

**Bible Study Notes**

**Provided by**

**Starlight Missionary Baptist Church**

**2844 Askew**

**Kansas City MO. 64138**

**Web: StarlightKC.org**

**Scott F. Thomas, Pastor**

**Light Our World With A Loving Family Culture”**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF RUTH**

Welcome to our study from the Book of Ruth. There is a treasure chest full of insights and truth to help you grow closer to God and train to be godly. Before we begin the study of any book in the Bible it is important to know some things about it’s background. This provides important information to help us better understand the purpose of the book. Before we begin our study in Ruth we will observe who wrote it, when the events occurred, the theme and key verse, and it’s main characters.

**Writer of the Book**

The writer of Ruth is unknown though some say Samuel wrote it.

**Occurrence of the Events**

The events of the book of Ruth occurred during the times of the Judges.

There were approximately six (6) major periods of Jewish history covered in the Old Testament.

1. **The Patriarchs.** This is covered from Genesis 12 – 50. This covers the lives of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob (Israel).
2. **Life in Egypt.** This is covered from Genesis 50 – Exodus 12:36. There are not many chapters that cover this period. However we do know that they were there for 400 years and they experienced the hardship of slavery.
3. **Journey to and settlement in the Promised Land.** Exodus 12:37 – Joshua 24. This covers the time period when they crossed the Red Sea to the time they were settled in the Promised Land.
4. **The Time of Judges.** From Judges 1 – 1 Samuel 8. This period is best summed up by ***Judges 21:25,*** ***“In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.”***  Because there was no strong leadership in the land at that time, Israel became spiritually and morally bankrupt.
5. **The Monarchical Period.** From 1 Samuel 9 – 2 Chronicles 36. Initially God was to be their king but they rejected him and wanted a king like all other nations. So God granted their request.
6. **The Exile.**  From Ezra to Esther. Israel’s disobedience towards keeping God’s law caused them to be taken captive by the Babylonians.

The first seventeen books in the Old Testament cover the six (6) major periods of Jewish history mentioned in the Old Testaments. The other 22 books are inserted in different places in the six (6) periods of Jewish history.

So what period does the events of the book of Ruth occur? The events in the book occurred during the fourth (4th) period the time of the Judges. Though the events are connected to this time the book wasn’t actually written until a later date, possibly during the time of David.

**Theme and Key Verse of the Book**

The theme of the book is faithfulness and devotion. This is revealed in chapter 1:16 – 17. Ruth returned to Bethlehem with Naomi and devoted to serving her. During a time of spiritual and moral darkness in the nation because everyone did that which was right in his own eyes, Ruth was a ray of light who showed unwavering commitment and devotion to Naomi. The lesson for us today is that we should have an unwavering devotion and commitment to God Almighty.

**The Main Characters**

**Ruth** – A Moabite woman married to Mahlon, Elimelech and Naomi’s son.

**Naomi** – Ruth’s mother – in – law.

**Boaz** – A close relative of Elimelech, Naomi’s deceased husband, and Kinsman Redeemer.

**OUTLINE OF THE BOOK**

1. The Tragic Experience in Moab Ch. 1:1 – 5
2. The Journey back to Bethlehem Ch. 1:6 - 22
3. Boaz’s Encounter of Ruth in His Field Ch. 2
4. Ruth’s Proposal of Redemption Ch. 3
5. Ruth’s Redemption by Boaz Ch. 4:1 - 12
6. Boaz’s Genealogy Ch. 4:13 – 22

**BIBLE STUDY NOTES**

**CHAPTER 1**

1. **The Tragic Experience in Moab Ch. 1:1 - 5**

Elimelech and his family move to Moab because of a famine. The two sons wed Moabite women. The tragedy that occurs.

**Vs. 1.** ***The days when the Judges ruled.*** This immediately takes to the events in the book of Judges. This was a period of spiritual and moral decline. After Joshua’s generation passed away the next generation did not know the Lord nor what he had done for Israel Judges 1:10. This may have happened because Joshua’s generation did not apply Moses law in Deuteronomy 6:4 – 9. They were to teach the Law of God to their children. Their refusal to do so led to the spiritual decline of the nation. This principle holds true for today. We must make sure we train our children to know God and his Word. If we do not it will lead to their own spiritual decline.

***There was a famine in the land.*** A famine meant there was a shortage of food supply. The ancient culture depended heavily on farming for survival. For farming to succeed rain was necessary. In the Bible, famines did not occur because of a course of nature. Famines occurred because of divine intervention. God used famines to warn, correct, or punish his people. Ultimately it was to cause them to turn from their ways and return to God. God uses famines in our lives also. He does so through different means. His purpose is to cause us who have wandered to return to and depend upon Him.

**Vs. 2.** ***Names Given.*** When names were given to a son or daughter it wasn’t because they liked the sound of the name. It was because the name represented a characteristic of the child or represented the destiny of the child. Jacob’s name was “trickster’. There are cases that God determined the name of the child. Jesus and John the Baptist were named by God. Elimelech means “Jehovah is king” and Naomi means “pleasant” The names of Mahlon, Kilion and Orpah are uncertain. Ruth means “friend”. This name was not of Moabite origin. It was probably given to her because of her commitment to Naomi.

It is good to provide honorable names for our children. Proper naming of children encourage character building and the destiny of children. Some name their children after a parent, grandparent or other relative. What better way to leave an honorable legacy by giving the child an honorable name.

***They were Ephrathites.***  They were inhabitants of Ephrath which is another name for Bethlehem Gen. 35:19. As we know 1,000 years later Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

**Vs. 3 – 4.** ***Elimelech died.*** So Naomi was left with here two sons. They married Moabite women. Israelites were not forbidden to marry Moabite women but they were not to seek the welfare or prosperity of the nation of Moab. Deut. 23:3 – 4. During the time of Israel’s travels to the Promised Land, Moab showed hostility towards them by (1) hiring Balaam to curse Israel, (2) The corrupted the holiness of Israel’s soldiers through sexual immorality with prostitutes. Elimelech probably did not know how long the famine would last so he probably encouraged his sons to find wives in Moab.

The Bible does not for bid us to marry anyone of another race. It does teach we are not to marry anyone who is an unbeliever. 2 Cor. 6:14 – 17.

**Vs. 5. *Mahlon and Kilion died.*** After ten (10) years in Moab Naomi’s husband and two sons died and she was left without them. This is significant because widows did not have rights to the husbands inheritance. There were no wills drawn to guarantee the widow would receive an inheritance. The distribution of an inheritance was determined by what God said in Numbers 27:8 – 11. The Inheritance was distributed in this order: (1) Sons; (2) Daughters; (3) Brothers of the Husband; (4) Uncles on the Fathers side; (5) Nearest Relative. A widow who had no children had no income. There was no Welfare, Social Security, WIC, Obama Care or any other social means of provision. This meant they had to survive through begging, prostitution, or starving to death.

So, in this case of Naomi, if Mahlon or Kilion were alive Naomi would be cared for by one of them. But because they are deceased Naomi is now homeless and her future very uncertain.

We must remember to consider the physically challenged, widows with children, and single mothers. Many are without financial wherewithal to provide for their families. There are different ways to help those who are raising families alone: Babysit for them, change the oil in their cars, small repairs around the home, help with maintaining their lawn, prepare a meal from time to time. In Acts 6:1 the early church made sure the needs of the widows were met. What can you do to help widows, physically challenged, or single mothers?

