

Series: Ruth

When God Brings Redemption

Ruth 4:1-10

Sermon by Youth Pastor Hanna Arata

Waterstone Community Church, Littleton, Colorado

Sunday morning, September 7, 2026

All right, good morning. If you all will stay standing for the reading of God's word, my name is Kimmy Diebel, and I am the fifth and sixth grade, the Bridge coordinator. So, it is nice to be here with you this morning, since we're having our intergenerational service. We are going to read from Ruth chapter 4, verses one through ten: "Meanwhile, Boaz went up to the town gate and sat there just as the guardian redeemer Boaz had mentioned came along. Boaz said, 'Come over here, my friend. Sit down.' So, he went over and sat down. Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said, 'Sit here,' and they did so. 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, Elimelech. I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you might buy it in the presence of these sitting here, so that you can be 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'll know, for no one has the right to do it except you, and then I am next in line.' 'I will redeem it,' he said. Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the land from Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property." 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.' Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel. So, the guardian redeemer said to Boaz, 'Buy it yourself,' and he removed his sandal. Then Boaz announced to the elders and all of the people, 'Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Chilion, and Mahlon. 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,'" the word of the Lord. You may be seated.

Hanna: Good morning, everyone. Thanks, Kimmy. That was great. So, I'd love to start us out with some prayer before we get going. So, if you bow your heads with me. God, thank you for this passage. Lord, it is so overflowing with hope and joy in a story that has been hard fought, a story that has had uncertainty and fear. God, thank you that today we get to talk about redemption. God, I pray over everyone in this room where redemption feels exciting. I pray over the person where redemption feels like a pipe dream, and maybe the people in here that feel somewhere in the middle. God, would you meet us in this place? We offer this message and this day to you. We love you, and it is in Jesus' name I pray, amen.

So, for the last several weeks, we have been walking through the story of Ruth, which if you've been reading with us, it hasn't been an easy story, but today I get the privilege of talking about the end of the story, which is a huge gift. I am really excited about this chapter, because today we are talking about redemption, but before we get too far into this conversation about redemption, I feel like it is important to define our terms, because like a lot of Christian things, sometimes we throw around words like redemption or salvation, and we do not actually know what they mean, and so first and foremost, I want to share with

you this definition that Tim Mackey from the Bible Project offers. He says, “Redemption is the transfer of possession from where something is to where it truly belongs,” and I want you to hold onto that, and we are going to dive right into our story for today.

We’re going to pick up where we left off in chapter four, but for some context, at this point in the story, Ruth has proposed to Boaz, and he has promised that he will redeem her. However, there is this other man, as we read in our passage today, that is a closer relative to Ruth and Naomi, and he is the first in line to redeem them, but Boaz promises, “Hey, if this doesn’t work out with this other guy, I, Boaz, will redeem you. I will marry Ruth and buy the land from Naomi,” and so our story picks up in chapter 4, when Boaz begins the process of redeeming Ruth and Naomi. This is the act of redemption, and so Boaz sets out to fulfill his promise that he made to Ruth. He goes to the town gate, and he finds the other kinsman redeemer, and we do not know this other kinsman redeemer’s name, but something funny I learned this week is that his name in Hebrew, the way he is described is the equivalent of calling him so-and-so. Super important person to the story, right? So-and-so. He doesn’t even get a real name, and so when Boaz sees so-and-so, he says, “Hey, let’s talk,” and he invites ten other elders, leaders from their town to come and witness this conversation. He says, “Hey, so-and-so, Naomi is selling her husband Elimelech’s land. Do you want it? You can redeem it. You get it first.”

I feel like this would be the equivalent if your cousin came up to you and said, “Hey, Aunt Donna is selling the family beach house, but you get first dibs.” Sounds like a pretty sweet deal. Sounds like a great thing, and so obviously this man says “yes,” but here is where Boaz’s cleverness comes in. He knew this land would be appealing, and did you notice that he talked about Naomi, did not bring up Ruth at all, did not bring up having to marry anybody. No more responsibility, just, “Hey, there’s this land that you can have to build your wealth,” and so it seems like a win-win, but if we look at the next verse, in verse 5, it says, “On the day you buy the land from Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the dead man’s widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property.” Oh, so there is a catch. This is not as simple as he thought.

