

# From Bitter to Blessed

Message 04 of 04 in the series: "Ruth: A Story of Valor, True Love, and Redemption"

## A. Some helpful background information:

Ruth is a love story that celebrates God's amazing providence in bringing together two godly people during a time when everyone "...did whatever seemed right in their own eyes." Judges 21:25b (NLT)

- Ruth was a woman of "heséd" (loyalty, faithfulness, true love).
- Boaz was a man of "chayil" (a mighty man of valor, sterling character, integrity).

Ruth is a story about God providentially bringing hope and blessing to Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law, who had chosen to become bitter and angry at God over the deaths of her husband and two sons.

Ruth is a story of redemption in which God providentially arranges circumstances such that Boaz takes on the role of an OT "goel" (kinsman-redeemer) in order to rescue Ruth and Naomi from abject poverty and keep their family line from dying out. "If one of your fellow Israelites falls into poverty and is forced to sell some family land, then a close relative should **buy it back** for him." Leviticus 25:25 (NLT)

"If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband's brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother **so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.**" Deuteronomy 25:5-6 (NIV)

## B. Another kinsman could have redeemed Ruth and Naomi, but he missed his chance.

"Boaz went to the town gate and took a seat there. Just then the family redeemer he had mentioned came by, so Boaz called out to him, 'Come over here and sit down, **friend**. I want to talk to you.' So they sat down together. Then Boaz called ten leaders from the town and asked them to sit as witnesses. And Boaz said to the family redeemer, 'You know Naomi, who came back from Moab. She is selling the land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. I thought I should speak to you about it so that you can redeem it if you wish. If you want the land, then buy it here in the presence of these witnesses. But if you don't want it, let me know right away, because I am next in line to redeem it after you.' The man replied, 'All right, I'll redeem it.' Then Boaz told him, 'Of course, your purchase of the land from Naomi also requires that you marry Ruth, the Moabite widow. That way she can have children who will carry on her husband's name and keep the land in the family.' 'Then I can't redeem it,' the family redeemer replied, 'because this might endanger my own estate. You redeem the land; I cannot do it.' Now in those days it was the custom in Israel for anyone transferring a right of purchase **to remove his sandal and hand it to the other party**. This publicly validated the transaction. So the other family redeemer drew off his sandal as he said to Boaz, 'You buy the land.'"

Ruth 4:1-8 (NLT)

*Note:* God had promised His people that if they would be faithful to Him, He would bless them and give them property wherever they walked in the Promised land.

"Be careful to obey all these commands I am giving you. Show love to the Lord your God by walking in his ways and holding tightly to him. Then the Lord will drive out all the nations ahead of you, though they are much greater and stronger than you, and you will take over their land. **Wherever you set foot**, that land will be yours." Deuteronomy 11:22-24a (NLT)

*Note:* Because the family redeemer was more worried about his own estate than doing what was right, we don't even know his name. He was just a "**paloni almoni**" (herky-jerky so-and-so).

**Life Application:** We must be careful that we don't miss opportunities to serve God by servicing others.

"Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, 'Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons. For I was hungry, and you didn't feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn't give me a drink. I was a stranger, and you didn't invite me into your home. I was naked, and you didn't give me clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn't visit me.' "Then they will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?' And he will answer, 'I tell you the truth, **when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.**'" Matthew 25:41-45 (NLT)

"...if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews **will arise from another place**... who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?" Esther 4:14 (NIV)

### C. When Boaz redeemed Ruth and Naomi, it changed the trajectory of their lives.

Ruth went from being a destitute, barren widow, and a foreigner to becoming a financially secure wife, mother, and one of God's people.

"Then Boaz said to the elders and to the crowd standing around, 'You are witnesses that today I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Kilion, and Mahlon. And with the land I have acquired Ruth, the Moabite widow of Mahlon, to be my wife. This way she can have a son to carry on the family name of her dead husband and to inherit the family property here in his hometown. You are all witnesses today.' Then the elders and all the people standing in the gate replied, 'We are witnesses! My the Lord make this woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, from whom all the nation of Israel descended! May you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. And may the Lord give you descendants by this young woman who will be like those of our ancestor Perez, the son of Tamar and Judah.' So Boaz took Ruth into his home, and she became his wife. When he slept with her, the Lord enabled her to become pregnant, and she gave birth to a son." Ruth 4:9-13 (NLT)

Naomi went from being a bitter woman who relied on herself to becoming a blessed woman who relied on God.

"Then the women of the town said to Naomi, 'Praise the Lord, who has now provided a redeemer for your family! May this child be famous in Israel. May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been better to you than seven sons!' Naomi took the baby and cuddled him to her breast. And she cared for him as if he were her own. The neighbor women said, 'Now at last Naomi has a son again!' And they named him Obed. He became the father of Jesse and the grandfather of David." Ruth 4:14-17 (NLT)

Boaz and Ruth became famous as the ancestors of David and ultimately, Jesus.

"This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David... Salmon was the father of Boaz (whose mother was Rahab). Boaz was the father of Obed (whose mother was Ruth). Obed was the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of King David." Matthew 1:1-6a (NLT)

*Note:* It's amazing who God wants in His family.

"All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. **God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do**, and it gave him great pleasure." Ephesians 1:3-5 (NLT)

**Life Application:** Jesus' redemption changes the trajectory of everyone who repents and puts their faith in Him.

"This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace." Colossians 1:6 (NLT)

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### Connect Group Questions.

Read Ruth 4 and then discuss the following questions:

1. Do you know someone whose life was radically changed for the better because of someone else's kind actions?
2. Why do you think the other kinsman-redeemer passed up the opportunity to help Ruth and Naomi while Boaz jumped at the chance?
3. Have you ever passed up an opportunity to help someone that you later regretted? What made you see the opportunity in a different light?

4. Surprisingly, Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1:1-6 mentions several women with shady back-stories. What do we know about Tamar and Rahab from the following passages?

- Genesis 38
- Joshua 2:1-13

Why do you think these women were included in the family record of Jesus? (Mark 2:15-17)

5. How has a relationship with Jesus altered the trajectory of your life and the lives of others in your family? (Colossians 1:6)
6. Ruth is a story about God's providence (His foreseeing guidance and provision). Share a time in your life when God providentially prepared you, guided you, protected you, blessed you, etc.