

# A Better Redeemer

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Ruth 4:1-12

## Greeting

- this is our second to last sermon in Ruth!
  - we have a few exciting things brewing, but you'll have to come in a few weeks to see where we'll be going in the Word together next!

*\*again, I want us to remember where we've been and what we've learned in Ruth, as we're wrapping it up:*

- **the theme of the book of Ruth is this: God works his saving plans through difficult circumstances.**
  - remember, we began this book by a man leading his family out of the promised land during a famine. they go to a foreign nation, Moab, and his sons find wives.
  - however these sons, and their father die, and the woman is left with her two daughters in law.
    - **lament, honestly bringing our pain and questions to God**
  - we then saw Ruth, one of these daughters in law remain with this woman, Naomi,
    - **biblical love, kindness, steadfast love, "hesed"**
  - we see these two women return to the promised land, and to the people of God
    - **where we learned about the value of repentance, and returning to God, and the places and spaces God has promised to bless**
  - we quickly see God blessing Naomi and Ruth, as Ruth is welcomed in the field of a godly man named Boaz, who provides food and protection for Ruth
    - **we saw biblical examples of godly manhood and womanhood in the characters of Ruth and Boaz**
  - we've seen Naomi and Ruth devise a plan to see if Boaz would marry Ruth and become their family's redeemer - to provide an heir for them, to allow them to keep their family's land
    - and so Ruth goes in the middle of the night, in a risky proposal, and he says yes
    - only, there is another redeemer, a relative closer to Naomi, and Boaz has no right to become their redeemer until he speaks with this man
  - and so we are brought to chapter 4
    - **let's read 4:1-12**

## Pray

- God, we thank you for your perfect Word
  - we thank you that in it you speak of our redemption
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## Intro

- let's be honest with one another
  - who of us doesn't face difficulties, and disappointment
  - who of us doesn't long for more
  - who of us doesn't long for rest
  - for deeper relationships
    - "For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies"  
Romans 8:22-23
- **for these reasons, our text can pose a few difficulties for some of us**

*\*someone can read this story, and I could preach this story like this:*

### 1) **"come to Jesus, he'll do this for you"**

- your life will be circumstantially better
- more emotionally fulfilling
- more prosperous
- better relationships
  - this just isn't true
    - in fact, what Jesus is actually clear on is this: if you want to follow me, you must:
      - lose your life
      - we deny ourself - both our personal desires and in our relationships we put the other person first
      - *in other words, it is not faithful way for me to teach this story, to read the happy ending of a couple in the bible and promise you your earthly life will go the same*
    - **that's not the point of this story**

## 2) great for them...sure wish it'd happen to me

- as we all long for heaven, for redemption, for something better...
- it can be difficult when our life is challenging, and we see God bless someone else
- “oh great, glad they got a spouse”
- “oh great, glad they had a child”
- “oh great, glad they’re happy with their job”
- “oh great, glad they just got that inheritance, vacation, etc”
  - a happy ending like we see in Ruth can be difficult for us
  - we often cannot identify
  - “it’s not my story, that’s not how my life is going”
- **these are real difficulties**
  - *my life isn’t promised the type of ending we see in Ruth*
- **but this is true: the story of Ruth, in fact every story in the Old Testament: is a signpost to a more important story**
  - where humanity is more desperate than even Ruth
  - where the only hope is for God himself to come and be the deliverer, the redeemer
  - where he pays a sacrificial price - not just out of a physical debt, but an eternal and spiritual one
  - where Jesus himself pays that redemption price, and redeems his bride
- **and THAT is your story**
  - Jesus is your redeemer
  - in Romans 8, that word “redemption” means
    - “a full ransom, release, deliverance”
  - the ultimate end of your story is not this life, but eternity with Jesus
- **and so as we read this story, and as we study Boaz, let us also look together at what this says about Jesus, who is your redeemer**

*\*we’ll look at our text in 4 chunks:*

## Boaz Is An Active Redeemer (vs 1-2)

"Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, "Turn aside, friend; sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down"

- remember the context - last night, other redeemer
  - we see Boaz go up, first thing in the morning to the city gate
    - the gate in ancient towns was more than just a walkway
      - more of an open square or plaza just inside the city against the back wall of the gate
      - thus, business and legal matters were often done there
- notice - we meet this other redeemer
  - the author goes to great lengths NOT to name him
    - "come over here, 'peloni' almoni' - it rhymes in Hebrew, expression roughly equivalent to "Mr So & So"
    - he is an ordinary man, no one particularly wicked, nor one particularly special
    - this man is simply starting his day, completely unaware of the situation going on with Naomi and Ruth

*\*on the other hand...*

- Boaz an **active redeemer**
  - **the last chapter ended with these words:** "Wait my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today" Ruth 3:18
    - wasted no time, literally the first opportunity he had, he went to the gate
  - we see clearly that Boaz had a **plan**, and he was acting on it
    - he went to the gate early, and waited
    - when the redeemer came by, Boaz initiated and had him sit down: "turn aside, friend, sit down here" vs 1
    - he then gathered the elders, this plan required accountability, authority, a council to be involved