I imagine that Boaz at this moment was doing something like, “Hey, you get the beach house. This is awesome. Also, there’s, now that you have said ‘yes,’ just so you know, Aunt Donna has this really weird friend that lives in the basement, and so you will just have to deal with him, if that is okay. Sound good?” That is a super different offer than the one he was initially given, and then the next verse says, “At this the guardian redeemer said, “I can’t redeem it. It will endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I can’t do it,” and so-and-so’s reasoning for saying “no” is because it would ruin his own inheritance. Instead of just getting some more land and moving on with his life, now he would have the responsibility to marry Ruth, take care of her family, namely Naomi, in her old age, and then he would be asked to give Ruth a son, and then that son would get the inheritance of the land, not so and so. So, what started as an easy yes, has now become a request for so-and-so to be selfless. He actually does not get anything out of this deal. So, like I think a lot of us might, he is like, “No thanks. I don’t really want that anymore. It is going to ruin my inheritance,” and so they do this weird thing where they take off a shoe, and you give it to the other person to say, “This is an official deal. It is done. You now have the legal right to the land that Naomi is selling,” which means Boaz now is in the clear to redeem them.

This is awesome, and then we move to the next piece of the story, the declaration of redemption. Let's keep reading. It says in verse 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 Elimelech, Chilion, and Mahlon. 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 the family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses.'" Boaz announces in front of everyone, "Hey, I am going to buy the land. I am going to marry Ruth," and this is so important, because Boaz is doing everything possible with integrity and in front of a lot of people, so that there is no way this deal can fall through. It shows his character, and now, because of this declaration, Naomi and Ruth have been redeemed.

The next piece of the story is the celebration of redemption. The end of this story reminds me of a musical at the end. You'll have to bear with me. I was a theater kid, but I like to imagine that this last piece of the story is like when, at the last song, when all of the ensemble, everyone that has been in this show, comes back on stage and sings one final song, because everything has been made right again. It is this beautiful picture of celebration, and so I imagine that there are two choirs. They are on the stage, there are risers on both sides, they are all wearing robes like gospel choirs would, and the elders are on one side, and the women are on another, and they sing a song of praise, and they bless Ruth and Boaz while also praising God. This is really significant, because Ruth's first husband died because she was a Moabite, and now his people, the family of God, are not only saying, "Hey, you guys can get married," but they are also actually giving her a blessing. They are saying, "You are part of us now."

The celebration of Ruth and Naomi's redemption takes three forms, legal, family, and social redemption, and the first we see is the legal redemption through the celebration of the elders. Verses 11 and 12 say, "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. Through the offspring the Lord gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.'" Interesting. Does anyone remember that story from last week? The elders have declared that they are witnesses, which means they are signing that contract. "Yes, this is what we are doing. This is what we want as God's people," and they sing the first verse of this final song.

Two really important things happen in these two verses. The first thing they say is that they equate, they compare Ruth to Rachel and Leah. If you remember the Biblical story in Genesis, Rachel and Leah were the wives of Jacob, and from them came the twelve sons that would be the progenitors of the twelve tribes of Israel, and they say, Ruth, "May you be like them." That is a huge deal. These women were incredibly important to the family and the story of God, and as we will see later, this family line that came through Rachel and Leah will continue to Ruth and Boaz all the way to King David and even Jesus Himself.

The second thing that happens is in verse 12. The elders pray that Ruth and Boaz's family will be like Tamar and Judah's son Perez, and you might say, that's weird. That's a hard story, but what the elders are doing in this moment is they're actually bringing up another redemption story from the same family to say, "This is a pattern of God's faithfulness and his ability and willingness to redeem Israel throughout the generations." He redeemed Rahab, and then He redeemed Tamar, and now He is redeeming Ruth and

Naomi. Time and time again in the story of God's people, He has brought women from where they were, in poverty, danger, and death, to where they truly belong, which is restored in the family of God and in the line of Jesus.

