



REDEMPTION BIBLE STUDIES #7

The Great Redeemer

The Redemption of RUTH

“The Story”

Ruth 3:1-18

Then her mother-in-law Naomi said to her, “My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may go well for you? ² Now then, is Boaz not our relative, with whose young women you were? Behold, he is winnowing barley at the threshing floor tonight. ³ Wash yourself therefore, and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes, and go down to the threshing floor; but do not reveal yourself to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴ And it shall be when he lies down, that you shall take notice of the place where he lies, and you shall go and uncover his feet and lie down; then he will tell you what you should do.” ⁵ And she said to her, “All that you say I will do.”

⁶ So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law had commanded her. ⁷ When Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came secretly, and uncovered his feet and lay down. ⁸ And it happened in the middle of the night that the man was startled and bent forward; and behold, a woman was lying at his feet. ⁹ So he said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth your slave. Now spread your garment over your slave, for you are a redeemer.” ¹⁰ Then he said, “May you be blessed of the Lord, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness to be better than the first, by not going after young men, whether poor or rich. ¹¹ So now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you say, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence. ¹² But now, although it is true that I am a redeemer, yet there is also a redeemer more closely related than I. ¹³ Remain this night, and when morning comes, if he will redeem you, good; let him redeem you. But if he does not wish to redeem you, then I will redeem you, as the Lord lives. Lie down until morning.”

¹⁴ So she lay at his feet until morning, and got up before one person could recognize another; and he said, “Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.” ¹⁵ Again he said, “Give me the shawl that is on you and hold it.” So she held it, and he measured six measures of barley and laid it on her. Then she went into the city. ¹⁶ When she came to her mother-in-law, she said, “How did it go, my daughter?” And she told her all that the man had done for her. ¹⁷ She also said, “These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said, ‘Do not go to your mother-in-law empty-handed.’” ¹⁸ Then she said, “Wait, my daughter, until you know how the matter turns out; for the man will not rest until he has settled it today.”

Many years ago my brother and sister-in-law had set aside some extra money that was their tithe above and beyond his regular salaried tithe. At Christmas time they decided to find a place to give this extra offering to one place. They had gone to school with a Christian young lady that had married a man in missions in the states and they chose this couple to bless with their offering. They gave every cent of



the money which came out to over \$800 (for some reason \$872 is what I remember). They put a check in the mail to this young couple as a gift.

A week or so later they got a call from this young lady and she asked them how they knew about their outstanding bill. They didn't know anything about a bill and they sent whatever was in the account at that time. It just so happened that the amounts were exactly the same, to the dollar.

God has a plan in many forms of redemption for you and I. First and foremost, His redemption plan was in sending Jesus to save us from an eternity in hell. Beyond that He has done many other things that show a redemption story in all of His children.

Ruth is just such an example. The book of Ruth is a great story that when read for the content of the story itself is very interesting. When it's read in the context of a foretelling of Jesus coming as our redeemer it is deep and meaningful.



Lowly Midianite to Redeemed

WHAT DID IT MEAN TO THEM

1) Ruth starts with three strikes against her

Ruth started her life as about as low in status as you could get, at least according to the people of Israel. You see Ruth was a Moabitess, which means she was a woman from the nation of Moab. This people started when Lot and his family were fleeing Sodom and after his wife was turned into a pillar of salt Lot and his daughters fled to a cave to hide. Lot's oldest daughter thought that their family would end there in the cave so she talked to her younger sister and they hatched a plan to get their father drunk and take advantage of him. Both daughters became pregnant by their father and the older daughter gave birth to a son that she named Moab. (Genesis 19:30–38)

From that line was born Ruth. We can see where she started out with a tough road ahead. The people of Israel looked down on the people of Moab and while God didn't say specifically not to marry in the Moabites, He did say not to marry into the other ungodly nations.

Not only was Ruth a Moabitess, once she left her family and followed Naomi into Bethlehem she was a widow without any children. These women of that day had no one to take care of them and they had to rely on the generosity of others just to survive. It seems as though Ruth had three strikes against her when she entered Bethlehem.

But God loves an underdog and as we saw earlier, God had a plan in place long before you and I can even imagine how we are going to get through what we are dealing with. We can wrestle with our difficult situations and do our best to overcome those things that we think we have control over, or we can look for what God has already planned and wait on Him, in His timing, to redeem us from the mess we're in at the time.

2) Ruth is unselfish

Naomi told Ruth and her sister-in-law Orpah several times that they should stay back in Moab with their families.

⁷ So she departed from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. ⁸ But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to your mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹ May the LORD grant that you may find a place of rest, each one in the house of her husband." (Ruth 1:7-8)

Orpah said "no", but eventually went back to her family. However, Ruth remained loyal to Naomi, her mother-in-law. Even after three efforts on Naomi's part to turn her back to her family, Ruth refused to leave and made a wonderful statement on her dedication to Naomi.