This tragic experience in Moab involved a family who left Bethlehem to survive a famine but resulted in the death of a husband and two sons, who died and left three widows. One woman who had no means of provision and a bleak future. As tragic as this may be we must remember that God is very faithful. He said that we a are not to worry when our daily provisions are low. We are to trust Him, the one who owns everything and know that he knows us by name and will remember us. So remember,

***“…If God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?”***

***Matthew 6:30 KJV***

1. **The Journey Back To Bethlehem Ch. 1:6 - 22**

The famine in Bethlehem subsides. The discussions and decisions the women make as they travel to Bethlehem.

**A. The Discussion on the way to Bethlehem Vs. 1 - 18**

As the women are on the way to Bethlehem Naomi speaks truthfully to them about what they would face if they went back with her.

**Vs. 6. When she heard in Moab.** There were no phones of other forms of electronic communication in those days so usually this information was made known by travelers or messengers.

***The LORD had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them.*** Notice the how there is a difference about how the word Lord is spelled. Notice it isn’t “Lord” or LORD, but it is “LORD”. The word “LORD” is the English spelling for “Jehovah”. This name represents the covenant God has with the nation of Israel to show what ever promise He makes to them He will keep it. The word “aid” in the NIV is used for the word “visit” in the KJV. It means “to care for”. So her it tells us that God cared for his people by lifting the famine and providing food for them.

God will always keep His promise to take care of his people. He will care for us by giving us wisdom, giving us direction, or giving us food. Though we will experience famines it is important to remember He is a promise keeper not a promise breaker. He will take care of us and no famine will prevent Him from keeping His promise.

**Vs. 7.** ***She left the place where she had been living.*** After she heard God showed His care for his people by providing food, Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah left Moab and went back to Bethlehem in Judah. Though she had no husband or sons she would at least be among her own people, a place where she was known and familiar.

**Vs. 8 – 10. *Go back each of you to your mother’s home.*** Because of the death of Mahlon and Kilion, Ruth and Orpah were no longer legally obligated to Naomi. Once death occurs the living spouse was free to find another spouse if possible. So they were advised to go back to Moab.

Naomi instructed them to go to their mother’s home. It was the mothers who prepared the women for marriage and advices them about womanhood, love, sexuality, and other issues in marriage.

Mothers and older women play an important role in preparing young women. Not only do they prepare them for marriage but also they are to train them to be godly. Titus 2:3 – 5 mentions how older women are to train younger women to be godly. They were to be an example of godliness, they were to show self control, and patience. We are living in a society where older women do not train younger women to be godly. Instead instructions about womanhood comes from secular television and magazine articles. Mothers and older women God has given you skills and experience to play a key role in the formation of Godly women. If we are to raise a generation of godly women older women must take younger women and help develop them.

***May the Lord show kindness to you as you have shown to your dead and to me.*** The word for kindness is Hesed. It is kindness that involves acts of love, favor, or mercy towards others. Ruth and Orpah faithfully served their husbands and Naomi. Naomi’s expectation of God was that he would show favor and mercy to them they way they showed favor to her and her sons.

We are called to show kindness towards others. The greatest commandments are found in Matthew 22:34. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves. This love is not a feeling. It is an action, an action that involves acts of forgiveness, grace, mercy, caring for others, and helping them, sometimes giving to them even when they don’t deserve it. This is how God is towards us. When we show kindness to others God rewards our faithfulness, Luke 6:38.

***May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband.***

The reply of Ruth and Orpah was to go back to Judah with Naomi. Though foreigners they wanted to establish a life with her.

**Vs. 11 - 13.** ***Why would you come with me?*** Naomi gives two reasons why they should not go back with her.

1. There is a very slim possibility Naomi will have any more sons. Naomi asks three (3) rhetorical questions to prove this point. (1) Why would you come with me? (1) am I going to have any more sons? (2) If I were able to have sons would you wait til they grew up? (3) Would you remain unmarried for them? These questions pertain to the levirate custom mentioned in Deuteronomy 25:5 - 10. If a man who was married died and he had no children, his brother was responsible to take the widow as his wife. He was to have children by her and the first born son was to be named after the deceased husband. In this way the name of the deceased would continue, his inheritance remained in the family, and the widow would be supported. Naomi realized that this was not an option for these ladies. She was an older woman and even if she could have children (certainly she would have to find a husband first which would be difficult) would they want to wait the time for them to grow up to marry them.
2. ***It is bitter for me because the Lord’s hand has gone out against me.*** Naomi tells Ruth and Orpah that conditions will be better for them if they go back. If they go to Bethlehem with her it won’t go well with them because God is against her. She has lost her husband and sons and has no means of provision. What will God do next? Will he make her situation worse? So she advises them not to go with her because she would not want this trouble to fall on them also.

God does not allow trouble because He is against us. Trouble is what God uses to bring all to repentance. When Nebuchadnezzer became arrogant God caused him to have a nervous breakdown to humble him and show him that all of his success resulted from God’s grace in his life, Daniel 4:36 – 37. God also allows adversity to build our character according to Romans 5:3. Christian character is not developed when things are going well. It is our adverse experiences that challenge us and mold us to become godly. When we face adversity we must remember not to conclude God is against us. God is not our adversary, the devil is 1 Peter 5:10. Satan uses trouble to destroy us. God always has our best interest at heart. No matter what we face we must always find the hope in our adversity.

**Vs. 14A.** ***Orpah kissed her mother in law goodbye,*** Orpah decided it was best to go back to Moab. After hearing Naomi’s explanation she saw there was no benefit in going back to Bethlehem, on the contrary there was nothing but trouble and hardship.

It is not always wise to abandon situations because of how they appear. In 2 Kings 6:8 - 17 When the children of Israel were at war with Aram, they were surrounded by the Aramaic army. Elisha’s servant became afraid and asked, “What shall we do?” Elisha calmly said, “Don’t be afraid, those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” Then he prayed, “O Lord, open his eyes so he may see.” The Lord opened the servant’s eyes and the servant saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire. It appeared this battle couldn’t be won but God had things in place to make them victorious. Just because things appear to be bad doesn’t mean they are. Hebrews 11:1 and 2 Corinthians 5:7 teach great principles about exercising faith. As Christians we not to always behave because of what we see. We are to act and move because of what God is telling us. His Word must be first in all of our decision making. The best way to make a decision like this is to pray and ask God to guide us.

**Vs. 14B.** ***But Ruth Clung to her.*** “Clung or Cling” means to be stuck or adhered to something and the difficulty being separated. The same word is used in Genesis 2:24 where the word “United” (NIV) or “Cleave” (KJV).

**Vs. 16 – 17.** ***Don’t urge me to leave you or turn back from you.*** It is powerful what Ruth now tells Naomi. Ruth promises to Go with Naomi and reside with her, Make Naomi’s people her people, serve the same God, and die in the place as Naomi.

Then she makes an oath. She says, May the Lord deal with me If anything but death separates you and me. This oath one where a judgement occurs if one doesn’t keep their end of the promise. Ruth makes an oath to Naomi to leave her old life and she commits to a life devoted to her. She is leaving her own family, friends, her god, and culture, and embracing Naomi’s family, friends, nation, God, and culture. If she does not keep this oath may God judge her harshly for her lack of commitment.

As followers of Christ we are doing the same as Ruth. When we became Christians we agreed to leave our old way of life and become devoted to God. We once lived by the principles of this world and according to it’s ways. We are to leave that life and be devoted to a new life in Christ. This is a life that involves living by the Fruit of the Spirit. Romans 6:13 says, “Do not offer the part so f your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.” We are no longer to devote ourselves to sin. We are now to now yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to produce fruit.

**Vs. 18.** ***When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.*** Naomi accepted Ruth’s decision to go and no longer tried to persuade her to go back.

