

## Themes Of Ruth (Part Three): Redemption

**Redemption, Too, is a Process**

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I would like to start with a story.

Mason did not know why he was rushing down the street, almost running. Truth be told, had he stopped to consider why he would have known instantly. He was anxious, hoping that his prized electric guitar had not been sold. Only last week he had walked down the same street, peered into the pawn shop window to see what had once been his Gibson custom Les Paul Standard, lightly figured electric guitar in Amber Sunset was still hanging with pride of place along the wall of guitars and other musical instruments. He had seen a glint, a flash of light off its gold hardware. He still had a chance.

It was a wonder that it had not been sold to some collector. They were expensive guitars, especially so since they were made in limited quantities. His, well, *former* guitar was one of only 25 that had been offered for sale in the whole world in the year that it had been crafted. It boasted a maple top with a sunset burst finish, a mahogany neck, and a rosewood fingerboard with pearloid trapezoid inlays. It was a beautiful instrument. At full retail, they ran upwards of \$8000. You had to be a serious player or collector to want one of these guitars.

Mason caught a glimpse of the pawnshop sign about a block ahead. His feet seemed to be telling them he had to get there as fast or as quickly as possible, but he purposely slowed down to try to tame his rising stress. What were the odds that someone had slipped into the store in the past week and stolen, well bought, his pride and joy, just as he had gathered enough cash to buy it back? He had just turned 23. The previous May he had graduated from college with a degree in accounting, and he had been recruited by a prestigious

company that paid him well. It was that degree that had forced him to part with his Les Paul. Without a scholarship that final year, and not wanting to add to his burgeoning student loans, he had decided to sell the guitar. The price he and the pawnbroker had settled on paid for about a semester's tuition and books.

Now, after nearly a year of scrimping to put aside as much as he could, along with the generous year-end bonus, he now had enough to buy the guitar, *his* guitar, back if the owner had honored the pre-negotiated buy-back price. He had the redemption receipt in his pocket, along with a thick wad of \$100 bills. Mason paused outside the door, not daring to look through the glass to see if the guitar still adorned the wall. Taking a deep breath, squaring his shoulders, he pushed the door open, took a few steps inside, adamantly refusing to look to his left until he had walked to the center of the store. Then he raised his eyes, caught a flash of gold. His beautiful Les Paul was still there. Five minutes later and \$6000 poorer, he began his walk back to his cheap apartment, carrying his guitar its original case, unable to keep the silly grin off his face.

This, of course, is a simple story of redemption. Mason redeemed his prized guitar from the pawnshop. Though a rather mundane example, I think it gets across the general idea of what redemption is. It is the buying back of a possession, along with the joy of the redeemer, who is just ecstatic when he gets his prized possession back.

Our word "redemption" comes from almost the same term or word in Latin, *redemptio*, which simply means "the act of buying back." *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines redemption in general as "the action of regaining or gaining possession of something in exchange for payment or clearing a debt." In common usage, redemption also denotes atoning for a fault or a mistake. We say things like, the person redeemed himself for not warning a friend about a threatening situation, something along that line. It also can indicate a kind of repentance or improvement. For instance, we say that the young man redeemed himself from his youthful delinquency. So he had improved his character. He had repented of his past ways.

It can also be used as a synonym for rescue or deliverance, although this usually comes as a result of someone paying a cost or a price to affect the other person's deliverance or rescue. In that case, redemption really covers the whole process rather than just the rescue, but we use it that way to mean the rescue. For instance, we talk every spring about the Israelites. Well, maybe we do not talk about this particular part, but we mention it a lot—that the Israelites were redeemed or delivered from the Death Angel at the cost of the blood of the Passover lambs which they put around the doors.

Theologically, redemption is a bit different. It moves on from the basic definition, I should say. This is from *The Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, "The term redemption indicates a freeing from the slavery of sin, the ransom or price paid for freedom. This thought is indicated in the Gospels, which speaks of Christ who came 'to give His life as a ransom for many.' [You find that in Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45.] Jesus in Himself fulfilled the redemption concept of Scripture and by His sacrifice, provided for the redemption of sinners." Like I said, this is a basic definition and it covers only the bare essentials of what biblical redemption is. You will find this idea of this theme of redemption throughout Scripture.

