



A Night at the Threshing Floor Ruth 3

Introduction

Boaz and Ruth have met and spoken to each other. Now there is the unfinished business of her dead husband's inheritance and name. Boaz is a near kinsman with the right to redeem both property and name but at a cost to himself. According to the law of Moses, if Boaz were to marry Ruth, their first child would be her dead husband's heir and carry on his name. Was Boaz' love great enough to be willing to redeem Ruth at cost to himself? Williams says, "This chapter is one of exquisite beauty and deep spiritual teaching" (The Student Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, George Williams).

Outline of Ruth Chapter 3.

- I. Ruth at the Threshing Floor - Ruth 3:1-15
- II. Ruth Waiting for Redemption - Ruth 3:16-18

I. Ruth at the Threshing Floor - Ruth 3:1-15

- A. Naomi, the Matchmaker - Ruth 3:1-2

Time had passed since Ruth first gleaned in Boaz' fields. She had gone faithfully every day and done as she had been instructed. While going about his own business, Boaz was aware of her. Naomi saw that the time was right for further action. She would assume the role of matchmaker! *My daughter, shall I not seek security for you that it may be well with you?*

Boaz was the closest unmarried relative. Naomi knew that he would be at the threshing floor winnowing the gathered grain that very night. The men often worked all night, once they began, in order to finish before rain came. They even slept at the floor to protect the grain from marauders. Naomi saw an opportunity.

Ruth had been satisfied with Boaz' kindness and gifts. However, there comes a time for more intimacy with the giver. This is true in the Christian walk. At first we enjoy the newness of the spiritual gifts of the Father. But soon it is the Giver Himself we want to know. He is the One who sends every good and perfect gift from above (James 1:17), and if the gifts are good, the giver is better. Often it is an older Christian who suggests the possibility of a deeper relationship with God, as Naomi suggested for Ruth and Boaz.

- B. Ruth's Part in the Plan - Ruth 3:3-5

Ruth was to wash and perfume herself and dress in

her best clothes. Then she was to go to the threshing floor and wait in the shadows until Boaz finished eating and drinking and was ready to lie down. Then she was to lie at his feet, uncover them, and await further instructions. Many things must have gone through her mind. What if he did not understand? What would he think of her? Would he react by telling her to leave and hold her up to shame? Worst of all, would he send her back to Naomi like a child who had misbehaved?

Nevertheless, Ruth trusted both Naomi and Naomi's God, who now, it seems, had become her own. She was committed to them both. There was no turning back. *All that you say to me I will do.* Ruth was a woman of conviction and courage.

Williams says, "There was no impropriety in Ruth's action. It was the law and custom of the time. To draw a portion of a kinsman's mantle over one was the legal way of claiming protection and redemption." Naomi had chosen a public place where there were witnesses if necessary, but she also chose the cover of darkness to free Boaz from embarrassment to respond however he wanted.

Naomi had rightly said that if Ruth did her part, Boaz would do his part and tell her what to do. So it is when we come to Jesus for help or direction. If we do whatever it is He shows us to do, He will lead us further. How often do we want to see the whole picture before we are willing to obey. Yet those who are meek enough to take just one more step in faith are the ones to whom God reveals the rest of His way (Psalm 25:9).

- C. Boaz' Part - Ruth 3:6-9

1. Interrupted Rest

After a long day's work of threshing wheat and a full dinner with lots of camaraderie, Boaz lay down feeling satisfied with what had been accomplished. The wind that was useful in separating wheat from chaff had died down and there was nothing to do but rest for the day ahead. As was customary, Boaz lay down next to his heap or grain so it would be guarded through the night. He fell asleep quickly only to awaken at midnight, startled by something, or someone, at his feet.

2. Ruth's Request for Redemption

Who are you? he asked. It was dark and he was not expecting anyone. The situation is similar to Jesus asking *Who touched me?* (Matthew 9:20-22) when the

woman came from behind Him for healing. *I am Ruth*, she answered, *your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing for you are a near kinsman*. This was her formal request for Boaz to do the duty of the kinsman redeemer under the law. According to The Bible Background Commentary, (John H. Walton, Victor W Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas), it was also a proposal of marriage. Furthermore, it is obvious from Boaz' response that he took it as such. "Naomi had not advised her to be this bold, but the outcome of marriage was certainly what she had in mind."

Two separate portions of the law applied to Ruth in this case. First, Leviticus 25:25 deals with redeeming property. *If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold*. Boaz was in a position to buy back the property of Elimelech.

Deuteronomy 25:5-6 deals with the situation of a widow in Israel. It describes what is known as the law of levirate marriage. *If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And it shall be that the firstborn son that she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel*.