¹⁵ Then she said, “Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” ¹⁶ But Ruth said, “Do not plead with me to leave you or to turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you sleep, I will sleep. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. ¹⁷ Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD do so to me, and worse, if anything but death separates me from you.” (Ruth 1:15-27)

Ruth was set on going with Naomi and carrying for her, even after Naomi begged her to go back to her country and her own people. It wasn't long until the people of Bethlehem learned of the love that Ruth had for Naomi and the care she showed to her.

3) God's plan already in place

I find it strange how we all get amazed when we see God moving in our lives. Somehow we are surprised with things working out. We forget about Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to those that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

All that being said, I find it amazing that before Ruth and Naomi got to Bethlehem God had already ripened the Barley for harvest. This started a series of events that shows us God's provision, His timing and His love.

4) Be bold and do a good job

Ruth could have waited around with Naomi when they got to Bethlehem. The two of them could have begged for enough money or food to get by, but instead Ruth went out and gleaned grain from the fields that were being harvested. It was instructed to God's people that they should leave the edges and the stalks that fell in the field for those that were in need (Leviticus 23:22). Ruth was out gathering some of what was left over.

Ruth stayed there at the field until Boaz came and Boaz noticed her there and asked about her. The supervisor that worked for Boaz had taken note of Ruth and noticed that she had been doing a good job at gleaning and that there was something special about her. This was important because when Boaz asked about this “young woman” the supervisor gave a good report which must have impressed Boaz. He reported that Ruth had asked to stay and glean.

⁷ And she said, ‘Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.’

Her boldness in a godly fashion had paid off.

5) Our Redeemer

When Ruth arrived home with grain Naomi asked her where she had gleaned that day. When Ruth answered that she had been in the field owned by Boaz Ruth responded with this.

²⁰ Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed of the LORD who has not withdrawn His kindness from the living and from the dead.” Again Naomi said to her, “The man is our relative; he is one of our redeemers.” (Ruth 2:20)

This is the first we see of the term for Boaz as a “redeemer”. He was a close relative and as such he had a responsibility to take care of one of the family that was without someone to take care of them. He was a man of great wealth and greater character and a kinsman redeemer.

The kinsman redeemer had a specifically defined role in Israel’s family life. He was responsible to buy a fellow Israelite out of slavery (Leviticus 25:28). He was responsible to be the “avenger of blood” to make sure the murderer of a family member answered to the crime (Numbers 35:19). He was responsible to buy back family land that had been forfeited (Leviticus 25:25). He was responsible to carry on the family name by marrying a childless widow (Deuteronomy 25:5-10).

So in all this we see Boaz as the kinsman redeemer who was responsible to safeguard the Ruth and Naomi, their property, and the future security of the family.

6) Ruth is submissive

When Naomi tells Ruth to go to the threshing floor and how to act there when she sees Boaz, Ruth answers with; “All that you say I will do.” (Ruth 3:5)

Once she gets to the threshing floor she shows her submission to Boaz. At the appropriate time, Naomi instructs Ruth to go in, uncover his feet, and lie down. Today we might think that this was a provocative gesture, as if Ruth was told to provocatively offer herself sexually to Boaz. This was not how this gesture was understood in that day. In the culture of that day, this was understood as an act of total submission.

At that time, this was understood to be the role of a servant, to lay at their master’s feet and be ready for any command he might give. So, when Naomi told Ruth to “lie down” at Boaz’s feet, she told her to come to him in a totally humble, submissive way.

This sincerely submission on the part of Ruth paid off, just as God had planned. Boaz told Ruth,

“Blessed *are* you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you *are* a virtuous woman.” (Ruth 3:10-11).

7) Blessed for her faithfulness

When God wants things to happen, they often happen in a hurry. We have seen so many times that God's timing is not man's timing. Through many of these situations in the Bible or in our own lives that we want immediate gratification and God was us wait.

We see this in the life of Abraham when God told him he was have a son. When it didn't happen quickly Abraham and Sarah took matters into their own hands and the results are still affecting us today. When we move ahead of God we run the danger of creating a mess for ourselves. This wasn't the case with Ruth.

In Chapter four of the book of Ruth we see where Boaz goes before the elders of the village of Bethlehem and the one other kinsman redeemer that was ahead of him in responsibility to Ruth and Naomi. Boaz explains the situation and the other potential redeemer forfeits his right and gives it over to Boaz. With this Boaz vows to marry Ruth.

Ruth and Naomi both were blessed in amazing ways because of Ruth's loyalty, faithfulness, submission and love. Not only did God provide a husband and children for Ruth, He put Ruth right in the direct lineage of Jesus Himself. God's timing and His plans are amazing.



What Does It Mean to Us?

As we read and consider what the book of Ruth tells us we can see much of what you and I deal with on a regular basis in our lives.

How many times in life do we feel helpless, with no hope of getting back to where we have any hope at all? Illness, death of a family member, financial disaster, abandonment and more has taken away any joy or hope from our lives.

