



READ: Selections from Ruth 1-4 (NIRV)

While Naomi was in Moab, she heard that the LORD had helped his people. He had begun to provide food for them again. So Naomi and her two daughters-in-law prepared to go from Moab back to her home.... Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Both of you go back. Each of you go to your own mother's home. You were kind to your husbands, who have died. You have also been kind to me. So may the Lord be just as kind to you... Then she kissed them goodbye. ... But Ruth held on to her. "Don't try to make me leave you and go back. Where you go I'll go. Where you stay I'll stay. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God..." Naomi realized that Ruth had made up her mind to go with her. So she stopped trying to make her go back... So Naomi returned from Moab. Ruth, her daughter-in-law from Moab, came with her. They arrived in Bethlehem just when people were beginning to harvest the barley.

Naomi had a relative on her husband's side of the family. The relative's name was Boaz. He was a very important man from the family of Elimelek... Ruth said [to Naomi], "Let me go out to the fields. I'll pick up the grain that has been left..." Naomi said to her, "My daughter, go ahead." So Ruth went out to a field and began to pick up grain... As it turned out, she was working in a field that belonged to Boaz.

... Boaz married Ruth... The LORD blessed her so that she became pregnant. And she had a son. The women said to Naomi, "We praise the LORD. Today he has provided a family protector for you. May this child become famous all over Israel! He will make your life new again. He'll take care of you when you are old. He's the son of your very own daughter-in-law. She loves you. She is better to you than seven sons." Then Naomi took the child in her arms and took care of him... They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of David.

ENTER THE STORY:

The town of Bethlehem, whose name means, "house of bread," had no bread, so Naomi and her family left in search of food. They settled in a new land, but sadly, Naomi's husband and both of her sons died, and she was left alone with the two women her sons had married.

It was not easy for women to make money in those days, and Naomi knew she could not provide for her two new daughters-in-law, so she sent them back to their families... but Ruth clung to her. She had made up her mind – she wanted Naomi and the Israelites to be her family, and she wanted Naomi's God to be her God.

Does this sound familiar? It should, because yesterday, we saw the same thing in Rahab's story. Another woman who wanted the people of Israel to be her family, and wanted their God to be her God!

And so Naomi and Ruth traveled back home to Bethlehem in search of family that could help, and God, who loves when people ask him for help, provided the answer!

You see, there was a special rule in Israel — if a woman's husband died before they had children, one of his other family members was supposed to marry her and help her have a son to carry on her husband's name.

This person was called the "kinsman redeemer." This was a very special job, because the, "kinsman redeemer," would rescue people!

In this story, Boaz steps up as the kinsman redeemer for Ruth and Naomi. He chose to marry Ruth and provide for her and protect her so that her family could continue.

Much later in the Bible, we read about a **MUCH BETTER** kinsman redeemer. A very special someone who will come to rescue his people, but he will save them from so much more than hunger... he will save them from their sins.

- Do you know who this special someone is? It's JESUS! Like Boaz, Jesus steps up to provide for us and rescue us.
- And what about Ruth and Boaz? Well, they have a baby boy named Obed...who makes Naomi so happy. And Obed
- grows up to be the father of Jesse, who grows up to be the father of David. And yet again, we find ourselves right back at
- the stump of Jesse! But this time, we *KNOW* who the shoot is, and we can't wait for him to arrive because when he gets
- here...he will be a great blessing and we will finally be happy, just like Naomi was when Ruth gave her a grandson.
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■ **PRAY:** *Jesus, thank you for the story of Ruth, that shows us the beauty of a Kinsman Redeemer. Thank you for*
• *rescuing and redeeming us from our sin and grafting us into your family tree, just like you did for Ruth and Rahab!*
• *Amen.*