The second celebration is a celebration of marriage, and in Ruth 4:13 it says, "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." When Ruth marries Boaz, their family redemption is official, and this wedding is so special, because it means that Naomi and Ruth are finally officially home. After so much pain and hardship, can you imagine what they must have felt at this wedding, to trade their poverty and fear of death for a life of peace and safety and hope? They get to live in their own land and continue their family line through Ruth and Boaz's son, Obed, and they don't actually say very much about the wedding itself, but I like to imagine that this is one of those weddings where everyone cries, where every speech is hard to get through, because they are just so overcome with joy and love for this couple. It is that kind of wedding where people dance late into the night, and even grandma dances to Don't Stop Believing, because everyone in the family knows how big of a deal it is that they have made it to this day. This is the joy of this union.

The last celebration is on our other set of risers. It is the celebration of the women, the social redemption. In verses 14 and 15, it says this: "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. 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.'" So, Naomi here is actually redeemed into her community. In a time and culture when your value as a woman was based in your ability to bear sons, Naomi losing her sons in the earlier chapters would have been utterly devastating, because her worth had been taken from her, and God knew that to fully redeem them, they needed to be fully accepted back into their community, not just by God, but by their friends. So, He brought Ruth to Boaz to give her a son, but also to give Naomi a son and have her value restored to her in the eyes of her community.

This women's celebration is that Naomi's future is secure because of the courage of Ruth. They say that having Ruth was better than if she had seven sons. It is a big deal. What I'm trying to get at is that the redemption that takes place in this story is complete and full. God is working through Ruth and Boaz, and now Naomi and Ruth have been redeemed to the fullest extent. They have their land. They have a home. They have a son that can carry on their family line, and they're brought back into the family of God, where they belong. At the end of the story, there's a genealogy. Ruth and Boaz's son Obed is the father of Jesse, who is the father of David. God redeemed their story not just for them, but for future generations, because God had already set in motion his plan to redeem not just them, but the entire world through his family line that would include the King David and eventually bring Jesus Christ into the world.

Now this is a beautiful story, right? It feels like the end of a perfect Disney movie ending, where the guy gets the girl, and they live happily ever after, and don't get me wrong. I love Disney movies just as much as the next guy, but they don't really feel that true to reality, do they? It doesn't really feel real. They're tied up in this pretty bow, where everything works out, and it seems like nothing is ever going to be wrong again, until inevitably they decide to make a sequel to the movie, because that's what everyone's doing right now, but there's this idea that everything is working out for their good. When we read stories like this in the Bible, it feels easier to see that God's hand is moving, and we can flip to the end. We can

skip to chapter 4 and say, “Oh, look, everything turned out okay,” and most of the time in our real lives, we set certain expectations for how we think our lives should go, sometimes based off of these kinds of stories with the happily ever after, but what is an expectation? An expectation is a strong belief or mental picture that something will or should happen in the future.

In the generation conversation, I am what you would call a cusper. I was born in 1996, which means that I was right on that cutoff between millennials and Generation Z, the Millenials. So, we are this weird middle generation that does not really know what to do, but we are very united, I would say. If any of the cuspers are in the room, let me know. There are a few of us, small but mighty, but when we were growing up, all pop music sounded exactly the same, and in every pop song that you would hear at a dance or a wedding, there would be this long instrumental, where the song would build and build and build, and then there would be this beat drop, and everyone on the dance floor would just go crazy, and it was so much fun. I think this is what it feels like when that satisfying beat drop happens. That’s what it feels like when what we expect to happen actually happens, because all is as it should be. I expected the beat to drop, and it did. That is great, but have you ever been at a wedding or a school dance where the DJ turns on that song, and it is building and building and building and building, and then right before the beat drop, they change the song?