*\*and in this, Boaz is a wonderful picture of the True Redeemer, Jesus Christ*

- **Jesus, is an active redeemer**

- Jesus too made a plan, and he did so with the Father and the Son
  - Christian, did you know your salvation was planned before time began?
    - “...he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will” Ephesians 1:4-5
- and Jesus didn’t just plan it, he didn’t just sit back and wait for his plan to unfold
  - he got his hands dirty
  - he does not sit in heaven, and say “work your way up to me”
  - he left heaven, and came for lost sheep
  - he pursues and seeks and redeems his bride
    - “For the Son of Man **came** to **seek** and to **save** the lost.” Luke 19:10
    - “As a shepherd **seeks out his flock** when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, **so will I seek out my sheep**, and **I will rescue them** from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness” Ezekiel 34:12
    - “**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us**, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” John 1:14
- the Bible is clear, we did not seek him, we were not the active ones in our redemption and salvation, we were sought, we were saved
- in fact, the Bible even goes as far as to say that we could not, would not seek him
  - “as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.” Romans 3:10-12
    - Paul is quoting David, who both are writing with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit - people will not seek God, we all turn aside
  - “You did not choose me, but I chose you...” John 15:16
    - the truth is, not one of us would be redeemed if not for Jesus, our active redeemer
- and yet, we were sought
  - if you are a Christian today, you were sought by the King of heaven and earth
  - he came for you
  - he bought you, he redeemed you
  - thank you God

## Boaz Is A Certain Redeemer (vs 3-6)

“Then he said to the redeemer, “Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. So I thought I would tell you of it and say, ‘Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people.’ If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you.” And he said, “I will redeem it.” Then Boaz said, “The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance.” Then the redeemer said, “I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it.”

- this other man was an **uncertain redeemer**
  - “If you will redeem it, redeem it...but if you will not...”
    - what a great deal! why wouldn't he? adding to his own family's estate and inheritance
    - the guy says “I will redeem it”
      - we can only imagine, if Ruth was there, her heart would have sunk
  - but when Boaz then mentions that he would also necessarily acquire Ruth as a wife
    - the other redeemer says, hmmm, “can't do it”
      - this is because this new information means not only that he would acquire a wife, but that the inheritance would then pass onto the first born child of this new marriage - it would not actually add to his own inheritance after all

*\*in contrast to this man...*

- Boaz was an **certain** redeemer
  - I'm going to fight for my bride
  - I'm going to make it happen: “as the Lord lives, I will redeem you” 3:13
    - Boaz fights for his bride
    - he's even strategic
    - he lets the news of Ruth fall like a boulder out of nowhere
      - “oh...by the way...you also have to marry Ruth...a widow...a foreign widow...Ruth the Moabite”
    - oh, but Boaz is a wise man, and he is fighting for his own future bride
- **Christ**
  - Jesus is a certain redeemer

- Christian, did you know Jesus never redeems someone half way?
  - “And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified” Romans 8:30
  - your redemption is certain
- Christian, did you know your redemption is secure till the end?
  - “According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” 1 Peter 1:3-5
  - “Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy” Jude 24
- God doesn’t give up on what he starts, our redemption is secure, certain
  - Jesus is not like this other redeemer
  - I’ll save that person, “Oh....yea, didn’t see that coming, I’m out”

### Application: want to make these things practical for us

- *because Jesus is an active redeemer, and redemption is certain*
  - we must not be passive
    - the paradox of the Christian life: God is sovereign, we are responsible
- God saves, acts, pursues, and we too must **respond, act, repent, obey**
  - For Example:
    - “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” Philippians 2:12-13
- **we must evangelize**
  - no one is saved who will not respond to God’s active saving love
  - no one is saved apart from hearing the gospel of Jesus
  - no one hears the gospel apart from a Christian bringing it to them!
  - “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20

- speaking of the nations, God, in his sovereignty, included the nations in the very bloodline of the redeemer of the nations!
- God made Jesus a Moabite, Jesus had Moabite blood in his veins
- incredible
- the certainty of our redemption never lulls a true Christian into complacency. The Holy Spirit would never let that happen
  - the certainty of our redemption is a wonderful source of joy and love to obey Jesus

## Boaz Is A Sacrificial Redeemer (vs 7-10)

“Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel. So when the redeemer said to Boaz, “Buy it for yourself,” he drew off his sandal. Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon. Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day.”

