

Ruth 4

Trusting our Kinsman-Redeemer and His plans for us

The previous chapter left us at a dramatic point with Boaz exercising the right of the kinsman-redeemer to claim Ruth as his wife. But there was a kinsman-redeemer closer to Ruth, and he had priority.

In his confrontation with the closer kinsman-redeemer, how would you characterize Boaz's actions? How does he conduct himself? Honest and upfront, not manipulating, prepared, well thought out strategy, in control, done his homework. He is in his element – among men he is a strong commanding leader; among women he is tender, sensitive.

When Boaz presented the offer to the other kinsman-redeemer to buy the land how did he respond (v. 4)? He initially agreed to redeem the land.

Certainly Ruth and Naomi were watching and listening. How their hearts must have sunk when they heard the nearer kinsman say, "I will redeem it." But Boaz had a trump card up his sleeve.

What was the trump card (v. 5)? Boaz told him that he wasn't only dealing with Naomi and the property of Elimelech; he also had to deal with Ruth – Naomi and Ruth were a package deal.

Naomi by herself was not a threat/concern. Why not? Since Naomi was older and beyond the child-bearing years (Ruth 1:12). It was biologically impossible for the nearer kinsman to marry Naomi and raise up children to preserve the family name of her deceased husband Elimelech.

Why did including Ruth change the nearer kinsman-redeemer's mind (v. 6)? His estate would be endangered. A potential son through Ruth could become an heir to compete with his own children.

What observations can be made about the closer kinsman-redeemer? He was the antithesis of Boaz – concerned about his wealth, selfish, lacking character.

What can we conclude from the enthusiastic response of the witnesses and elders (vv. 11-12)? They held Boaz and Ruth in high esteem, great respect. Boaz and Ruth had endeared themselves to the people. When people see lives that are lived honorably, consistently, and without hypocrisy, they are more likely to respond positively.

Why were Rachel, Leah, Perez and Tamar held up as examples? Rachel and Leah gave birth to 8 of the 12 sons that would become renowned for building up the house of Israel – the fathers of Israel's 12 tribes, one of which is Judah. Perez is in the line of Christ, coming from the illicit union between Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38:13-18). Tamar, like Ruth, was a widow, a Gentile, and also included in the line of Christ.

What is the significance of the statement, and the Lord gave her conception (v. 13)? As the Author of Life, God empowers the wombs of women for childbearing. Note that she had no children with her first husband.

What changes do you see in Naomi? She went from being empty to being full, from sorrow to joy.

How did the women of the city regard Naomi? Sympathetic, affectionate and respectful of her, they were gathered around her, rejoicing with her.

Why seven sons (v. 15)? The number seven in the Bible signifies complete or perfect. Seven sons were considered to be the ideal family makeup by the Israelites.

Who named the child (v. 17)? The women of Bethlehem. This is the second and final time in Scripture when a child was named by someone other than the immediate family (Exodus 2:10).

Why does the genealogy start with Perez (v. 18)? To show the faithfulness of God when He promised to raise up a ruler over His people from the descendants of Judah (Genesis 49:10). Like Perez, the illegitimate son of Judah and Tamar (1 Chronicles 2:4), Boaz was the descendant of Salmon, an Israelite, and Rahab, a Canaanite harlot (Matthew 1:5). Both Tamar and Rahab entered Israel because they believed and valued God's promises to Israel, as Ruth did. David himself was the youngest rather than the eldest son of Jesse." This genealogy emphasizes how God circumvented custom and tradition in providing Israel's great redeemer, David.¹

Why is the book concluded with a genealogy? To show the continuity of God's purposes through the ages, that this little story fits in the bigger picture – the genealogy of David and Christ. History is neither haphazard nor coincidental and is orchestrated clearly and specifically by the hand of God. This seemingly little story is actually of great significance.

Application:

The Lord had a great and sovereign plan for Ruth's life – just like He does for our lives. Imagine God saying to Ruth, "I have a great and wonderful plan for your life. First your husband is going to die. Then your father-in-law is going to die. Then I'm going to send you to a foreign land and a foreign people with a different language, far away from everything familiar to you. And you're going to live with a negative, complaining woman. And by the way you're going to be destitute, a beggar. And you're going to do hard manual labor in order to eat. This journey will be a walk of faith, not a walk of sight. Are you ready Ruth? Are you willing to trust in me?"

Are we willing to trust in God's sovereign design for our lives even when the going gets tough? Doing the right thing often involves an element of risk, the possibility of loss, may damage a career, alienate people. But God honors those who take a courageous stand in the face of adversity. We see that clearly in the life of Boaz and Ruth.

God does great things through faithful and obedient servants. It's probably safe to say that Ruth and Boaz didn't realize that their marriage would produce Israel's greatest kings including David and Jesus Christ.

Be conscious of character and integrity issues. Boaz and Ruth did the right things in both their public and private lives. Our character is measured in large part by what we do when no one is watching.

Do you have a Naomi in your life? Someone you need to unselfishly persevere with, to serve, be committed to?

Not married? Ruth's departure from her native land, people, and the religion of Moab seemingly meant she was also giving up her best chance to marry again. But by giving her heart and life to God, and putting Him first, He brought her into a relationship greater than she could have imagined.

The story brings us back to the idea of Jesus as our *kinsman-redeemer* and why He became a man. God might have sent an angel to save us, but the angel would not have been our *kinsman*. Jesus, in His eternal glory, without the addition of humanity to His divine nature might have saved us, but He would not have been our *kinsman*. A great prophet or priest would be our kinsman, but his own sin would have disqualified him as our *redeemer*. Only the sinless Jesus Christ, both fully God and fully man, is uniquely qualified to be both the *kinsman* and the *redeemer* for mankind!

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¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Ruth, 2014 Edition (published by Sonic Light, www.soniclight.com), pp. 35