**B. The Arrival at Bethlehem Vs. 19 - 22**

Naomi and Ruth have arrived at Bethlehem and those who know her took notice of them.

**Vs. 19.** ***When they arrived the people were perplexed when they saw the women.*** When Naomi left for Moab she was probably well and great. She left with her husband and two sons. Yet when she returned her appearance raised the question in the minds of the women. Who is that woman with her? Where is her husband and two sons? Why does she look so worn and distressed. And of course speculation as well as gossip may have spread because of these questions. One thing for sure this wasn’t the same Naomi they knew before and they wondered what happened.

We must be careful of our reactions when people come to church. When they left they were hopeful about their life choices but when they return they may have experienced events that have caused them to be devastated. They may return in shame and deep discouragement. Moments like this are always opportunities to build others up, Ephesians 4:29. The church is God’s hospital. Christians are servants in His hospital. Servants who use words and kind acts to help others heal from their pain and disappointments. We are not here to tear others down but build them up.

**Vs. 20 – 21.** ***When Naomi heard them her reply was, “Don’t call me Naomi call me Mara because the lord has made my life bitter.”*** She said in verse twenty one (21) that she went away full but returned empty. In the Commentary on the Old Testament by Kiel and Delitzsch, the word full is defined as riches. Not in terms of cash or property but the riches of a husband and two sons. Yet she feels that God has taken them away from her and left her with a bitter situation. So she prefers to be called Mara instead of Naomi.

**Vs. 22.** ***Naomi and Ruth arrive in Bethlehem as the barley harvest began.*** What the writer mentions next is interesting. The barley harvest was the time when the barley grain had grown and was able to be gathered for food. Barley was considered food for the poor. It was cheaper than wheat and also was a grain farmers used to feed to their animals. God worked things out so that Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem in enough time to have food.

It is important that we remember the small blessings. Small blessings are great things that God does but they go unnoticed because they happen is normal ways. Naomi and Ruth’s timing was perfect, or was it? They made it just in time for the barley harvest, right when food was available. Also, Ruth was there to help Naomi to gather the barley. What if neither of these things had happen? What if Naomi didn’t arrive at the barley harvest or Ruth decided to go back to Moab? Naomi’s condition would be even worse. These are not normal occurrences this is God at work in ways we would consider as being normal. This is why we are to give thanks “in” all things 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Remember not to neglect the small blessings. The small blessings are really large blessings.

**Conclusion of Chapter 1**

Elimelech, Naomi and their two sons travel to Moab because of a famine in Bethlehem. While there the two sons marry Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. Elimelech and the two sons died leaving all of the women as widows. The famine in Bethlehem cleared and the three women decided to make their way back to Bethlehem. Orpah decided to go back to Moab after hearing that there was not a promising future there. Ruth made a commitment that no matter what would happen she would remain devoted to Naomi. So Naomi and Ruth went to Bethlehem. When they arrived it was the beginning of the barley harvest. I would like to share four insights to apply from chapter 1:

1. **God is always has been and always will remain sovereign.**  A famine is the reason Naomi and her family traveled to Moab. Yet the removal of the famine caused Naomi and Ruth to return. The famine didn’t happen by chance. It happened because God is sovereign and in control. The chaos in our world doesn’t happen by chance either. Disease, Political confusion, and racial tension do not happen by chance. They happen because they are permitted by God, Colossians 1:16 - 17.
2. **Tragedies are a part of God’s plan and purpose.** Famines, the loss of a loved one, the departure of a daughter in law or any other types of tragedies can cause much grief. Yet as strange as it may seem God has a purpose for our tragedies. James 1:2 – 3 and 1 Peter 1:5 – 6. God is either strengthening your character, strengthening your faith, or proving your faith.
3. **God will always care for us.** The two women who lost husbands and food sources made it back to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest, and they made it back safely. God’s amazing care was at work. As God cared for those two women he will also do the same for us, Matthew 10:29 – 31. He doesn’t tell us how, He just does it. How He cares, is not our business. That He cares, is.
4. **Our responsibility is to remain devoted to God.** Ruth made an oath to Naomi that no matter what the circumstances were she would remain devoted to her. This is where we struggle. We are devoted to things, people, jobs, and activities, but we struggle with being devoted to God. We don’t struggle with our feelings toward God. We feel love towards Him. We struggle with our actions. Listen to the words of Jesus in John 14:15. True love is not in feelings only, it is actions also. Our devotion to God must reveal itself in actions as well as feelings. This is what proves our devotion.

**CHAPTER 2**

1. **Boaz’s Encounter of Ruth in His Field Ch. 2**

Naomi and Ruth are in Bethlehem. Ruth gleans in a field owned by Boaz. Boaz notices Ruth and shows grace to her.

**A. Boaz Notices Ruth 2:1 - 7**

**Vs. 1. *Naomi had a relative on her husband’s side.*** The story doesn’t say how Boaz was related to Elimelech, but it tells about the type of person he was.

He was a man of standing. KJV and NASB each say he was a man of great wealth. The expression is translated, a “man of valor”. The expression spoke about Gideon and Jephthah in Judges 6:12 and 11:1. A man of valor was one who was courageous and skillful in battle. When it speaks about Boaz it tells us about the type of character he had. He was well respected in his community. He was just and fair in dealing with others and he also feared the lord. See Leviticus 19:12 – 18.

We should work towards having a good reputation towards others, Proverbs 22:1. A good reputation is very important because it is the means of influencing others.

**Vs. 2. *Let me go to the fields and pick leftover grain.*** God designed a program to take care of the needy, Leviticus 19:9 – 10.

Ruth was an alien and she was poor so she met the qualifications. This is an act of grace. God didn’t have to make provisions for the poor. Nor did he have to receive aliens. Instead he met their needs.

We should always attempt to discover ways to help others. We live in a country where we are blessed to have so many resources. Yet there remain some who have needs. God uses his people to help others.

**Vs. 3. *As it turned out, she found herself working in Boaz field.*** I have discussed this principle earlier. Though this may have been a random choice the outcome was not. This happened by God’s will and leading.

The events in our lives do not happen by chance. They are graciously guided by the Lord, Proverbs 16:1,9. We make our plans but in the end God’s decision is final.

**Vs. 4. *Boaz arrived and greeted the harvesters.*** When Boaz saw the workers he spoke a blessing on his workers. The Lord be with you” is the hope that he will be gracious enough to watch over and keep you safe.

Numbers 6:24 – 26 is used as a benediction in the local churches today. As you go on your way throughout the week the hope that God’s face will shine upon you.

**Vs. 5 - 6. *Whose young woman is that?*** Boaz noticed that there was a stranger in his field. She had not been there before. Boaz wanted to know who she was. The expression “young woman” says something about Ruth. The word “damsel” is used in the KJV and NASB. It could refer to a young girl between infancy and adolescence or it could refer to a young woman.

There is also a possessive pronoun used to refer to Ruth (Whose). This lets us know that Ruth was either someone’s daughter, wife or servant. In this case she was Naomi’s daughter – in – law.

**Vs. 7. *Please let me glean.*** Here is another quality about Ruth. She was a hard worker. She asked to work and then worked nearly the entire day. The harvesting process involved cutting the stalks of barley with a sickle. Next the stalks were tied in bundles. These bundles were put in small heaps or piles called sheaves. Any grain or stalks that fell to the ground were allowed to be picked up by the poor and needy. This was the responsibility of the wealthy to the poor according to Leviticus 19:9 – 10.

