

Ruth 4

Redemption Realized

Learning Objectives

- To see the story of Ruth as a picture of the Gospel in miniature
- Understand that God is constantly at work in our lives and has a plan, even when things are hard

Pray for your time together as a group.

Section One: Here Comes Boaz

Read Out Loud: Ruth 4:1-12

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. 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.

⁵ Then 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.”

⁶ At 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.”

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.)

⁸ So the guardian-redeemer said to Boaz, “Buy it yourself.” And he removed his sandal.

⁹ Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, “Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon. ¹⁰ I 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!”

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.”



Is it Boaz’ responsibility to redeem Naomi and Ruth? Why or why not?

Possible answers: No - as there was this other relative “in line” to redeem the land, line, widows. Yes - as a man of integrity and substantial means, Boaz is in a position to care for the most vulnerable in Israel society i.e. widows (Naomi) and sojourners (Ruth).

Leader's note: Verse 7 in this section gives us a clue that even the original audience of this story may have been in the dark about the particular aspects of this ceremony, as are we! Share this with your group if there is confusion, that this was a way to formalize the 'taking care of' Naomi and Ruth. The culture was centered on family, and this was a village-halting issue for which a trial was needed.

? What do Boaz' actions demonstrate about his character?

Possible answers: His forwardness with the situation reveals he cares and thinks it is important, yet he approaches it in a calm and unaggressive way. He displayed integrity by gathering the elders, presenting a chance to the other relative, keeping of a tradition. Maybe he was deceiving the other redeemer?

Leader's note: In going through this 'trial' before the elders, Boaz is laying out all intentions and giving both himself *and* the other relative no room to circumvent the true responsibilities and cost of redemption. It may seem cunning, in a bad way, but perhaps this was a wise move to test the inner heart of the other relative.

Matthew Henry sheds light on this passage within Ruth, and the book as a whole, in very approachable ways. Here is what he says on Boaz as an example: "...to be not only just and honest, but fair and honourable."

"What is a great estate good for, but that it enables a man to do so much the more good in his generation, and especially to those of his own household, if he have but a heart to use it so!"

Section Two: Boaz marries Ruth

Read Out Loud Ruth 4:13-17

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. 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. 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.

? Have you ever been the focus of a celebration or event? What was that experience like? Why was it important to you? (i.e. graduation party, wedding, having a child)

? Is it strange to hear that Naomi was said to have received a son? Why is this an important aspect of the scene of celebration?

Possible answers: this is a collective praise for God's redemption of her suffering and affirmation of her true identity as Naomi rather than as 'Mara.' This is one aspect of how the brokenness at the open of this story is undone.

Section Three: Family Line

Read Out Loud Ruth 4:18-22

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.



Why is tying this story to King David significant? Who was King David to ancient Israelites?

Possible answers: This adds meat, potatoes, and some celery to the stew of the Messianic line of King David. Here we see the divine purpose of Ruth as her son Obed will carry on the lineage to David, and eventually, to Jesus.

Leader's note: With our perspective of the cross, we see all the more the redeemed brokenness inherent to Jesus' lineage, that yet begat a perfect God-Man to redeem the world. Consider the following passage in response to the question above.

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.



How can we maintain hope and trust in God's ultimate plans in the midst of personal hardship? How do you think Boaz, Ruth, Naomi, and others of their time did so?

Possible answers: We can take heart in the examples of God's faithfulness revealed in scripture (the life of Moses, Jacob, Joseph, Daniel, etc.)

*The book of Ruth has a symmetric plot of: **Tragedy** > **Loyalty** > **Loyalty** > **Reverse Tragedy***

*The opening act starts with **Tragedy** (abandoning the promised land, the loss of husbands and sons due to foolishness and sinful choices) but ends with **Loyalty in suffering** as Ruth returns with Naomi to Bethlehem. The closing act features the **Generous Loyalty** of Boaz toward Naomi and Ruth and concludes with the **Reverse Tragedy**: the gaining of a place in the promised land, a husband and a son.*



How do we see gospel themes demonstrated in the whole book of Ruth? How does this vignette reflect the Great Story God has written, and continues to write, around us?

Possible answers: leaders not trusting God, leading to the suffering of others. A humble person outside, seeking redemption. A giver restoring dignity, security, peace to people in need. Tragedy of the fall, the loyalty of Christ, our inheritance through Him.

Leader's note: this is a major punch line to this study! Hammer home that this story is a picture of the long arc God has for us: we started in Paradise, stubbornness drove us out, generations were broken, and a faithful redeemer brings justice and righteousness to change our future (both here and now) forever, eventually concluding in paradise!

For Discussion And Accountability

? Can you think of a difficult time in your life in which God's faithfulness was revealed to you?

? Where are you struggling to trust God's redemption of a hard situation now?