

Ruth 4:1-8

In March, we left this study at the end of Chapter 3. Verses 16-18 reminded us of the necessity to rely completely on God's direction. We are to choose to **trust** God, we are to find our **delight** in Him alone, and we are to **commit** to His perfect plan, having confidence that He is in control.

Now we come to the last chapter in this incredible true story of redemption. Ruth, a Moabitess, having trusted in God, is awaiting to hear from Boaz, her kinsman redeemer. Will he be able to save her late husband's family's name and inheritance through marriage? We have witnessed through this account, Naomi's faith in God, her teaching of His ways to her daughter-in-law, and her wise instruction to Ruth. Ruth has obediently followed instruction, humbly accepted her position and trusted in God's direction. Her actions have been noticed and her character of virtue applauded. Boaz, described for us as honorable, has been an encourager to all those with which he is in contact. He has placed the law and doing what is right over his own desires and shows us his care for Ruth in leading her in a righteous way. Ruth has been told to wait for the response of Boaz as he approaches a member of the family who is a closer relative, with the right to redeem Ruth and the inheritance of the family's land. Now we will continue with Chapter 4.

Ruth 4:1 Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there, and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz spoke was passing by, so he said, "Turn aside, friend, sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down.

Boaz went to the city gate. This was a place for public deliberation, administration of justice or of audience for kings and rulers or ambassadors (*Smith's Bible Dictionary*). Matters of great importance were decided upon at the city gates. Boaz chooses to bring the matter of redeeming Elimelech's inheritance to the public. This again speaks of his character. Perhaps, he could have just assumed the closer relative was uninterested since there had been no movement that we know of from any other direction. However, ***being upright in all things requires every action to be completely honest before God who knows all things. Think how this example might be applied to yourself.***

- ♥ Have you tried to 'get away' with something, thinking no one would find out?
- ♥ Have you purposely ignored information that might change what you would like?
- ♥ Do you avoid taking a stand because you will be unpopular with family or friends?

We can assume we know what someone else's response may be to a situation that involves them. We can even make decisions for another, thinking we are acting in their best interest or that they will not care or have a preference. Making an important decision with these assumptions leaves the consideration of someone else's desires to our own interpretation and personal benefit. Is this approach truly honest? Do we manipulate circumstances for our own profit?

There may be a personal cost of being careful and deliberate in our decisions. Consider the account we are studying. It seems Boaz had developed a heart for Ruth. He had been attracted to her virtuous character. He is perhaps anticipating a union with

her. He is now taking steps that could take his opportunity away. Yet, he is proceeding in a righteous direction.

We may find there is a different explanation for something or a better way to proceed. Are we open to a direction we may not have thought or appreciated? Sometimes exploring all the possibilities will lead us to a more difficult answer. It might even seem that we will miss out on something. However, the end result of being careful and righteous in our decisions is always honoring to God. Think carefully, we can ignore doing the right thing before God in order to preserve a relationship or not cause any waves, but then, who are we honoring?

♥ **Do you make promises you are not sure you can keep in order to avoid flack?**

Rather than making a promise to Ruth that he righteously was uncertain he could fulfill, Boaz sought complete honesty and justice in redeeming Elimelech's land and name. We are told Boaz sat at the city gate. Recall this is where all public transactions took place and usually a council of leaders was present. As people moved in and out of the city, business was arranged, and deals were made. When Boaz sees the relative, he needs to address, he greets and stops him. "[Turn aside, friend, sit down here.](#)"

Boaz recognizes the one who is a closer kinsman to Elimelech's family than himself and tells him he has business to conduct with him. Boaz was an important magistrate or leader in the village, and he was able to gather men together to hear the transaction.

[Ruth 4:2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down.](#)

It is interesting to note how simple it was to make a legal transaction at that time. Compared to our court system now, it would take months just to gather the people involved with all their witnesses and evidence! Notice the wisdom also in conducting business with others present to hear the decision. This way there would be little chance for misunderstanding, or as it is in our courts, to contest the verdict.

Boaz presents his case to the closest relative and to the elders in the city:

[Ruth 4:3-5 Then he said to the closest relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the land of Moab, has to sell the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. "So I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy \[it\] before those who are sitting \[here,\] and before the elders of my people. If you will redeem \[it,\] redeem \[it;\] but if not, tell me that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem \[it,\] and I am after you.'" And he said, "I will redeem \[it.\]" Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the deceased, in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance."](#)

Boaz states the first order of business – Naomi was in need and there was land of Elimelech's to be redeemed. The purchase rightfully belonged to the next of kin. Initially, the closer relative agrees to purchase the land, to buy back his relative's property. Then Boaz informs the relative that purchasing the land also means acquiring Ruth and having a family with her so that he might continue the family name. This bit of information was a game changer!