Ruth had been working from morning until the time Boaz visited the field. We do not know what time he arrived but it appears that she has been working most of the day. Time was recorded differently in Israel than for us. Ruth had been working nearly the entire day with an exception of refreshing herself for a short time. This says much about Ruth. It shows that she is a hard worker. First of all she has initiative. In Vs. 2, She requested of Naomi that she be permitted to go to the fields to work. Secondly, she has been working all day. She shall be rewarded for her diligence and hard work.

God rewards our diligence and hard work. Proverbs 13:4 tells us that the soul of the sluggard desires and has nothing but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. Working is a basic responsibility for humanity. Even Adam was responsible to work the garden to provide food, Genesis 2:15. That responsibility has not changed even for today. We are to work and provide for our families 1 Thessalonians 3:10.

**B. Boaz Shows Favor Towards Ruth 2:8 - 16**

***Vs. 8 – 9. So Boaz said to Ruth, don’t go glean in another field.***  Once Boaz discovered who the young woman (damsel) was he showed favor to her. There are several observations to consider:

He called her his daughter. This shows that Boaz was much older than Ruth, probably Naomi’s age. Next, he wanted her to remain in his field. We shall see in the story that he had a purpose for keeping her there. He wanted her to glean behind the other servant girls. This would ensure that Ruth was not gleaning from another field owned by someone else. The men of the field were instructed not to touch her. The field workers were harsh towards the poor gleaners. Boaz protected her from being treated harshly. Whenever she wanted water she was permitted to get it from the water jars. The jars were filled for the workers in the field not the gleaners. Boaz permitted Ruth to receive privileges that others who were poor were not.

***Vs. 10. She bowed down with her face to the ground.*** Bowing was a part of the culture in the ancient near east. It was a way to show respect to guest. It was also a was a way to show submission to a lord or master.

***Vs. 10. Why have I found such favor in your eyes?*** “Favor” is the word used for “Grace”. This involves showing affection, kindness, extending fortune, or mercy. Boaz was not being harsh with Ruth. He was giving her favor. Ruth could not understand this especially because she was a foreigner.

God is Gracious to us. The Bible teaches that we are sinners. It also teaches that we were foreigners. Ephesians 2:12 tells us that at one time we were separated from Christ, excluded from the the citizenship in Israel and not included the covenants of the promise and without hope. But God is rich in mercy, he extended Grace and we who were once far away have been brought near to God by the blood of Jesus. Ruth could not understand why Boaz was gracious because she was not deserving of it. We too should wonder why God is gracious to us seeing that we are undeserving also.

***Vs. 11. I have been told all about what you have done for your mother – in – law.*** Ruth considered the needs of Naomi above her own. She could have had a life in Moab and done well for her self. Instead she was thinking about Naomi. So instead of going back she made a sacrifice and helped her mother – in – law.

Jesus tells us that he cannot use us unless we are willing to die to self. This doesn’t mean we cannot think of our own needs or how we should be treated. It means we must die to attitudes of self centeredness. The attitudes of Self centeredness can be pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, and sloth. These are attitudes that Satan uses to cause us to behave in an unrighteous manner towards others. They cause us to place ourselves before others, mistreat others, and neglect others. We can become harsh, revengeful, apathetic, abusive, competitive, or tear others down. We can do it being aware or unaware. Ruth did not have a self centered attitude. Her concern for Naomi was greater than her own in this case. She was willing to inconvenience herself to accommodate her mother – in – law. Jesus wants us to do the same. He wants us to do his will and accommodate others, sometimes above ourselves.

***Vs. 12. May the lord show favor towards you.*** Now Boaz is praying that God will reward Ruth for her sacrifice. This shows the loving care God has towards his people who are faithful. This is shown in two ways: 1. God will repay us for the kind acts of others. God’s recompense swings both ways like his grace. God will repay man for sinful actions against others (See Romans 12:17 – 21). Yet He also rewards us by repaying us for our actions towards others (See Colossians 3:23 – 24). God rewards us for acts of kindness towards others. 2. God will protect and provide for those whom are his. Boaz mentions that Ruth come under God’s “wings” to take refuge, This is called a Zoomorphism. This is when the qualities or characteristics of an animal are compared to something else. God does not have wings, but the comparison of a hen protecting her chicks is used as a comparison to show how God cares for his people. God protects us in the same way. He provides for us and keeps us under his protective care. Boaz is praying that God will reward Ruth by caring for her like she cared for Naomi.

***Vs. 13. You have given me comfort.*** Boaz also comforted and spoke kindly to Ruth.

To comfort means to draw breath or breath deeply. In that culture taking a deep breath when one saw the condition of another person was a way of showing compassion for another. This is a practice that remains true in our culture. When a tragedy strikes someone we love or someone whom we have concern, our only response is to take a deep sigh. This is an expression that shows how we have compassion and pity for them.

2 Corinthians 1:3 – 4 teaches us that we are to comfort others with the comfort we receive from God. The church is to establish an environment of comfort. This is not only the Pastor’s responsibility. It is the duty of every member to comfort our church family and others so that their faith will remain stable or they would become Christians. Ruth was appreciative and grateful for Boaz. He comforted and spoke kindly towards her.

***Vs. 14. At mealtime Boaz said to her, Come over here***. Boaz shows favor to Ruth once again. He offered her bread and wine vinegar at mealtime, and he allowed her to eat with the harvesters.

It is amazing how some of the cultural practices that occurred in the ancient near east are practiced in our culture. As we define “Mealtime”, there were two main meals per day, one at noon and one in the evening usually before dark. The one at noon was a light meal. It usually consisted of barley bread, olives, and maybe fruit. The evening meal was a heavier meal where meat, bread, grain, fruit and maybe vegetables were served. The meal mentioned here is the noon day meal. American culture serves three meals daily. With an exception of breakfast, lunch and dinner are served approximately the same time as ancient near eastern culture.

The bread and wine vinegar. The wine vinegar may have acted as a condiment. The bread was probably a barley grain cake cooked in oil. It may have had a rather bland flavor. The wine vinegar was probably bitter. When the bread was dipped in the wine vinegar, it enhanced the taste of the bread. Here is an example for us in our culture. A hamburger plain is bland. But when you place condiments on it, the condiments enhance the taste making it quite delicious. In the same way once the bread was dipped in the wine vinegar it became quite delicious.

This principle applies to the roasted grain also. The grain was roasted to enhance the flavor. Potatoes can be eaten raw but they sure taste better when they become french fries!

Ruth sat with the harvesters which was another privilege Boaz afforded Ruth. Being a foreigner and poor she would have been excluded. She would not be a partaker of the meal at all. But Boaz treated her like a worker and gave her equal privileges and benefits. God does the same for us. We were excluded from the “commonwealth of Israel”, Ephesians 2:12 – 13. Commonwealth has to do with having citizenship in a community. We were excluded from God’s community and were not beneficiaries of God’s promises. Now we are partakers of the promises and are citizens because of Christ.

***Vs. 15 - 16. Rather pull out some stalks for her from the bundles.*** Boaz has allow Ruth to walk behind the harvesters and gather the grain that falls to the ground. Now he is telling the workers to pull out additional stalks from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up. He is giving her extra grain.

Ruth has devoted herself completely to God. She has obeyed God by her devotion to Naomi her hardest times, she worked hard to make sure they had provisions, she left her own family, culture, and religion to take Naomi’s. She has sown into the life of Naomi and God noticed it. He is using Boaz to bless her with more than she could imagine.

God rewards those who are faithful to obeying His will. The Bible teaches the principle of sowing and reaping and it remains true today, Galatians 6:7 – 8; 2 Corinthians 9:6 – 15. Devotion to others, good deeds towards others, are examples of planting seeds in to the kingdom economy. When the Holy Spirit nudges your heart to meet someone’s need don’t ignore him. Do not harden your heart. When we are faithful in blessing others we shall reap what we sow. Those whom are faithful will receive a harvest that overflows.

