

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
7-3-24

Ruth 4

Boaz Meets The Nearer Kinsman – Verses 1-2

¹ Meanwhile Boaz went up to the town gate and sat down there just as the guardian-redeemer he had mentioned came along. Boaz said, “Come over here, my friend, and sit down.” So he went over and sat down. ² Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said, “Sit here,” and they did so.

4:1 Now Boaz went: The previous chapter left us at a dramatic point. Ruth and Boaz were obviously in love and wanted to get married, with Boaz exercising the right of the goel — the kinsman-redeemer. Yet, there was a kinsman closer to Ruth and he had priority. Would he claim the right of kinsman-redeemer towards Ruth, and keep her and Boaz from coming together?

4:1 Boaz knew he could find his relative at the town gate. This was the center of activity. No one could enter or leave the town without traveling through the gate. Merchants set up their temporary shops near the gate, which also served as “city hall.” Here city officials gathered to transact business. Because there was so much activity, it was a good place to find witnesses (4: 2) and an appropriate place for Boaz to make his transaction.

4:2 Come aside, friend, sit down here: Literally, in the ancient Hebrew, when Boaz greeted the nearer kinsman he called him “Mr. So-and-so.” The writer of Ruth never identified the name of the nearer kinsman because he was not worthy of the honor. He declined to fulfill his obligations as the nearer kinsman to Ruth.

Boaz Asks The Nearer Kinsman To Redeem The Land Of Naomi (And Elimelech) – Verses 3-4

³ Then he said to the guardian-redeemer, “Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our relative Elimelek. ⁴ I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of these seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you will not, tell me, so I will know. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line.” “I will redeem it,” he said.

4:3-4 Boaz cleverly presented his case to the relative. First he brought in new information not yet mentioned in the story— Elimelek, Naomi’s former husband, still had some property in the area that was now for sale. As the nearest relative, this man had the first right to buy the land, which he agreed to do (Leviticus 25: 25). But then Boaz said that according to the law, if the relative bought the property he also had to marry the widow (probably because Mahlon, Ruth’s former husband and Elimelek’s son, had inherited the property). At this stipulation, the relative backed down. He did not want to complicate his inheritance. He may have feared that if he had a son through Ruth, some of his estate would transfer away from his family to the family of Elimelek. Whatever his reason, the way was now clear for Boaz to marry Ruth.

Boaz Informs The Nearer Kinsman Of His Duty To Redeem The Property Of Elimelech – Verse 5

⁵Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the land from Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the dead man’s widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property.”

4:5 On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess: Boaz then put the surprise on the nearer kinsman. He told him that he wasn’t only dealing with Naomi and the property of Elimelech, he also had to deal with Ruth.

4:5 Because of Boaz’s wise (perhaps shrewd) way of framing the occasion, this was the first time the nearer kinsman considered this, and it was a pretty big question to take in all at once. When it was just a matter of property, it was easy to decide on; but if he must take Ruth as a wife, that was another matter.

The Nearer Kinsman Declines His Right Of Redemption Towards The Property Of Elimelech – Verse 6

⁶At this, the guardian-redeemer said, “Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it.”

4:6 I cannot redeem it for myself: Though it would be great to receive the property associated with Ruth, the nearer kinsman knew that taking her into his home would ruin his own inheritance. Also, no doubt, the man was married — and knew it would be awkward (at best!) to bring home Ruth as wife number two.

The Custom Of The Sandal In Transactions – Verses 7-8

⁷(Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel.) ⁸So the guardian-redeemer said to Boaz, “Buy it yourself.” And he removed his sandal.

4:7-8 It was the custom in former times in Israel: Deuteronomy 25:5-10 describes the ceremony conducted when a kinsman declined his responsibility. The one declining removed a sandal and the woman he declined to honor spat in his face. But in this case, because there was not a lack of honor involved, they just did the part of the ceremony involving the sandal. Buy it for yourself: The nearer kinsman said, “The land is yours to redeem, because you are also willing to redeem the posterity of Elimelech by taking Ruth as wife, something I am not willing to do.”

Boaz’s Announcement To The Elders And The People – Verses 9-10

⁹Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, “Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Kilion and Mahlon. ¹⁰I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon’s widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses!”

4:9 Boaz said to the elders and all the people: Boaz joyfully proclaimed — legally sealing the transaction — that he would redeem both the property and the posterity of Elimelech, and (best of all!) take Ruth, the woman he loved, as his wife.