I am reminded again of the importance in total honesty when disclosing information. It may be that we are led to leave out just a small bit of information for fear that things may not go the way we would like. We may stretch the truth to make something seem more desirable. We are used to 'wheeling and dealing' in many of our transactions today. It is important however, to hold honesty as a priority.

2Corinthians 8:21 for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

In order for the relative to purchase the land, he must take Ruth as his wife. He was to redeem all or nothing. His response changes as he contemplates the full cost.

Ruth 4:6 And the closest relative said, "I cannot redeem [it] for myself, lest I jeopardize my own inheritance. Redeem [it] for yourself; you [may have] my right of redemption, for I cannot redeem [it.]

According to several commentaries, the kinsman may have had a previous marriage and children. The addition of children with Ruth would affect his own inheritance and family name. The *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* gives this insight, "The Targum seems to give the proper sense of this passage: 'I cannot redeem it, because I have a wife already; and it is not fit for me to bring another into my house, lest brawling and contention arise in it; and lest I hurt my own inheritance. Do thou redeem it, for thou has no wife; which hinders me from redeeming it.'" I am certain I do not understand Jewish law to give any explanation for the refusal so we will just go with what we know. The closest relative gave up his right to purchasing Elimelech's land and this opened the door for Boaz to redeem the land and Ruth.

Let us pause for a moment and consider Christ as our Redeemer. Jesus fully paid the price to redeem us for His Father. Christ willingly suffered an undeserving, horrific death for the redemption of mankind. Because of Christ, our inheritance in the kingdom of God has been restored. We have been ransomed from death to life. This picture of Ruth is much like our own. We are unworthy, we have a sinful nature and rebel against God. Yet God chose to remove us from the control of sin and place us in His care and protection. He gifted us with hope for the future through giving us His Son, Jesus Christ as our Redeemer.

Consider this thought. **If you say Jesus Christ is your Savior, claiming you understand the need you have to be redeemed from sin, yet, do not follow Him as Lord, you have not accepted the fullness of God's grace.** Many desire the assurance of heaven without wanting to live for Christ. Your life needs to be completely surrendered to God. This means He is the ruler of your life, He has jurisdiction over all you say, think and do – whether you like it or not, whether it is easy or not, or whether you agree or not.

The closest relative in this account wanted the land; he was ready to jump at increasing his property. However, when he realized there was more attached to the deal, and it might make things difficult for him, he bowed out. He wanted part but not all.

- ♥ **Is your life completely surrendered to God? What is your proof?**
- ♥ **Is Jesus your Savior and your Lord? How does your life testify to this?**

"This kinsman, when he heard the conditions of the bargain, refused it. In like manner many are shy of the great redemption; they are not willing to espouse religion; they have heard well of it, and have nothing to say against it; they will give it their good word, but they are willing to part with it, and cannot be bound to it, for fear of marring their own inheritance in this world". *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*

Ruth 4:7-8 Now this was [the custom] in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange [of land] to confirm any matter: a man removed his

sandal and gave it to another; and this was the [manner of] attestation in Israel. So the closest relative said to Boaz, "Buy [it] for yourself." And he removed his sandal.

These next two verses give us the legal exchange of redeeming land and resigning the rights to inheritance.

"The manner and ceremony of conveying over a title and estate amongst the ancient Israelites was this: the person who sold or conveyed over his title pulled off one of his shoes, and in open court delivered it to the purchaser, thereby signifying that he had full right to walk, enter into, or tread upon the land, &c. as his own proper and entire possession". *British Family Bible*

The closest relative resigned his right to redeem the property of Elimelech's family and take Ruth as his wife. The transaction of removing his sandal and giving it to Boaz, allowed Boaz to take possession of the land and marry Ruth.

Naomi's faith in God results in her family's name being restored. Ruth's obedience, faith and trust will place her in a position to be used for God's redemptive plan. Boaz's righteousness is blessed by God's perfect provision.

- ♥ **How has your trust in God changed the direction of your life?**
- ♥ **How do you see His hand in moving you towards His purpose?**