Ruth had a just claim on Boaz as a close relative or kinsman redeemer. He must now answer her. The Hebrew word for the kinsman redeemer is "go-el". It is used confidently by Job for his Redeemer in Job 19:25, *For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth*. But Job also lamented that there was no mediator to go between himself and God: *If I wash myself with snow water, and cleanse my hands with soap, yet You will plunge me into the pit, and my own clothes abhor me. For He is not a man, as I am, that I may answer Him, and that we should go to court together. Nor is there any mediator between us who may lay his hand on us both* Job 9:30-33. Job realized that there was nothing he could do to redeem himself. He needed a mediator. Jesus Christ is our "go-el". He is both our Redeemer and our Mediator. *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus* (1 Timothy 2:5). He is the God-Man who bridges the gap between God and us. He had the right to buy us back for the Father when we were lost through the penalty of death for our sin. He redeemed us. But we must come to Him. We must take our place at His feet as Mary did (Luke 10:39). Is Jesus your Kinsman Redeemer?

D. Boaz' Answer - Ruth 3:10-15

Boaz understood immediately what Ruth was doing and the claim she was making. He answered, *Blessed are you of the Lord, my daughter*. He may have been considerably older than Ruth. He commended her for not encouraging younger or wealthier men. He promised to act on her request. He also remembered that there was a closer relative than he who must be given opportunity to take up the claim. But either way, she would be redeemed. Once more Boaz showed his care and generosity. He filled Ruth's shawl with grain for Naomi, this time perhaps as payment for prompting Ruth to action and for being a mediator herself.

II. Ruth Waiting for Redemption - Ruth 3:16-18

After discreetly leaving the threshing floor, Ruth arrived at home with the load of grain and a wonderful story to tell. Naomi rejoiced that all had gone according to her plan. Now she could relax. She admonished Ruth to relax too. *Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day*. Some matters we take to the Lord and leave with Him, knowing there is nothing more we can do. We rest in the Lord, confident that He is busy acting on our behalf. He never slumbers nor sleeps (Psalm 121:4).

Applications

1. What courageous, if unfamiliar, step will you take toward Jesus Christ and greater intimacy with Him?
2. What promises in God's word will you act upon and then claim as your own in prayer to God?
3. Will you wait in faith and trust while God works out the details of your faith and trust in Him?

QUESTIONS

Questions are based on the New King James Version of the Bible.

DAY ONE: Read all notes and references.

1. ? (Thought Question) Why do you think that it was so important to the Jews for their name to be carried on? (See 1 Samuel 24:21 and 2 Samuel 14:7 for help.)
2. What do you think of Naomi's plan now that you have studied Ruth chapter 3?

DAY TWO: Read Ruth 4:1-2

3. a. Where did Boaz go to sit down?
 - b. What happened at "the gate" in the following Scripture passages?

2 Samuel 15:2
1 Kings 22:10
Joshua 20:2-4
 - c. ? (Thought Question) From the above verses, why was "the gate" an important place?
4. Who came by while Boaz was at the gate? If possible, look this up in at least one other version of the Bible, other than the one you normally use. Be willing to share the words used by the different versions.
5. Who else sat down with Boaz?

DAY THREE: Read Ruth 4:3-6.

6. a. What did Boaz tell the close relative ("kinsman" in KJV, "redeemer" in ESV).
 - b. In verse 4, what did Boaz ask this person to do?
 - c. What was his response?
7. a. At this point, what additional information did Boaz add?
 - b. From what you have learned in studying the Book of Ruth, what difference would this make to the close relative? Put a check mark next to the statements which are true.

___ He would have pay double the price of the land.

___ He would have to marry Ruth.

___ He would have to build a memorial to Ruth's husband on the property.

___ He would have to build a home for Ruth and Naomi on the property.

___ The firstborn son would be considered the son of Ruth's dead husband.
 - c. How did the close relative respond to this news? Fill in the blanks below.
I _____ redeem it. I would ruin _____. You (Boaz) _____.
8. ? (Thought Question) Explain in your own words why the close relative refused.

DAY FOUR: Read Ruth 4:7-12.

9. a. What was the custom in Israel to confirm an agreement?

- b. What did the close relative do with his sandal?
10. a. What two things did Boaz acquire in the agreement?
- b. Who agreed to be witnesses?
 - c. What blessing did they bestow upon Ruth?
 - d. What blessing did they bestow upon Boaz?
11. ? (Thought Question) From Genesis 35:23-26, why would it be a blessing for Ruth to be like Rachel and Leah?

DAY FIVE: Read Ruth 4:13-22.

12. a. From verse 13, how did God bless Ruth and Boaz?
- b. From verse 14, how did the women say God had blessed Naomi?
13. a. How did the women describe Ruth?
- b. What did they name the baby?
 - c. Whose grandfather did this baby become? Give verse:_____
14. a. Look in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38 and list the verses which match Ruth 4:18-22.
- b. ? (Thought Question) Why is it important that these verses match?

Final Review Questions for All:

15. Choose one of the people from the Book of Ruth and tell:
- a. Why that person is important in history.
 - b. Why that person was important to you in your study of this book.