**C. Ruth’s Report to Naomi 2:17 - 23**

***Vs. 17. Ruth gleaned until evening.***  Ruth has worked the entire day with only a few breaks. The Jewish day was twelve hours (12) beginning at 6 a.m. Ruth may have worked until 6 p.m.

***Vs. 18.*** After gathering all of the barley she gleaned that day the amount she had was about an ephah. An Ephah amounts to about 15 to 17 dry gallons. This was enough grain to feed them for a month. Here is something to consider: In the model prayer it states, “give us this day our daily bread”. That was literal. Many folks were trusting that God would supply enough food for the day. This is why provisions were made for the poor to glean from the fields of the wealthy. Also the amount that was given to Ruth was the wage paid to the workers. Ruth is a stranger and was poor, sh was not a worker. But God has blessed her with food for the day but for a month. Ephesians 3:20 tells us that God has blessed us and is able to continue to bless us exceedingly, abundantly, above all we could ask or think.

***Vs. 19. Blessed be the man who took notice of you.*** When Naomi saw the amount of grain Ruth brought home that evening she was surprised. If anything she was only expecting enough for the day. So when she saw the unusual amount she prayed that the man who noticed Ruth would be blessed.

Ruth was blessed because she was under observation by Boaz. He he heard about Ruth and made sure she was blessed. Boaz was compelled to bless Ruth. The acts of benevolence of Ruth towards Naomi moved him to act towards Ruth.

This is the power of love. Love compels others to action. Ruth was compelled to show love towards Naomi because Naomi loved Ruth. Boaz was compelled to show love to Ruth because he was touched by the love shown to Naomi. When someone is shown love it motivates the recipient to love also. 2 Corinthians 5:14 tells us how Christ’s love motivates us. Luke 6:30 – 38 speaks of our love towards others motivates them. 1 Corinthians 13:4 – 8 tells about what love does. Ephesians 5:22 – 30 tells us about the love of Christ to the Church. If we would learn how to love we can affect our world.

***Vs. 20. The Lord bless him! He is one of our kinsman redeemers.*** When Naomi heard who Ruth worked with that day she rejoiced. First of all, she rejoiced because he was showing kindness to the living and dead. Boaz kindness to Ruth by providing for her was an expression of kindness to her deceased husband. There was no deceitful motive on Boaz part. What he did was purely out of love. Secondly, she rejoiced because Boaz was a kinsman redeemer.

A kinsman redeemer is the person who is the next of kin who could marry the deceased wife. Earlier we discussed Deuteronomy 25:5 - 10. If a man who was married died and he had no children, his brother was responsible to take the widow as his wife. If there were no brothers alive, the kinsman redeemer was the next or closest person of kin who could marry the widow of the deceased. The kinsman redeemer was responsible was to have children by the widow and the first born son was to be named after the deceased husband. In this way the name of the deceased would continue, his inheritance remained in the family, and the widow would be supported. Boaz was a kinsman redeemer which meant there was the possibility Ruth could carry the name of Mahlon through Boaz.

Once again this did not happen by chance. This has happened by the Sovereign hand of God. How would Ruth know to go back to Bethlehem with Naomi? How would she know to glean in Boaz field? How did she know Boaz was a kinsman redeemer? All of this has happened because of God’s sovereign hand working behind the scenes.

***Vs. 21. He even said to me, Stay with my workers until they finish harvesting all of my grain.*** The barley harvest begin between March or April and lasted between May to June. So for the next 6 to 8 weeks Ruth has a job! They will be fed for the next two months. Psalm 37:4 tells us to trust in the Lord and He will feed us.

***Vs. 22 -23. It would be good for you my daughter to go with his girls.***  Naomi now advises Ruth. Ruth is a stranger and unfamiliar with the culture. She could get harmed by a landowner, thief or someone else while working in the field. Naomi advises her to remain in the field where she would remain safe.

Our success or failure in many cases is determined by the decisions we make. Much of the time we make poor decisions because of emotions or what we would call discernment. Proverbs 11:14 KJV tells us, “Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety. The decisions should be made by prayer, God’s word, or wise counsel from Godly people.

Ruth heard the sound advise of her Mother in Law. Instead of resisting she gleaned close to the servant girls until the end of the harvest. Proverbs 12:15 tells us, “The way of the fool is right in his own eyes, but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.” There are some who are so obstinate that they will not listen to wise counsel. This was not Ruth. She listened to Naomi. For her, this was the gateway to a bright future. Those of us who are willing to listen to the counsel from the Lord will be blessed and have a bright future.

**Conclusion of Chapter 2**

Chapter 2 introduced the third main character in our story, Boaz. Boaz was a wealthy owner of a barley field in Bethlehem. He noticed Ruth gleaning in his field and extended grace to her by providing for her. When Ruth reported this information to Naomi she was joyful because she discovered that Boaz was a kinsman redeemer. She advised Ruth to follow the instructions of Boaz by remaining close to his servant girls while gleaning. Ruth followed the instructions of Naomi and Boaz. I will share three insights to apply from this chapter:

1. God rewards our good works towards others. From the time she left Moab to her time thus far in Bethlehem, Ruth performed good works towards Naomi. God used Boaz to reward Ruth for her good works. She was given an abundance of grain for food and work to receive provision for the next six to eight weeks. God will always reward the obedience of his children.
2. Love has a powerful influence over others. Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz were all influenced by love. The Bible teaches the principle of Sowing and Reaping. Whatever we sow we reap. When we show love others they feel compelled to show love to us.
3. We must learn to seek and hear wise counsel when making decisions. Ruth was given wise counsel from Naomi and Boaz and she listened and followed what they said. Making sound decisions involves patience. I have discovered that very few decisions have to be made immediately. If so, we have probably procrastinated and are now at a point where we have to make a decision at that moment. Much of the time we make hasty decisions because of impatience or without hearing others. Sometimes if we would hear the counsel of others, those who have experience the outcome will be better.

**CHAPTER 3**

**IV. Ruths Proposal of Redemption**

Naomi’s plan to help Ruth capture Boaz. Ruth’s execution of the plan and Boaz’s response.

**A. Naomi’s Instructions Vs. 1 - 9**

***Vs. 1. “My daughter, should I not find a home for you, where you will be well provided for?”*** Naomi’s would like to make sure that her husband’s name and family line is preserved and that Ruth has a secure future. So she wanted to find her a husband. Women did not have opportunities the way they do today. If a woman loses a husband she can sustain herself through work. In those days women did not have rights to do so. In order for them to have a life of provision and safety they had to find a husband. To help Ruth, Naomi gave instructions to her to help ignite a flame of attraction. Titus 2:3 – 4 encourages older women to instruct younger women. Even in creating attraction older godly women are to instruct younger women. She shares several insights to help Ruth attract Boaz.

1. ***Character***

***Vs. 2. Is not Boaz, with whose servant girls you have been, a kinsman of ours?”***

Character is the key quality in attraction. Character refers to qualities of godliness. Naomi discerned that there was an attraction Boaz had for Ruth. Boaz told Ruth to work only in his field, he made it possible to glean behind the servant girls, he had the workers to give her extra grain for provision. Boaz had an attraction for Ruth. Yet the attraction wasn’t because of Ruth’s beauty alone. It was because of her character. Ruth’s devotion and treatment towards Naomi caused Boaz to have a special affection for her.