Has that happened to anyone? It is the worst. I cannot stand it when DJs do that, because it leaves me feeling like there is no resolution. It is like I am floating in the air. What happened to the beat drop? What did you do with it? It got taken away from me. It leaves me feeling weird, because the song just dissipates, the energy shifts, and people leave feeling a bit disappointed. Do you know that feeling? I think this is what it feels like when our expectations are not met. We had all this anticipation, all of this buildup, only to have that beat drop taken from us, and we are left feeling weird or maybe even angry. When what we expected or hoped would happen does not happen, we experience a very specific kind of grief and pain, because a lot of the time we do not realize how much stock we were putting in our expectations of how our lives would go, until it does not go that way.

So, we can come to a story like Ruth and say, “Hey, that’s great for them, but I do not know if I believe God will come through for me like that. I’ve been let down too many times. God really hasn’t met my expectations.” I think stories of God’s redemption for us can sometimes feel more like a fairy tale than a truth that we can trust and put our hope in. Has God ever not met your expectations? Maybe you’ve been praying for a husband or wife, and you start dating this really awesome person, and then it does not work out, and there is no end to your singleness in sight. Maybe you felt like God told you to take a risk, and then it did not turn out the way you thought. Maybe you have felt far from God, and you have been praying to feel close to Him again, and for some reason He still feels far away. Friends, these things are real. The pain we feel from this kind of disappointment can be brutal, and when we know the end of the story, as we do with Ruth, we can forget that Ruth and Naomi had no idea what the ending of their story would be either, and they faced the pain of unmet expectations.

I mean, if you remember in the first chapter of Ruth, Naomi started out in grief and loss and pain and fear. She lost her husband, her kids, and her future all at the same time. She changed her name to mean “bitter,” and Ruth lost her husband and any chance of having a son, so how Naomi and Ruth expected their lives to turn out was thrown out the window. All they had was each other and a God who they felt

like had abandoned them. It is hard when you expect God to show up in a certain way, and He doesn't, so what do we do?

I think often we can go to one of two things. The first is that we can lower our expectations. We can try to, "Hey, God, I will just settle for what you have for me, because even though I want this thing, I am just going to settle for what you want," because we do not actually believe that it is best, and we get worried that we are asking too much from God, so we just pray safe, small prayers so that we will not be disappointed. We pray things like, "God, it is just too much to ask for a husband who loves you and who treats me well, so could you just give me someone who isn't against Christians and is nice, maybe in my same age range? Like, that would be enough. That is totally fine." Or "God, I have prayed for friends for so long, and it doesn't seem like it has happened yet, and I am so lonely. Could you just, you know what? I don't need that. Could you just give me one person that would smile at me today?" I don't know about you, but sometimes I don't ask for big things in my life from God because I've been disappointed in my expectations before, and I'm worried that that's going to happen again, and I'd rather not ask, so I'm not disappointed, than ask and have it not happen.

The second thing we do is we actually get mad at God for not doing what we expected Him to do, and so we start to doubt his character and if He cares about us. We jump straight to the conclusions about who we believe God is out of our anger and our fear and our disappointment, because if God doesn't show up how I thought He would, maybe He is actually not good. Or maybe He is not real, because He is not showing up the way I want Him to. What I want you to hear is that it is not that expectations are bad, but it is like it gives us tunnel vision, and God could be doing so many things around us, and when we put all of these expectations on God, "You need to move in my life in this way, in this timeline," we are so unable to see all the other things that He is doing. It is human for us to do that, but what I want to encourage you with is that God actually offers us a lot more. The encouragement that we get from Ruth's story is that even though God did not meet their expectations, He went above and beyond and actually far surpassed their expectations. It wasn't in their timing. It did not look at all like they thought it would. Most of the time they did not know what was going to happen, but it was actually far better than anything they could have dreamt up for themselves, and so what God increased in Ruth and Naomi was not their expectations, but their expectancy.

