

but with everlasting kindness

I will have compassion on you,”

says the Lord your Redeemer.

This passage describes a beautiful truth: The ministry of the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, is our *go-el*, our kinsman-redeemer. From eternity, God plans to bring Ruth and Boaz together, making Bethlehem the blessed place for His entrance into the world—for the coming of Christ as our one, true kinsman-redeemer.

The setting of our story actually begins in Chapter 3: 18: “Wait,” Naomi advises Ruth. Your redeemer is at work and can be trusted. Yes, there is a “nearer” redeemer (relative) according to the law, and his claim must be honored. Boaz meets him at the city gate (In this culture, the city gate serves as a kind of court). In the original language of this part of the tale, Boaz refers to the closer relative and potential kinsman-redeemer as “*peloni almoni,*”which is best translated as “what’s-his-name.” For we who have read our Bible, this part of the Ruth story is not expected. This is not how the story is supposed to go. The closer kinsman responds initially, “I will redeem the land.” However, Boaz then adds the fact that “Ruth comes with it.” To this news, “what’s-his-name” reneges: “I can’t jeopardize my inheritance,” he responds. We do not know the details, but we do know that to this closer kinsman Ruth presents complications. For Boaz, Ruth is not and has never been a complication; rather, she has been the focus of his willingness and ability to redeem her. He has the right and the resources to buy the land and redeem Ruth. Notice that Ruth’s redemption is not earned. It is given. And it is sacrificial, the fruit of freedom. Notice, too, that Boaz is pro-active. He doesn’t sit back and wait.

Church, I submit to you that our Redeemer is pro-active. In our setbacks, our spiritual poverty, our bitterness, and our barrenness, our Redeemer Jesus is always up to something. In Ruth 1:12, Naomi believes there is no hope that Ruth can continue the family line. All the while, God is preparing and positioning them. Ruth has a purpose before anyone has an opinion. Again and again, God is at work in the setbacks of people’s lives. Even when they are oblivious to the grace of God, God is plotting and planning a legacy for them in line with His purposes. For us, His plan may not be a straight line to glory, but our Redeemer sees to it that we get there—that we get to Him.

Church, our redemption, our assurance, and our security are to be based upon the character and trustworthiness of our Holy God. Listen to this little story that I came across:

One day while my son Zac and I were out in the country, climbing around in some cliffs, I heard a voice from above me yell, “Hey, Dad! Catch me!” I turned around to see Zac joyfully jumping off a rock straight at me. He had jumped and *then* yelled, “Hey, Dad!” I became an instant circus act, catching him. We both fell to the ground. For a moment after I caught him, I could hardly talk.

When I found my voice again, I grasped in exasperation, “Zac! Can you give me one good reason why you did that???”

He responded with remarkable calm, “Sure, because you’re my Dad.” His whole assurance was based in the fact that his father was trustworthy. He could live life to the hilt because I could be trusted.

Isn’t this even more true for the Christian? Church, our redemption was settled on a cross. Our lives as believers, our testimony, our redemption are all secured and based upon the trustworthiness of our Redeemer. This planning and trustworthiness of our God becomes abundantly clear in the closing of the book of Ruth, which ends with a genealogy to show us that He is just getting started. As Naomi holds her grandchild, the child of Boaz and Ruth, in her lap (Ruth 4:16), I can’t help wondering if her mind wandered back just a short season or two earlier when she felt broken, bitter, hopeless, and helpless (Ruth 1:20-21). And now, “See what God can do!” The writer of Ruth explicitly wants us to see God’s hand in the legacy of redemption (Ruth 4:13). Thus, Ruth concludes with the genealogy and the New Testament begins with the genealogy of the Messiah. God orchestrates circumstances for His purposes, and for our hope and our salvation.

Believer, someone needs to hear your story of what God has done for you. Someone needs to be reminded that your Redeemer is currently at work in your life, in your circumstances. Our Redeemer can be trusted. Naomi’s emptiness is filled beyond her imagining. And can I offer one last thought? Ruth is no longer “Ruth the Moabitess.” When we leave her, she is Ruth, the great-grandmother of King David and the ancestor of our Redeemer Jesus. Listen, believer, your redeemer can not only redeem your present and your future, but He redeems your past and gives you a new name: Christian, child of God. Redemption for Ruth occurs despite what looks like circumstances that are hopeless. Think, then, of the length Christ has gone, what He has endured, to secure your Redemption and mine:

Hebrews 9:11

11 But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here,[a] he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation.

Titus 2:14

14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Ephesians 1:7

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace

Colossians 3:13-14

13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Romans 3:23-25

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement,[a] through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—

Isaiah 1:18

“Come now, let us settle the matter,”

says the Lord.

“Though your sins are like scarlet,

they shall be as white as snow;

though they are red as crimson,

they shall be like wool.

Each of us is redeemed, set free, given a new identity, through the finished work of Christ.

Passage in support of this sermon:

Ruth 4

1 Meanwhile Boaz went up to the town gate and sat down there just as the guardian-redeemer[a] he had mentioned came along. Boaz said, “Come over here, my friend, and sit down.” So, he went over and sat down.

2 Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said, “Sit here,” and they did so. 3 Then he said to the guardian-redeemer, “Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our relative Elimelek. 4 I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of these seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you[b] will not, tell me, so I will know. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line.”

“I will redeem it,” he said.

5 Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the land from Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the[c] dead man’s widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property.”

6 At this, the guardian-redeem it yourself. I cannot do it.”

7 (Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel.)

8 So the guardian-redeemer said to Boaz, “Buy it yourself.” And he removed his sandal.

9 Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, “Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon. 10 I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon’s widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses!”

11 Then the elders and all the people at the gate said, “We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel. May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. 12 Through the offspring the Lord gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.”

13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. 14 The women said to Naomi: “Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! 15 He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.”

16 Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. 17 The women living there said, “Naomi has a son!” And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

The Genealogy of David

18 This, then, is the family line of Perez:

Perez was the father of Hezron,

19 Hezron the father of Ram,

Ram the father of Amminadab,

20 Amminadab the father of Nahshon,

Nahshon the father of Salmon,

21 Salmon the father of Boaz,

Boaz the father of Obed,

22 Obed the father of Jesse,

and Jesse the father of David.