When choosing a spouse, the number one trait to observe is character. Character has to do with who the person is when no one is there to observe them. Are they a Christian, not only in word but in actions also? Do they have a church home and are they active? How does the person treat their parents? How do they treat others? Will the person do what God is telling them even if others disagree? These questions are important to ask because they affect the future relationship you will have with them. If they are godly they won’t leave when things are difficult, call you out of your name when they are angry, they will take responsibility for their faults, and love you for who you are not what you have. Proverbs 31:10 – 30 talks about the importance of character in a woman of excellence. Physical attraction is important but character is more important than beauty. A persons attitude and qualities out weigh physical attraction. Physical attraction fades but character lasts for a life time.

1. ***Appearance***

***Vs. 3A. “Wash and perfume yourself and put on your best clothes.”***

Naomi teaches Ruth how to build a man trap. If Ruth is going to secure Boaz as her husband she is going to have to learn to build a man trap. Building a man trap involves appearance. She told her to make your self look good: Wash, perfume yourself, and put on your best clothes. Ruth had been working in the fields during hot weather. She was probably smelling outdoorsy and probably had a body odor. Naomi told her to take a bath and put on perfume. This would cover the odor. Also put on your best clothes. She told her all of this because she wanted her appearance to create an attraction.

Though character is important when creating attraction, appearance is important also. It is important to present ourselves in a way that gets the persons attention. Dressing a certain way, wearing makeup, or dressing ones hair enhances the package! One doesn’t have to wear the most expensive cologne, perfume, or clothes but there is a way to dress with good taste.

Good appearance doesn’t mean wearing clothing that is inappropriate or revealing. Generally, the type of bait you use will determine the type of fish you catch. If you wear clothing that are revealing do not be surprised if you attract a person who primarily sees your physical anatomy. Godly men and women should dress modestly and adorn themselves with good deeds. 1 Timothy 2:9 – 10; 1 Peter 3:3 – 4.

1. ***Advances***

***Vs. 3B - 4. Then go down to the threshing floor,***

Naomi has realized the type of man Boaz was . His concern for Ruth’s reputation prevented him from doing anything to shame her. Naomi, by feminine intuition, read that he would not approach Ruth with a proposal for marriage. So she advised Ruth that after she dressed herself she was to go where he was and wait for his instructions.

At some point a person must make advances towards another. In that culture men usually made advances towards women. Even to this day there are many women who feel men should be the one who makes advances. There is nothing wrong with women or men making advances towards one another. However, one should be careful with becoming too aggressive. Too much aggression may be a turn off for some. Also the aggressive person can get hurt. Ruth wasn’t forcing Boaz to marry her. By laying at Boaz feet she was showing she was interested. It is good to show the person you are interested.

**B. Ruth’s Execution Vs. 5 - 9**

After Naomi gave Ruth her instructions Ruth followed them exactly as given.

***Vs. 7 - 8. “When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits…”*** Boaz had been working at the threshing floor until night. He was in good spirits. Maybe while eating and drinking he thought to himself about how well the day went for him and he was feeling pretty good. Afterwards he lied down at the threshing floor and went to sleep. He slept there to protect the grain from thieves and wild animals. Ruth quietly approached Boaz uncovered him slightly and lied down where his feet were located. During the middle of the night he was startled by something. He noticed a woman where his feet were located.

***Vs 9A. “Who are you? he asked”.*** Being that it was dark he was probably only able to notice that she was a woman not who she was.

***Vs. 9B. “Spread the corner of your garment over me…”.*** Some scholars have proposed that Ruth was acting inappropriately by making sexual advances towards Boaz. This is not the case. It was a marriage proposal by Ruth. The expression, “the corner of your garment”, uses the same Hebrew word in chapter 2:12. Boaz prayed that Ruth would find refuge under the “wings” of Jehovah. Now Ruth is proposing that she find refuge under Boaz’s wings. Ruth is proposing that Boaz would be her husband, provide and take care of her as his wife. There are two insights to gain from this request:

* Marriage should be a place of refuge. It should be a place where you can find safety. You should be able to reveal who you are and be comfortable. The Bible teaches that Adam and Eve were naked and were not ashamed (Genesis 2:26). Their physical nakedness represents complete nakedness. When you are clothed you do not reveal all that you are. only certain parts are seen. When you are naked you are completely exposed, perfections as well as imperfections. Physical nakedness is not the only issue. It is the nakedness of the soul that is important. This involves exposing your struggles, hurts, past failures, as well as dreams, hopes, and desires. If you are going to be free to reveal who you are to your marriage partner your marriage must be safe.
* The primary responsibility of the man is to be a caretaker for his wife. Ephesians 5:28 – 29 tells us that a man is to care for his wife as he would himself. The reason for this is that marriage is oneness. The two are one. In the same way Christ is the head of the church the husband is the head of his wife. This doesn’t mean that he is to lord over her. It does mean that he is to be a leader, provider, and caretaker whether it is spiritual, emotional or material.

As we review Ruth’s proposal we can see that Ruth’s intent was to get a husband. Naomi advised Ruth and Ruth took Naomi’s advice by making a request to Boaz to be her husband because he was a kinsman redeemer.

**C. Boaz Response to Ruth Vs. 10 - 15**

***Vs. 10. “This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier:”***  The act of kindness that she showed earlier was the consideration she has shown to Naomi. Boaz feels that her request for him to be her husband is greater than her consideration for Naomi. Why did he feel this way?

***Vs. 10B. “You have not run after younger men.”*** Boaz sees that Ruth has pure motives. Ruth’s main concern was not her own wellbeing. Her greatest concern was to preserve the legacy of her deceased husband. When a man’s property was up for sale because of poverty or death, a kinsman redeemer, who was a male relative could purchase property back in the man’s name. Ruth could have looked to another man as a husband. Instead, she was not thinking about herself, she was thinking about how she could preserve her dead husband’s legacy. She was concerned about doing God’s will and what was best for this family.

In the grand scheme of God’s plan, God does not use a self centered person. The reason for this is that a self centered person is an Idolator. In Exodus 20:2 – 6 The Lord shares his command about Idolatry. Idolatry is when we put anything before God. Yet when we see other passages we can see other traits of Idolatry in our behavior. Greed is Idolatry, Ephesians 5:5 and arrogance is Idolatry, 1 Samuel 15:23. These are self centered behaviors. When we as Christians practice these behaviors as a way of live we are not useful to God.

***Vs. 11. “I will do what you ask. All of my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character.”*** This is an honor for Boaz to marry Ruth because she had a reputation for being a woman of character. The word for “character” is translated in the KJV “Virtuous”. This is mentioned in two other places in the Bible, Proverbs 31:10 and Proverbs 12:4. The virtuous woman has certain qualities the are beneficial to others. Ruth was a virtuous woman. It should be the goal of the Christian woman to be a woman of virtue. A woman does not have to be married to be a virtuous woman she can be a single woman also. Every woman should start where they are and allow the Holy Spirit to begin to develop them to be a virtuous woman. She should allow herself to be filled by the Spirit, Ephesians 5:18; She should no longer allow sin to enslave her, Romans 6:13; and avoid the influences of the world system. Instead of being a woman of the world become a woman of Godliness.

***Vs. 12 – 13. “There is a kinsman redeemer nearer than I.”*** Boaz was willing to marry Ruth but there was a condition. There was a kinsman redeemer closer than he was. The person who was nearest of kin was the person who had the first opportunity to redeem the property and the bride. Boaz was of kin but he wasn’t the closest of kin to Elimelech. There was someone closer than he. So Boaz would resolve the matter the next day. If the next of kin did not wish to redeem Ruth and the deceased property, then he would.