This is the definition of expectancy: "A feeling of anticipation or the state of hoping and thinking that something is going to happen." It is related to expectations, but it is actually a little bit different in really important ways. With expectations, the focus is on our idea of what we think should happen. With expectancy, the focus is on God's character, anticipation, and hope. Expectation is hosting your birthday party and letting everyone know that they need to bring you a gift from your pre-approved list, or else you will turn them away at the door. If you have been hurt before, maybe expectation is hosting your birthday party and not actually believing anyone's going to come, or everyone else is going to find something better to do. Maybe they have a closer friend they want to spend time with. Maybe you are not worth celebrating, but expectancy, on the other hand, is hosting your birthday party and getting excited about the gifts that your friends are going to bring. You have no idea what gifts they are going to bring you, but you have hope and anticipation and trust that they are going to be good, because you know the gift givers, and they know you. So, in the end, it doesn't actually matter as much what the gift is, because you trust in the gift

giver. When we put our expectations on God, we put the focus on our own plans and our own desires. When we are expectant of God, we put the focus on His unchanging character. We do not know what He is going to do. We do not know how things are going to turn out, but we put our trust in who He is, that He is good and that He is faithful, and this leads us to trust Him with the outcome. When we are expectant, we believe and trust that God is actively working on our redemption, and as we wait, we do so with the anticipation and hope that can sustain us through the uncertainty.

One of my all-time favorite verses about expectancy is from Ephesians 3, verses 20 through 21, and it says this: “Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever, amen,” and so my question to you today is this: What expectations have you placed on God? Where in your life do you need to move from expectation to expectancy? God did immeasurably more for Ruth and Naomi than they could have asked or imagined, and then He promised through their family to bring about our ultimate redemption, which He fulfilled through his Son, Jesus Christ. What I love most about this story and this chapter that we are reading today is that it actually points to a larger story of redemption. Ruth and Boaz’s wedding is a taste of the final redemption that we have because of Jesus, so this is the final redemption.

Our story today was divided into three sections. We had the act of redemption, the declaration of redemption, and the celebration of redemption, and this parallels the story of Jesus, which is so cool. The first thing, Boaz selflessly redeems Naomi and Ruth, and he purchases the land. Jesus selflessly left his throne to come and live among us, live the life we could not, die the death we deserved, and pay the cost of our sin. He purchased us back. Then Boaz declared his marriage and purchase to the elders. Jesus declared on the cross, “It is finished.” All of Israel rejoices at the wedding of Ruth and Boaz, and their marriage brings forth new life. Jesus’ death and resurrection have given us new life, and at Jesus’ second coming, we will be resurrected with Him and experience eternal life, represented by a wedding feast, as shown in Revelation 21, which says this: Then I saw a new heaven and a new Earth, for the first heaven and the first Earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband, and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Look, God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new.’ Then He said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’”

Friends, this is the final, ultimate redemption, that God’s dwelling place would come to be among the people, and the people would finally be where they belong. This is the end of our story. We might not know how our lives are going to turn out, but this is our story, that in the end there will be no more crying and no more tears. If we put our faith in Jesus, our story, all of us, ends in a wedding feast. God has made all things new, and this ending is way better than any fairy tale, because it is true. Do you believe that idea this morning? It is the story that God has been writing since the beginning of time, and because of Jesus, we already know the ending, and with that, we are going to move into a time of communion.

I think a lot of the time when we receive communion, we can forget that it is not only somber, but a joy to participate in. When we come to the Lord's table to participate in communion, we remember not only the sacrifice made by Jesus on the cross, but we remember how He redeemed us, how through his life, death, and resurrection, He has saved us from sin and death, called us his, and put us where we truly belong, with Him in the family of God. Communion is our celebration not only of our salvation, but a taste of the final wedding feast to come. To participate in communion is to celebrate as a family the joy of our redemption, and so today, when you come forward to receive communion, someone will speak the words over you, "Christ's body, broken for you," and "Christ's blood, shed for you," which are rooted in the words that Jesus spoke on the night He was betrayed.

"Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper, He took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant of my blood. Do this whenever you drink it in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." There will be gluten-free stations in the back for those who need it, and now I invite you to stand and join the celebration through taking communion. Go as you are ready.

Now receive the benediction, and if you feel comfortable, put your hands out as a sign of receiving. Jude 24 says, "To Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy, to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore." You may go in peace.

38:36 minutes

Edited by Tom Kenaston

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