

Ruth 4:1-10

God's hand in our shrewdness

In this session we are focused on the outcomes of chapter 3 when Ruth was bold enough to claim what was now her right as a member of the house of Elimilech— namely, the claim to a kinsman-redeemer. Boaz responded by acknowledging that he would be glad to offer her the protection and care provided by the Law of Moses to a young widow. He promises to seek out the one who has the first responsibility in the family lineage first. He honorably goes beyond the requirement of the Law in that it is not a requirement for him to act. A marriage is in the making here. Let's see what happens next.

READ Ruth 4:1-10

BOAZ AND THE NEARER KINSMAN-REDEEMER

a. Why was important legal business conducted at the town gate? (e.g.'s Ps. 127:5; Amos 5:10; Deut. 22:15, 24; 25:7-9; Prov. 22:22; 31:23; Gen. 23:10; 34:20;)



b. What did Boaz urge the nearer goel to do and why? How did the latter respond?

c. Ruth 4:3 is the first mention of land that Naomi wanted redeemed. Read Leviticus 25:23-28 for a reminder about the governing Levirate Law.

i. Perhaps during Naomi's absence when in Moab, the land had fallen into other hands prompting Naomi's present request for its redemption. Or perhaps the land was inadequate to sustain a household. The Law did not suggest that the land would easily transfer to a widow. These may help to explain why Ruth couldn't glean on Naomi's parcel of land early in the story? (see vs. 9, and Numbers 27:8-11)

ii. Naomi had a vision of economic survival and household harmony in 3:1. Boaz is equally entrepreneurial in his approach to the nearest kinsman in 4:4. Why do think he omits to speak of the widow Ruth in the deal? What might the kinsman have thought about the deal if the elderly Naomi were the widow in focus?



iii. In verse 5 Boaz declares his hand. What were Boaz' motives in presenting his argument this way (mentioning the land first)?

iv. What makes the nearer kinsman refuse the deal? Why is he so concerned about having to take on a widow and bear a son to her, as well as taking on another plot of land? What economic realities and personal responsibilities might come result for him?

v. In what ways do his actions parallel those of Orpah in Ruth 1?

vi. What does this emphasise about Boaz and his love and care for Ruth?

d. Compare Ruth 4:1-10 to the story of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38.

i. How does the nearer kinsman-redeemer's surrender of his right of redemption recall Onan's refusal to act as levir to Tamar?

- ii. How does the nearer kinsman-redeemer's surrender of his right of redemption recall Judah's breaking of his word to Tamar?

- iii. What was it about Boaz that made him so different from Onan, Judah, and the nearer kinsman-redeemer?

- iv. Review Deuteronomy 25. How has the effectiveness of the law been extended in the story of Ruth? If the Law was a guide and love (*hesed*) was the intended motivation among God's covenant people, consider the differences in the attitudes of those in the account of Judah and Tamar in Gen. 38. How does Jesus' teaching in Matthew chapter 6 connect with these ideals?

There is nothing illegal going on here. Boaz is next in line (vs. 6). Boaz ticks all the boxes for Ruth's situation. Though he had no immediate obligation, he had:

- kinship
- wealth (2:1)
- commitment
- love
- sacrifice

BOAZ MARRIES RUTH

e. Consider Boaz's announcement in verses 9-10.

- i. How is the property to be redeemed described in verse 3? How is it described in verse 9? What is the reason for these rather different descriptions?

- ii. What reason did Boaz give for redeeming the land and marrying Ruth? How do these two actions exemplify the principle of *hesed* (steadfast love)?

- f. In his work as redeemer and savior of Ruth and Naomi, Boaz may be thought of as a prefiguration of the work of Jesus Christ, Redeemer and Savior of the world. Use the table below to record a few of the parallels between Boaz (the type) and Christ (the fulfillment) as a preview to next week's study. Read the scriptural references and write a summary of the theological principle.

<i>Boaz</i>	<i>Christ</i>	<i>Theological Principle</i>
Ruth 1:5	Romans 3:23	The work of the redeemer is necessary because people are trapped in a hopeless situation from which they are unable to save themselves.
Ruth 3:11-13; 4:9-10	Mark 10:45; John 10:17-18	
Ruth 4:4-6	2 Corinthians 8:9; 1 Peter 1:1-19	
Ruth 4:9	Hebrews 9:15	
Ruth 4:10	Ephesians 5:23; Revelation 21:2	