

## Ruth Part 6

### Wanted and Redeemed

Ruth 4: 1-12

Last week, we left off with the understanding that Boaz wanted to redeem Ruth, but we were left with the understanding that an obstacle stood in the way. There was another who has “first dibs” at Ruth because he is a nearer relative.

- We have to understand the intrigue here. While we know the story, the contemporary readers would not.
- If we were reading this for the first time, we would be left wanting to know what is going to happen.

See the suspense of the scene.

- Boaz begins by deferring to the nearer kinsman.
- To the dismay of the audience, the nearer kinsman accepts the responsibility of redeeming Naomi.
- With the suspense heightened, Boaz reveals what he has kept from him... that to redeem Naomi means that he must take Ruth as his wife. This means that he must marry “a Moabite woman” and that they must have children together.
- What will the kinsman choose? He ultimately refuses to accept the responsibility for Ruth and this opens the door for Boaz to redeem her.

What do we actually mean when we say that he “redeemed” her?

- Verse 7 tells us of the transaction that took place. They followed the proper custom on redeeming and exchanging.
  - Notice this was done in the presence of several witnesses. They would respond down in verse 11. Their response is the same as saying “Amen”.
- Verse 10 tells us the key for redemption. Boaz says “And Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife.” That sums up the core of redemption—it means to be bought with a price.
- *“No word in the Christian vocabulary deserves to be held more precious than Redeemer, for even more than Savior it reminds the child of God that his salvation has been purchased at a great personal cost.”* (E.F. Harrison)

We see redemption illustrated for us in the Old Testament.

- We see it in the Garden of Eden. God had told Adam that in the day you eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree “you shall surely die.” But he didn’t die immediately. Why? Because God provided a substitution. He killed an animal and that animal spared him temporarily and covered his shame.  
Most notably is the Exodus. But let’s see first what the Lord says to His people
- Exodus 6: 2-9- This is reminiscent of a Jewish marriage vow. The Lord is promising to deliver the people and in so doing He will pay the cost for them.
- Then, we see the Lord send the plagues on Egypt ultimately culminating in the Tenth Plague which is the death of the firstborn. It is a dire and uncomfortable scene for us. It serves as a reminder of the price and the consequence of disobedience to the Lord. But, God provides the substitute and through the death of the Lamb, the life of the firstborn could be spared. And it is in this that the Lord ransomed His people from slavery.
- Hosea 3 also shows us a picture of redemption. God had told Hosea to marry a prostitute named Gomer. Hosea did and she proved herself to be unfaithful.

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Somewhere along the way, Gomer was probably forced out of Hosea's home and fell into slavery, probably as a prostitute. In chapter 3, Hosea goes and buys his own wife back out of the life of slavery and prostitution.

- He was told to "love a woman who is loved by another man..."

Now, we come to this story of Ruth. We are told that Boaz served as the redeemer and we should know what that word means. He paid a price to rescue and ransom them. Now, what we must take note of here is that a few things were necessary to enable Boaz to serve as the redeemer:

- The right to redeem: the kinsman redeemer couldn't be just anyone. He had to be the closest relative. With the refusal on the part of the nearest relative, that gave Boaz the full right to redeem.
- The resources to redeem: Naomi and Ruth were clearly too poor to pay the price for themselves or else they would have and this whole encounter would not have mattered. But instead, they are completely unable to redeem themselves and are at the mercy of someone else. Boaz clearly has the resources needed to pay the price for them.
- The resolve to redeem her: Our text clearly demonstrates that Boaz had the resolve to redeem her. The other kinsmen, who was the closer kin, had the right and the resources, but lacked the resolve and as a result the redemption did not take place.
  - But Boaz clearly wanted to. He arranged it where it would happen. His heart's desire was to marry Ruth.

Every redemption story of the Old Testament serves to prepare us for the ultimate redemption story that we are told in the New Testament.

- Ephesians 1: 7-8: *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished on us.*

### Jesus has the right to redeem us:

- Fully God
- Fully man
- Jesus fully understands both parties involved.

#### - "**The Long Silence**"

(from John Stott's book "*The Cross of Christ*")

At the end of time, billions of people were scattered on a great plain before God's throne. Most shrank back from the brilliant light before them. But some groups near the front talked heatedly - not with cringing shame, but with belligerence.

"Can God judge us? How can he know about suffering?" The words came from a thin, starving young girl. She ripped open a sleeve to reveal a tattooed number

from a Nazi concentration camp. "*We endured terror ...beatings ... torture*

*...death!*" In another group, a man lowered the collar on his shirt revealing an

ugly rope burn on his neck, "*What about this...I was lynched for no crime, for no reason other than the color of my skin.*" All across the plain there were hundreds

of such groups, each had a complaint against God for the evil and suffering he

permitted in the world. "*How lucky God was to live in heaven, where all was*

*sweetness and light...no weeping, no fear, no hunger, no hatred...What did God*

*know of all that humans had been forced to endure in this world?..."* they were

saying. So each of these groups sent forth their leader, chosen because he or she

had suffered the most -- a Jewish person, a black person, a person from

Hiroshima, a horribly deformed arthritic, several with various forms of disabilities -- at last they were ready to present their case...it was rather clever. They pronounced that before God could be qualified to be their judge, he would have to endure what they had endured. Their decision was ... God would have to be sentenced today. Sentenced to live on earth and to live as a man who would suffer. *"Let em' be born a Jew!" "Let the legitimacy of his birth be doubted!" "Let him know what it is like to be hungry!" "Let his work be so difficult that even his family will think he is out of his mind when he tries to do it!" "Let him be betrayed by his closest friends!" "Let him face false charges!" "Let him be tried by a prejudice jury!" "Let him be convicted by a cowardly judge!" "Let him be tortured!" "Let him see what it means to be so terribly alone and then let him die! Let him die so that there can be no doubt that he died!" "Let there be a great host of witnesses to verify it."* As each leader pronounced the portion that he or she would add to the sentence, loud murmurs of approval went up from the throng of people... *"Yes, yes, it's only fair! It's only right!" "If he would judge us, he must face what we faced"* ... And when the last had finished pronouncing their sentence...**there was a long silence...**

No one dared utter another word. No one could even move. For suddenly, it dawned upon them all. That God had already served his sentence and that God would judge no one in whose shoes he had not already walked in.

#### **Jesus has the resources to redeem us:**

- Power over sin- The only way to redeem us from our sin is to overcome sin. He took our sin. He embraced our sin. "He who knew no sin, became sin."
- Authority over death- death could not hold him. The story of Easter is the story of victory. Easter isn't about a cross. Easter is about an empty tomb. We are alive because he is alive. We have hope through life because He is alive. That's why the Psalmist could say, "even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."

#### **Jesus has the resolve to redeem us:**

- He seeks us: Just like Boaz took the initiative to redeem Ruth, Jesus takes the initiative to redeem us. He did not wait for us to discover a way. He did not way for us to clean ourselves up. He came to seek us out.
- He saves us: He grants us mercy. He makes the exchange and serves as the substitution (v. 7). Let's be grateful that we do not get what we deserve. Let's be glad that we aren't treated as Moabites.
- He changes us: Did you notice the change in verse 10? Throughout the entire book, Ruth has been known as Ruth the Moabite. But, this is the last time. Boaz says, "I have bought her to be my wife." She is no longer known as the Moabite but now she is the wife of Boaz. It changed everything for her.
  - Redemption does that for us. It did it for Rahab the prostitute. It does it here for Ruth the Moabite.