4:10 Ruth... I have acquired as my wife: Back in chapter one, Ruth seemed to be giving up on her best chance of marriage by leaving her native land of Moab and giving her heart and life to the God of

Israel. But as Ruth put God first, He brought her together in a relationship greater than she could have imagined. Today, God will bless those wanting to get married in the same way if they will only put Him first.

4:10 You are witnesses this day: This explains why a marriage ceremony is important, and why it should be recognized by the civil authorities. Boaz had a love for Ruth that was public, a love that wanted to be publicly witnessed and registered. Sometimes, people wonder why a marriage ceremony, or a marriage license is important. “Can’t we just be married before God?” But there is something severely lacking in a love that doesn’t want to proclaim itself; that does not want witnesses; and that does not want the bond to be recognized by the civil authorities. That love falls short of true marital love. So, those who say “Well, if we were on a desert island and no one was there to marry us, could we still be married before God?” need to hear the answer: “Yes — on a desert island. But you aren’t on a desert island. There are witnesses and civil authorities for you to proclaim your commitment of marital love to. God wants you to do it!”

The Blessing Of The Witnesses To The Wedding – Verses 11-12

11 Then the elders and all the people at the gate said, “We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel. May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. **12** Through the offspring the LORD gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.”

4:12 Of all the ancestors (including Abraham) they could have named, why did these men mention Perez? The birth of Perez was an example of the “levirate” practice, whereby the brother or relative of the dead husband married his widow (Genesis 38). Boaz, as guardian-redeemer, was following this levirate practice since Ruth’s former husband had no living brothers. The descendants of Perez made Judah a prominent tribe. Boaz, David, and all the Judean kings were descendants of Perez.

Ruth And Boaz Have Their First Child – Verse 13

13 So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.

The Lord gave her conception: The gift of children was never taken for granted in Israel. The fact that Boaz and Ruth were able to raise up a son to the deceased Elimelech was evidence of God’s blessing.

The Blessed Life Of Naomi – Verses 14-16

14 The women said to Naomi: “Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! **15** He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.” **16** Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him.

4:14 Blessed be the LORD: Look at blessed Naomi! She now had a grandson; she was now famous in Israel; and she got to be a nurse to her own grandson. Who has not left you this day without a close relative: It was fitting that these blessings in the life of Naomi be given so much attention at the end of the book. Naomi was the one whose original returning to the LORD began all this great work of

God. If Naomi had not decided to go back to Bethlehem, the land of Israel, and the God of Israel, none of this would have happened.

4:15 This is a marvelous demonstration of what God can do through one poor woman who gets right with Him. It is also fitting because Naomi was the one who said in chapter one, the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me... the LORD has brought me home again empty... the LORD has testified against me Ruth 1:20-21. If only Naomi could have seen then how greatly the LORD would bless her at the end!

4:15 We can't blame Naomi — we certainly do the same kind of thing. But we should also learn from what she learned. We should learn that God's plan is perfect and filled with love, and even when we can't figure out what He is doing and it all seems so desperate, He still knows what He is doing. We should learn that all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose Romans 8:28.

4:16 Throughout her tough times, Naomi continued to trust God. And God, in his time, blessed her greatly. Even in our sorrow and calamity, God can bring great blessings. Be like Naomi, and don't turn your back on God when tragedy strikes. Instead of asking, "How can God allow this to happen to me?" trust him. He will be with you in the hard times.

Ruth And Boaz: Great-Grandparents To David, King Of Israel – Verses 17-22

¹⁷ The women living there said, "Naomi has a son!" And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. ¹⁸ This, then, is the family line of Perez: Perez was the father of Hezron, ¹⁹ Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab, ²⁰ Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, ²¹ Salmon the father of Boaz, Boaz the father of Obed, ²² Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David.

4:17-22 To some, the book of Ruth may be just a nice story about a girl who was fortunate. But in reality, the events recorded in Ruth were part of God's preparations for the births of David and of Jesus, the promised Messiah. Just as Ruth was unaware of this larger purpose in her life, we will not know the full purpose and importance of our lives until we are able to look back from the perspective of eternity. We must make our choices with God's eternal values in mind. Taking moral shortcuts and living for short-range pleasures are not good ways to move ahead. Because of Ruth's faithful obedience, her life and legacy were significant even though she couldn't see all the results. Live in faithfulness to God, knowing that the significance of your life will extend beyond your lifetime. The rewards will outweigh any sacrifice you may have made.