So we have come this far to understand what redemption is. In the rest of the sermon, I am going to be digging into the book of Ruth and this theme of redemption. It is the most obvious and the most dominant theme in the book of Ruth. It appears throughout the book in ways that maybe we had not thought of before, but I hope to point some of those out today, and it does not appear just in chapter 4. That is where we think of Boaz actually redeeming Ruth and the property there in Bethlehem.

But the redemption process had already occurred, or had begun to occur, and I want you to catch that word that I stuck in there. The word "process," redemption process, because redemption, let us say, just in the book of Ruth occurs in various guises throughout the book, not just at the end, as I explained. In a larger sense then, God, I think, is teaching us that redemption, like salvation, like sanctification, and even justification (you can throw that one in there as well), are all processes that occur over our lives.

For instance, let us take justification, which is maybe the most unusual of those to think of them as a process. But justification occurs at the beginning when we were covered by the blood of Christ and we are aligned then to the character of God. We are holy and pure because Christ's blood covers us. But God spends, through the process of sanctification, our whole lives trying to align us to Him. And we will not be completely aligned to Him until the resurrection when we are changed to be like Him and He is satisfied with our character growth, and He totally accepts us as His own.

But all that takes place over time in the same way salvation, we have found with scriptures in the Bible that we are saved, but we are also *being* saved, and we in the resurrection *will be saved*. All of these things have a past, present, and future indication, and the redemption is the same way. We *have been* redeemed. If you want to, you can go to many scriptures in the New Testament, but I will go to one in particular here in Galatians, the third chapter where this is shown. Paul says,

**Galatians 3:13** Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us.

So there it is in the past tense. He has redeemed us. But we are also *being* redeemed. We will go to this scripture later but I want to take us to Titus the second chapter in verse 14.

**Titus 2:14** Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

If we would read the whole passage there, it is very clear that this process of redemption is still taking place. And then also let us just go to this one in Luke 21. This is the future one. He is speaking of His return.

**Luke 21:27-28** "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

We see this past, present, future aspect of redemption as well. The middle part is a little harder to see, but think of it this way: you have been drawn out of this world, He has redeemed us from this world, but how often do we go back? Do we stumble and fall and sin and need to change our ways and God is constantly drawing us out again toward freedom, toward *His* freedom? Because we keep going back into the slavery of this world because of our carnal minds and we keep having to repent and again re-establish ourselves as part of His people and do what is right and good.

I just want you to understand this. This is how I am going to approach redemption in the book of Ruth. There is all of these different aspects of redemption in the book of Ruth and hopefully I will be able to show them to you. However, it is the day of Pentecost, so we need to touch the teaching of this day by going back into the book of Leviticus in chapter 23. We will look at the command there and then we will go to Deuteronomy and read some instruction there as well. So we will read this whole instruction here in Leviticus 23 on the day of Pentecost, the Feast of Weeks.

**Leviticus 23:15-22** 'And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbath shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord. You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to the Lord. And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be as a burnt offering to the Lord, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the Lord. Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of peace offering. The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the Lord, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the Lord for the priest. And you shall proclaim on the same day that it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations. When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of

your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the Lord your God."

Now let us go to Deuteronomy 16 and look at the instructions there.

**Deuteronomy 16:9-12** "You shall count seven weeks for yourself; begin to count the seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the grain. [That is at the wave sheaf offering.] Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the Lord your God blesses you. You shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who is within your gates, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are among you, at the place where the Lord your God chooses to make His name abide. And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes."

There is so much here and so many details that we will not be able to cover because of a lack of time. This thing is chockfull of interesting stuff, both of these sections. But we have to focus on a few things. Now I do want to note the wave loaves. There are the two wave loaves made of very fine grain—fine wheat—meaning it was highly processed. It was sifted and sifted and sifted until only the finest of the wheat was left. That is what was used for this wave loaf offering. And, of course, it mentions here that the wave loaves are baked with leaven. Now, God says explicitly that these are the firstfruits to the Lord. He lets us know that those wave loaves represent the firstfruits of the Lord.

