

Ruth: Trusting God in the Unknown

Ruth 4: Redeemed & Restored!

→ *Survey: Let's understand the background and context of the passage.*

Last week, Ruth boldly asked Boaz to be their family's guardian-redeemer. She was asking him to protect her, to buy back her mother-in-law Naomi's land, and to provide a family and a hope for future generations. Though Boaz was honored by this request, and willing to redeem Ruth's family, there was someone who had the legal right to be their guardian-redeemer before Boaz. So we reach the end of the book of Ruth wondering - who will it be?

As we read tonight, notice how this final chapter reverses all of the early chapter's sorrows. What began with death and despair ends with redemption and new life. What looked like coincidence is revealed as divine providence, and a personal story becomes part of God's greater redemption plan.

This unlikely family - a Moabite widow, a gracious redeemer, and a grieving mother-in-law is grafted into the lineage of the Messiah. While Ruth's guardian-redeemer will pay the price to redeem her and Naomi's family, we have a redeemer in Jesus who paid his life to redeem us from sin and death. What began with death and despair ends with redemption and new life as Jesus rose victoriously from the grave! From brokenness, God brings beauty. This is the good news of Easter: no one is too far from His love and His power to redeem and restore all things.

Read: Ruth 4 (NIV)

→ *Observe: Let's take a close look at what the text is saying.*

1. *Let's set the scene (v. 1-3).* Where are they? Who all is present? What is the matter at hand?
 - How did the unnamed guardian-redeemer initially respond (v. 4)?
2. What makes this unnamed guardian-redeemer change his mind (v. 5-6)?
3. So what happens next (v. 8-10)? What does Boaz gain?
4. What three blessings do the witnesses give to Boaz & Ruth (v. 11-12)?
5. What happens after Boaz & Ruth get married (v. 13)?
6. Why do the women praise God (*the LORD*) in verse 14? How do these women describe Ruth (v. 15)?
7. What does Naomi do next (v. 16)? What was the name of this child (v. 17)?
 - Who was Obed's grandson (v. 17 & 22)?
8. How does the end of this story (v. 14-17) contrast the end of chapter 1 when Naomi wanted to be known as Mara?

→ *Interpret: Let's seek to understand the meaning of this text in its original context.*

1. If Ruth & Naomi were there at the town gate (v. 1), how might they have felt at the moment when the unnamed guardian-redeemer said "I will redeem it." (v. 4)?
 - Why would he be eager to redeem Elimelek's land, but not marry Ruth?
2. What is redemption & how do we see it at work in this final chapter of the story? Who or what is being redeemed?
3. Reflecting on the book of Ruth, who would you say was the main character? Why?
 - How did we see God at work in this story?
4. Why might the story of Ruth end with a genealogy - who is it pointing to and why? What do we know about this person(s)? *Remember, this story happens during the time of the Judges when there was no king.*

→ *Apply: Let's explore where the text intersects with our lives and our world.*

1. Ruth and Boaz didn't know they were part of God's bigger redemptive plan, yet their acts of generosity & faithfulness led to King David & to Jesus! How does this change your perspective about the seemingly small & mundane decisions you make in your life?
2. Throughout this story, we see Naomi go from bitter to blessed. Reflect on a time when you saw the full circle of God's work in your life. How did it grow your faith? If you haven't seen that yet, what would it look like to trust that He's still writing the story?
3. As we prepare for Easter, how is Jesus our guardian-redeemer? In what ways has he redeemed you?
 - Who is someone you want to share the good news of Jesus with this week? What tends to hold you back from doing so?