If we trust that God has a plan for our lives as He had a plan for Ruth's we can see hope in any situation. What can we learn from Ruth to keep us seeing Hope through our relationship with Him?

1) Remaining unselfish

We saw that Ruth might have been better to stay with her family in Moab, yet she chose to follow Naomi and care for her in her time of need.

We with go through times in life where we know that in the short-term there is a better way for you and I. But when we look at the big picture what might be best for me today might not be what God wants. When we learn to look at what God wants and how our decisions stack up again what we learn in scripture, we see things a different way.

³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3-4)

2) Know that God has a plan already in place

Ruth and Naomi just didn't happen to end up in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest. God had planned that out so that there wouldn't be a lapse in timing that might have changed things. We need to trust that God has a plan for you and I far before we ever have a need.

In Luke 19:1-10 we read about Jesus as He was traveling through Jericho, and as was the case throughout most of His ministry, He was surrounded by a large crowd. To the outcasts, the rich, the poor, the sick, the rulers, and the sinners, Jesus was the Way, the Truth, and the Light. He was a force, drawing in the hearts of any person in His path.

Many of us remember the old song from Sunday School Class about Zacchaeus. If you don't we learned in that song that he "was a wee little man"... He was short. He wanted to see Jesus and he ran ahead of the crowd and found a tree to climb in so that He could see Him. Jesus saw Zacchaeus and called him out and went to his house to eat.

There is a saying that I have seen several times in different places and it goes, "Long before Zacchaeus couldn't see Jesus, the tree was already planted to serve his need". This is a simple story and saying, but it's the truth. God knows our needs long before we even know of them and He has already figured out

how to take care of the need. We just have to rest on Him. We have no need to worry, God has it all planned out ahead.

²⁶ Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

²⁸ "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; ²⁹ and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

³⁰ Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?*

³¹ "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:26-34)

3) Always do your best, you never know who's watching

If Ruth had waited behind those that were picking the grain hoping that there would be some easy pickings left, most likely the supervisor that was working for Boaz would never had taken note of her.

You and I never know who is watching us and what impact we might have on them today or in the future. We can rest assured that if no one else is watching, God is always watching over us. He sees everything. This is not to scare us into doing our best, but so we know what He cares enough to keep an eye on us.

If we are a child of God then we can rest assured that the world is also watching. Some are watching in hopes that we will mess up and they can pounce on our faith. But others are watching to see what is different about us. Boaz knew right away that there was something different about Ruth and because she was living and acting in a godly fashion, she ended up being redeemed from the life she and Naomi had been living.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

4) Be Submissive

Being submissive has somehow gotten a bad rap in today's world. When we think of someone that is submissive today we think of a skinny legged wimp with pants about his ankles, a pocket protector and



electrical tape holding the bridge of his glasses together. If that is our idea of biblical submission we are way off base.

What does submission mean? Google's dictionary defines submission as "*the action or fact of accepting or yielding to a superior force or to the will or authority of another person.*" Submitting means putting others before yourself; it means not always doing what you want to do. It means putting God's desires above your desires.

When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before He was crucified, He was struggling about what was coming the next day. Remember Jesus was 100% man and 100% God. He had the feelings and struggles that you and I have. Which one of us would have wanted to leave our friends and family, be whipped and beaten, had to carry a heavy cross through the streets and then be nailed to that cross and hung until you died? And worst of all, which us would have wanted to watch our father turn His back on us?

Jesus didn't want any of that, and I don't blame Him. But I am so glad that He prayed, "Father not My will but Your's be done." (Luke 22:42) Now that is perfect submission.

The life of Ruth is a great example of how we are to act in our lives. We also see God provision through this great woman of faith. What else is revealed to us is the example of Jesus Christ and how He has redeemed you and I. Ruth could have gone back to her parents and her country, but she chose to stay with Naomi. She could have rejected the redemption offered by Boaz, but she accepted his gift. This is the same situation that we face as we decide to accept or reject Jesus Christ as our savior.



DIGGING DEEPER

1) When God shows you an opportunity for positive change in your life (as He offered to Ruth), do you doubt Him?

2) Where do you fail in being unselfish, time, money, love ?

3) Have you confessed this, laying before God and asked for forgiveness?

4) Where do you fail to trust that God has the best in mind for you at all time?

5) Do you do your best when someone or no one is watching? When do you fail?

6) Do you have someone that you know that you are responsible to help (as Boaz did) yet you have been letting them down? Make a plan now to serve them in Jesus name.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

We praise You today that we know that You go before us and have a plan for our lives that we cannot comprehend. We know that you have our best interest at heart for every single part of our lives. I pray that we would always do our best, know that our world is watching and we carry your name with us as we go through our day to day lives. Help us to be loyal and trustworthy to those that you place alongside of us. Might we always be watching out for those that need us and those that we can point to you. Thank you for all that we have done for us and especially for sending Jesus Christ to be our redeemer. In His name we pray, amen.