

Women in the Lineage of Christ

Week 7 – Ruth 4

Prepare...

As you begin, take a moment to pray and focus on the Lord as you come into his presence and study his word.

You may want to use this prayer, based on Hebrews 4:12

God, your Word is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing my soul and spirit, my joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of my heart. I want to hear you through your word now.

Begin...

Read through the text twice. First read to gain a general understanding of the passage. Read a second time slowly, looking at each verse in detail.

To make sure you have understood the story in Ruth, answer the following questions (in your head or on paper).

1. Where did Boaz go after leaving Ruth?
2. What does he do there?
3. What does Boaz first offer to the kinsman-redeemer? And what is his response?
4. What does Boaz then offer? What is the response?
5. How were transactions made legal at the time?
6. Who blesses Boaz? Who blesses Naomi?
7. Who is the great-grandson of Boaz and Ruth?

Memory Verse for the Week...

Mark 10:45

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Historical background

The town gate was the town hall of ancient Israel, the normal place for business and legal transactions, where witnesses were readily available. The ten elders represented a full court for legal proceedings.

When a kinsman-redeemer married a widow, the Law required that the widow's firstborn son would keep the dead man's name alive and retain ownership of the family inheritance. Boaz was willing to take on all the expenses and duties of marrying Ruth, when he would get nothing tangible in return. Perez was also born from the kinsman-redeemer law.

Some scriptures for contemplation...

Lev. 25:25

"If one of your countrymen becomes poor and sells some of his property, his nearest relative is to come and redeem what his countryman has sold."

Deut. 25:5-6

"If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband's brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel."

Philippians 4:13

"I can do all things through him who gives me strength."

Proverbs 16:9

"In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps."

Study Questions

1. At the beginning of chapter 4, Boaz goes to the city gate to wait for the kinsman-redeemer mentioned in chapter 3. Boaz discusses the land first, then the widow. The kinsman would have bought the land to add to his own inheritance. Why was he reluctant to marry Ruth? (see historical context)

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2. The elders at the city gate acted as witnesses to the transaction between Boaz and his relative. Who else had been following every move of the story since the beginning (1:19; 4:14)? What impact do our attitudes and actions have on our surroundings?

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3. Two blessings are pronounced in this chapter. Summarize what is said in each one and explain their significance.

Blessing on Boaz...

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Blessing on Naomi...

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Considering Ruth's origin, what do you think this unusual blessing by the women must have meant to her? To the Israelite readers?

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4. In verses 9-10 Boaz further demonstrates his upstanding character. He states that he is redeeming the land from Naomi and acquiring Ruth as his wife in order to maintain Elimelech's name. His own interests are never mentioned. How hard is it for you to give without your own interests in mind?

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Give examples of times God has helped you act selflessly.

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Compare Boaz's actions with what Christ has done for us.

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5. The first half of Ruth 4 shows us a Boaz who gives of himself to redeem Ruth. He puts aside personal desires and does what is best for her. God, through Boaz, provided for Naomi and Ruth.

The second half of Ruth 4 goes even further. Boaz and Ruth become the great-grandparents of king David. We see God’s sovereign plan at work. The book of Ruth ends with a genealogy. What is the significance of this?

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6. The conclusion of Ruth mirrors the introduction by focusing on Naomi. In 1:21 she speaks of her emptiness, which in chapter 4 is contrasted with her fullness.

Boaz was used to bring Ruth and Naomi from emptiness to fullness through his selfless love. Their descendant David selflessly served the people of Israel, and the ultimate end of the genealogy is Jesus, who brought fullness and redemption to mankind.

Where have you seen the God of Ruth and Boaz act providentially and redemptively on your behalf? What in your life makes it hard to believe God’s sovereignty over your story?

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7. God is not often mentioned in Ruth. Nonetheless, the most striking feature of this simple and beautiful story is the sense of God’s intimate concern in humble affairs. How does Ruth’s story change the way you see every day life? How does it confirm or change the image you have of God? Who is His priority?

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8. Take a moment to meditate on the verses in the sidebar under “Christ is our redeemer.” Offer praise to God for the sacrifice he made in order to redeem us. How is he asking you to respond?

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“Redemption does not only look back to Calvary. It looks forward to the freedom in which the redeemed stand.”

—The New Bible Dictionary by InterVarsity Fellowship

Christ is our redeemer...

Philippians 2: 5

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross.”

Romans 5:8

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Mark 10:45

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Galatians 5:1

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”

Personal Application