Boaz proves that he will marry Ruth with a vow. He said, “As surely as the LORD lives I will do it”. This is serious. A vow was made so that someone else could hold the person making vow accountable. If the person did not keep the vow a judgment was brought against them. What Boaz is saying is that if he did not keep his vow to redeem Ruth, may God bring judgment against him.

I would also like to point out that there was a great benefit in redeeming the property. Though the redeemer eventually had to turn the property over to the first son, there would be many years where the redeemer would be able to profit from the land. Though this may seem as an inconvenience this is a benefit.

Ruth was told to stay there that night. Not to do anything to dishonor her but possibly to protect her from wild animals or it may have been difficult to see her way home.

***Vs. 14. She lay at his feet until morning, but got up before anyone could be recognized.***

If someone spotted Ruth coming from Boaz field that night with him their reputation would be ruined though nothing happened. To protect their reputation from speculation and gossip, she made it home before anyone saw her.

Usually when we consider sinning we tend to view what would be called the major sins. This is fornication, murder, drug addiction, alcoholism, stealing, or lying. We frown on these. We give a pass on gossip. Yet gossip can be one of the most destructive of all sins. Gossiping is an acceptable sin that is divisive, ruins friendships, and damages the reputation of others Proverbs 11:13; 16:28; 26:20; 20:19. Though we may not have an addiction to drugs or alcohol we all have a serious struggle with gossip. Overcoming gossip takes practice. It takes walking in the Spirit, Galatians 5:17. When we take seriously our own imperfections and short comings, understand how gracious God has been to us, and realize the damage we do to someone else through gossip it helps us to avoid it.

***Vs. 15. Bring me the shawl… when she did so, he poured into it six measures of barley and put it on her.*** The six measures amounted to about 60 pounds. Ruth may have Carried it on her head which was the custom in the ancient near east. Ruth must have been very strong to carry the grain.

**D.** **Ruth Returns to Naomi vs. 16 - 18**

***Vs. 16. How did it go, my daughter?*** Simple question regarding what happened after you followed my instructions. Ruth shared everything with Naomi.

***Vs. 17. “He gave me these six measures of barley saying, don’t go back to your mother in law empty handed.”*** This gift was a token from Boaz to assure Naomi that he would make sure that this matter would be resolved as soon as possible.

God promises those who believes in Him that they would have everlasting life. Everlasting life is a quality of life where we are no longer slaves to sin. It is life where we shall be in complete fellowship with Him throughout eternity. To prove he is serious he has gives each believer the Holy Spirit as a gift to prove that Heaven is ours in the future.

***Vs. 18. Wait, my daughter, until you find out what happens.*** Boaz has given evidence that he will settle the matter. He has given his word through a vow and he has given a gift to show his seriousness. Now they must wait.

We too must learn to wait on God to settle certain matters in our lives. Whatever promises God makes to his children He will keep them. The Bible teaches that God is not a liar, Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2. His timing is not according to our timing, Ecclesiastes 3:1 – 8. So when considering the timing of God we must learn to patiently wait on Him. Lamentations 3:25 – 26 says, ***“The Lord is good to those whose hope is in Him, to the one who seeks Him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.”*** Ruth had to wait patiently on Boaz to settle the matter. We too must learn to patiently wait on the Lord as He settles the matters in our lives.

**Conclusion of Chapter 3**

As we close out this portion of our study I wish to leave four points of application for us to remember:

1. **God always cares for the poor and less fortunate.** Naomi and Ruth were amongst those who met both requirements. God in his foreknowledge established a plan to provide for the less fortunate. Christians should take an active part in helping those who are less fortunate. There are many ways to do so. You may decide to adopt a family or start a ministry in the church for the less fortunate. This effort has a cost attached to it. It will cost time, skills, and money.
2. **The Kingdom cause must be greater than an individual person.** Ruth’s motives were not self centered. She was concerned about preserving her deceased husbands legacy. This caused her to make great sacrifices. When we realize that the cause of the kingdom is more important than our own agenda our heart, motives, and actions will reflect this principle.
3. **Our reputation is very important.** Ruth had a public reputation of being a woman of virtue. She had a reputation for being a woman of Godly character. Titus 2:6 – 8 tells us that we are to be an example in order to have a good reputation. Ruth was not a married woman when she was known for this. So you don’t have to be married to have a reputation that is virtuous. You need to be devoted to God and his commands.
4. **We must all work to avoid Gossip.** A gossip is a talebearer. One who tells the secrets of others with the intent of scandalizing them. It is so self centered because it’s intentions are to expose the weaknesses of others. It defames, is divisive, and destructive. There have been many close life long relationships that have been ruined in a mere moment because of Gossip many of which have not been mended to this day. It ruins friendships, families, and godly fellowships. If we are going to be a church that exemplifies Christlikeness in our world we must learn to work at avoiding gossip daily.

**CHAPTER 4**

**IV.**  **Ruth’s Redemption by Boaz 4:1 - 12**

Boaz proceeds with the process of becoming Ruth’s kinsman redeemer.

1. **The Proposal for Redemption Vs. 1 - 6**

***Vs. 1. “Boaz went to the town gate and sat there.*** The town gate was the place where legal disputes, personal business and civic transactions were made. The kinsman redeemer mentioned here was the one who was closer than Boaz and had the first opportunity to redeem. The expression “my friend” is placed here by the writer of the book probably because the name of the redeemer wasn’t mentioned. So the “my friend” could be an “John Doe” expression.

***Vs. 2. “Boaz took ten of the elders of the town…”.*** These were ten elderly men who were chosen to be witnesses about the transaction. Witnesses were necessary to verify The Bible teaches that at least two to three witnesses were necessary to verify the transactions. It was also necessary to have more than one witness. If a person brought an accusation against someone else at least two witnesses were necessary see Deuteronomy 19:15. This same principle carried into the New Testament. When church discipline and church matters are dealt with Jesus mentioned that two or three witnesses are necessary. See Matthew 18:15 - 20 Legal transactions were verified by witnesses. Boaz made sure that there were witnesses to verify the transaction.

***Vs. 3 – 5. “Then he said to the kinsman redeemer…”*** Boaz certainly wishes to redeem Ruth. He also wishes to be honest and truthful with the kinsman. So he carefully planned a strategy that worked in his favor without being deceitful. He explained everything involved with redeeming the estate. He mentioned that Naomi was selling the land that belonged to Elimelech. He also suggested that the kinsman purchase the property. The kinsman agrees to purchase the property. This is when Boaz mentions that by purchasing the property he must take the widow to maintain the deceased man’s name. This meant the kinsman would have to take care of Ruth, Naomi, and the child.

If we are to lead the lost to Christ we must be strategic. In Luke 16:1 – 9, Jesus tells the parable about the rich man who’s manager wasted his resources. The manager commended the man for being strategic in recovering the resources. In the same way the Church must be strategic about winning the lost to Christ. We must use our skills, resources, and time and be strategic. Satan uses strategies to deceive Ephesians 6:11 – 13. We must use strategies to win the lost to Christ.

***Vs. 6. At this, the kinsman – redeemer said, “Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate.”*** Initially the kinsman agreed to the redemption. After he heard he would be responsible for Ruth he denied it. There may be different reasons for his denial. It may have been that he didn’t want to marry a Moabite woman because the fate of Mahlon may happen to him. A reasonable assumption would be that redeeming Mahlon’s estate would be a burden for several reasons. First He would be responsible to take care of Ruth, Naomi, and have a child in the name of the deceased. Second the estate he inherits will eventually go to the son of the deceased. Third, a part of his own estate may go to the deceased also seeing that it is his actual son. By redeeming the property the kinsman would incur financial burden thus endangering his own estate. It was wise to say no.