- **this other redeemer was willing to add to his inheritance**
  - but he was not willing to sacrifice it
  - this purchase would no longer financially beneficial for him
    - he would have to pay for the land, then provide for these widows, and then ultimately give up the land to the child who would be born of their marriage

*\*now to be fair to him...*

- when God lays out the provision for a widow to be redeemed and provided for by a relative in Deuteronomy 25, it only refers to the brothers of the deceased man
  - it is clear these two men are not direct brothers but simply relatives
  - therefore, there was no technical obligation for either of them to take care of these widows
  - furthermore, it would not be financially beneficial - for they would pay for the land, then provide for these widows, and then ultimately give up the land to the child who would be born of their marriage



- **so as Boaz offers this land to other redeemer, he is appealing not to the letter of God's law, but to it's spirit**
  - **last chapter**, we saw Boaz extend his integrity even above what was required by God
  - now in this chapter, we see him extending his sacrificial love above what God explicitly required
    - (quick note on that: we often view the Old Testament with an "good riddance", thankfully that's over" attitude.
    - but that's not how Boaz viewed the law of God, nor how Jesus viewed it.
    - In fact, Jesus did the same thing Boaz did. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus takes Old Testament commands and extends and broadens their scope, he calls for an even deeper adherence to God's law, an obedience that comes from the heart)
    - In fact, this is what happens to those who are born again, as prophesied in Jeremiah
      - "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant...I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people" Jeremiah 31:31, 33
    - This is the attitude of one who loves the Word and Law of God - how can I know it and obey it and even go to far extremes to display the kind of love and compassion it calls for)
- **and so we see Boaz willing to be a sacrificial redeemer, paying the costly price of redemption**
  - he was willing to pay the price
  - he was willing to loose some of his own inheritance
  - he was willing to sacrifice, to acquire for himself his bride
    - was not unwilling to pay the price for his bride
  - this funny ancient custom occurs
    - now we're not exactly sure who's exactly taking whose shoe, but it is thought that the one who did the purchasing would take the sellers shoe, and then step into it, as an act of "what was yours is now mine, I'm stamping/standing myself upon this new thing"
- now, let us remember this church: **we all begin in a situation more desperate than Ruth**
  - Ezekiel 16 describes our situation with allusions to Ruth:
    - "Again the word of the LORD came to me: 'Son of man, make known to Jerusalem her abominations, and say, Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth are of the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. And as for your birth, on the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to cleanse you, nor rubbed with salt, nor wrapped in swaddling cloths.

No eye pitied you, to do any of these things to you out of compassion for you, but you were cast out on the open field, for you were abhorred, on the day that you were born. "And when I passed by you and saw you wallowing in your blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' And I helped you to thrive..." Ezekiel 16:1-7a

- not only were we that helpless, we have all sinned and wandered from God
- our sin accrued a spiritual debt, and separation from God
- and Jesus came for us, and became our sacrificial redeemer
  - and he purchased us, redeemed us, with his own blood, he gave his own life
  - 1 Peter 1:18-19 "You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
  - the price he paid is unfathomable
  - the eternal punishment for sin, he became sin, that we might become the righteousness of God
  - he paid the debt, paid in full

## Application

- because Jesus is a sacrificial redeemer, who paid the costly price...
  - **we are not our own**
  - "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body" 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
    - we are not our own
    - our lives are not our own
    - our desires are no longer our lord and master, Jesus is
  - "Jesus...gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works" Titus 2:14
    - we have been purified, set free from sin, it is no longer our master
    - rather, we have been changed and are zealous for good works

## Boaz is a Praiseworthy Redeemer (vs 11-12)

"Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem, and may your

house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the LORD will give you by this young woman.”

- this other redeemer missed out, to say the least
  - unworthy redeemer
  - and ironically, in seeking to preserve his own name and inheritance, he was never praised, and wrote himself out of the story and the genealogy of Jesus
- and yet, on the other hand the elders and people at the gate of the town recognized Boaz's act and praised him for it
  - but they didn't know what they were saying
  - their words can be better seen as a prayer
    - may the Lord bless Ruth like he blessed Rachel and Leah
    - may the Lord build up Israel through Ruth
    - may this couple act worthily and become renowned in Bethlehem
    - may your offspring continue the line of Judah
- what is so glorious about reading the Old Testament, is that we know more than they know
  - God answered these prayers
  - he did bless Ruth and Boaz as he did Rachel and Leah
  - he did build up Israel through their child
  - their names will forever be remembered in Bethlehem
  - their offspring did continue the line of Judah...soon to be David...and one day Jesus, the one who would redeem his Bride from every nation and tongue
- and so, while those in this text simply prayed for this couple, hoping that God would bless them
  - we see that God answered this prayer
  - and brought about our own redemption
    - and while Ruth and Boaz were blessed and praised by those at the city gates,
    - their future descendant Jesus, the very answer to these prayers, would be cast out of the city gates, not blessed but cursed, not praised but mocked, and yet in this terrible act of rejection and death on a cross..
    - he would purchase redemption for all who would come to him
      - and so we praise him

- he is worthy to be praised

## **Pray**

### **Call to Worship**

- communion, remember the blood of Jesus, who purchased our redemption at a costly price
- carpets, for postures of prayer and worship
- prayer team, bring your requests and receive prayer
- finally, worship
  - one of the biggest obstacles to our worship is our desire to make our own name great, our great obsession with ourselves, our inheritance
    - when we, like the other redeemer, are more concerned with our own wellbeing, survival, inheritance, circumstances, we miss out on worship
    - when we are concerned with our own name, our own inheritance, we miss Jesus
  - worship is the great opportunity for our souls to say “this moment is not about me. my name. my glory. I will look upon and praise my redeemer”
    - let us worship him together