There are times when we must be wise enough to say no, even to good things and ideas. The kinsman realized that if he were to say yes, he would be in over his head. He said no We too must learn to discern when certain situations are over our head. We must learn to say no.

Once the kinsman denied redeeming Ruth Boaz took the opportunity to do so.

1. **Finalizing the Redemption Vs. 7 - 12**

***Vs. 7. “Now in earlier times in Israel…”.*** The author records the process that finalized the redemption during Ruth’s life. That process may not have been practiced any longer during the authors time. In order to finalize the redemption the one who decides not to redeem takes off his sandal and gives it to the one who decides to redeem. This symbolized the person giving up rights to redeem. Remember, the proof he gave up his rights were the elders who were witnesses and also the man’s sandal, a keepsake, to show he gave up his rights.

Today all legal transactions are different. Any legal transactions would occur before a notary who would be a legal officer of the state verifying transactions. Also there is paperwork given to show and explain the legalities of a transaction. During the time of Ruth there wasn’t the means to produce paperwork to show legalities. The first printing machine was invented in 1440 and the first copy machine was invented in 1938. We should be grateful for the modern inventions to help us with legal matters.

***Vs. 8. “So the kinsman – redeemer said to Boaz, “buy it yourself.” And he removed his sandal.***

***Vs. 9 – 10. Today you are witnesses… I have also acquired Ruth the Moabitess”.*** Boaz now claims his rights to Ruth as his wife and to maintain Mahlon’s name. This was to be remembered among his family and the town records.This means those who assemble at the gate will be able to verify as the child was older that he was an heir of Mahlon and Elimelech who once left this place and migrated to Moab. Someone else would be able to defend the boy’s family rights.

Intermarriage between Israel and other nations was forbidden and frowned upon in the Bible, see Deuteronomy 7:1 - 7. Other ethnic groups worshiped gods other than the one true God and intermarriage would cause them to go astray. This was not God’s intent for his holy people. He desired that they be completely devoted to Him.

This is an application for today. Christians are God’s holy people, this means we are set apart to be devoted only to Him. The Bible teaches that closed connected relationships between Christians and non Christians are forbidden, see 2 Corinthians 6:14 - 18. We must use discernment when considering certain types of relationships with others.

Boaz who was a Jew is now marrying a woman of a different ethnic background. She was a Moabitess. During their journey to the promised land, Israelite men were involved in idolatry and sexual immorality with Moabite women, see Numbers 25:1. Yet the Israelites were NOT forbidden to marry Moabite women. Deuteronomy 23:3 – 4 mentions that the Moabites were not permitted to be apart of the community of Israel but does not say that Israelite men were not permitted to marry Moabite women.

Here is a picture of a Jew and Gentile in close covenant with one another. In the same way, God has now brought Jews and Gentiles together and has made them one body in Christ. Ephesians 2:11 – 13 shares that though Gentiles were excluded from the promises and covenants of God. Now, we who were once far away, have been brought near by the blood of Jesus Christ. No matter our ethnicity, family background, gender, or way of life, we have been forgiven and are recipients of God’s grace!

***Vs. 11 - 12. “Then the elders and all those at the gate said…”.*** The elders were pleased with every step Boaz took. He acted honorably towards the kinsman redeemer, Naomi and Ruth and did everything decently and in order. verified that they were witnesses to the transaction. They therefore pronounced blessings upon the new bride and groom. They prayed divine blessings that Ruth would be like Rachel and Leah who built the house of Israel. Rachel and Leah both experienced moments of barrenness but eventually had children, 6 by Leah, 2 by Rachel and 2 by each of the women’s servants. Perez was the son of Tamar. Judah had a son named Er who was married to Tamar. The story is recorded in Genesis 38. Er died prematurely because of his wickedness, God put him to death. Judah was to have one of his other sons to marry her and have children in Er’s name. Judah didn’t fulfill his obligation. Tamar dressed as a prostitute and became pregnant by Judah. When he discovered she was pregnant he was furious and sentenced her to be put to death. Tamar then went to Judah and mentioned that she was pregnant by him. He felt ashamed and claimed she was more righteous than he. The child she had was Perez. Perez had many children. The elders praying that God would prosper them by giving them many children and that they would continue to build the house or nation of Israel. Children were considered a blessing, see Psalms 127:5. They were able to defend and assist parents at old age.

The elders were praying prosperity on Boaz and Ruth’s life because of they type of people they were. Boaz was an outstanding man in the community. Ruth was a woman of virtue. They both had a desire to be right before God and others. When we are right before God and others God prospers our lives, see Psalms 1. Prosperity is not always defined financially. It is a life that enjoys all the riches and blessings of Christ.

Boaz was the kinsman redeemer for Mahlon. He redeemed his property and widow to have a future child in Mahlon’s name. This is a picture of Jesus being our kinsman redeemer. We were all slaves to sin. But Jesus our next of kin, our brother, redeemed us by his precious blood and saved us not only from being enslaved to sin but from the wrath of God, see Hebrews 2:11 – 17. Praise God for Jesus our kinsman redeemer!

1. **Ruth’s Conception Vs. 13 - 17**

***Vs. 13. “Then he went to her and the Lord enabled her to conceive,…”.*** The expression “went to” speaks of sexual intimacy. In Genesis 4:1 says, “And Adam knew Eve his wife”. “Knew” means to be acquainted with in a sexual way. Though the word is different the concept is the same for Boaz and Ruth. Boaz was acquainted with Ruth in a sexual way.

She conceived and had a son. In the ancient way of life a son was the means to continue the life of the father. The father felt that his life’s purpose was fulfilled and was to continue through the life of his son. Genesis 15:1 – 5 is an example of this. The Abrahamic Promise was given in Genesis 12:1 – 3 and in it there was the promise that all nations would be blessed, and Abram’s dependents would out number the stars in the sky. Genesis 15:1 – 5 is a promise God gives to Abram that he would have a son. This son was to continue the life purpose of the father. He was to have children to accomplish God’s plan for Abram. This is why polygamy and levirate marriages were permitted. These were means to fulfill the father’s purpose and continue his life.

This is certainly applicable for our times. God created Adam to fulfill the Cultural Mandate. Genesis 1:28 Adam was instructed to be fruitful and multiply (have children); fill the earth and subdue it (govern society); and Rule over the fish of the sea, etc. (govern the animals). Humanity’s purpose was to build a world of Godliness so he would be glorified. This is now our responsibility. However, it was impossible to accomplish this in a state of sinfulness. This is why we were “Born Again”. In this way we are born as sons and continue God’s purpose. So now when we have children we train them to be Godly so they will fulfill God’s purpose in our world.

***Vs. 14 – 15. “Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a kinsman – redeemer.”*** Certainly God is to be honored above all. Though Boaz and Ruth came together to conceived the conception happened because of God. He is the one who gave life and preserved the name of Elimelech. See Job 1:21. Even to this day we do not give life or preservation it is God. He is the one who watches over and takes care of us.

***Vs. 16 – 17. Then Naomi took the child ,… The women living there said, ‘Naomi has a son’”.*** If Ruth gave birth to the child why would the passage say, “Naomi has a son”? Scholars have speculated regarding the answer to the question. Some have assumed there was an official adoption by Naomi, this is shown by her taking the child in her lap and caring for him. Another assumption is that Naomi has taken custody of the child to raise him. Naomi probably did not take custody of the child but did assist in raising the child. She ensured that he would continue Elimelech’s name. So then his name would be Obed which means he would be a servant to Naomi.

1. **Boaz’s Genealogy Vs. 18 - 22**

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