It takes a little bit of digging but biblical symbolism indicates that these loaves represent actual people and they have been accepted by God. We could go to Revelation 14, and we will in a few minutes. And the way they are described here in Leviticus 23 is that they are people who have gone through the paces of many tests and trials. They were often put under tremendous heat, we would say. The trials were so bad that they had to suffer

in a certain way until they reached a special quality or a special maturity or a special completeness that is acceptable to God. And so when they are waved before God, He sees them and He says, "These are acceptable to Me."

But they had leaven in them. Remember, this was an offering made with leaven. I think it is the only offering that is made with leaven and it is because leaven is a symbol of corruption and of sin. It indicates that these wave loaves are people who were sinners but who have been redeemed, justified, sanctified, and saved, and they are therefore acceptable to God as His people, as His sons and daughters. So as it says there, they are holy to the Lord, they have been set apart as His people. They are "a holy people" as Peter says, made to be God's building, God's temple, and that they are holy to the Lord for the priest. It suggests then that what they have been specifically and specially prepared for is to be priests like Jesus Christ. They are the priesthood of the Lord.

So put this all together. The wave loaves then represent people who have been redeemed from lives of sin, and then trained and repurposed for acceptable service to God. The waving of the wave loaves mimics the waving of the sheaf of the firstfruits that occurred on the day of the wave sheaf, which represents Christ, of course. And in Christ, the cutting and the waving and all that was done there, represented a resurrection and ascension and acceptance before God.

So these firstfruits experienced the same sort of thing as their Master, Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus Christ, we call Him the first of the firstfruits, was waved before God and accepted as His Son and glorified, so will the firstfruits go through a very similar thing. They will be raised, accepted, and glorified as the bride of Christ.

I want us to notice too that these loaves are offered with other offerings. There are several burnt offerings. And if you remember what the offerings represent, burnt offerings represent complete dedication. And of course there is a dedication to God and there is a dedication to fellow man. So these offerings show that these wave loaves, which are offered with these very offerings on this day, have done this. They have dedicated themselves completely to God and completely to their fellow man.

There is also a sin offering that is done at the same time and this sin offering represents, of course, that our sins have been covered. There was a price that was paid, a life was given—obviously the Lamb of God was given so that we might be saved, we might have our sins forgiven, and be justified before God.

There were also peace offerings made with this. And the peace offering represents the harmonious relationship between God, the priest, and the offerer. They all have a good relationship. They eat at the same table, and they are all in harmony and moving forward in the same direction. They all think the same.

These four offerings—burnt, sin, peace, and the wave offering—together they illustrate the quality of person whom God considers a firstfruit. It is an extremely high standard that He sets here for the firstfruits, the ones who will be the bride of Christ. And it is no wonder that so few reach the level of faith and righteousness to be among the firstfruits of God. Among all humanity, we find in Revelation 14, only 144,000 reach this pinnacle of human achievement, as it were, through God's help.

**Revelation 14:1-5** Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed [it says again] from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

An extremely, extremely high standard, extremely high goal for us to work toward. These have been purified like no others have been purified. Remember the flour was very finely sifted. I think the Jews used seven or 12 sieves. I cannot remember how many it was but they got the finest little bits



of flour for this offering. Of course beforehand the kernels of wheat had to have been beaten and gone through all of the process of grinding and all that. And we find here the end product. These people have been *made* holy through much affliction—much persecution, much pressure, much heat. All of those things—they have gone through the ringer. But out the other end comes something fabulous, wonderful, holy, pure, and irreproachable, as it says in Colossians 1.

Going back in thought to Leviticus 23 and Deuteronomy 16. Remember, we read through the little bit, the verse that hangs on at the end of each of those paragraphs. We could call them, maybe, offhand additions to what is in the instruction on the day of Pentecost. Leviticus 23:22 records Israel's gleaning law; that the people who sow their fields and reap a crop are supposed to leave the corners of their fields so that the poor could go in there and glean. This is a major factor in Ruth. Obviously, Ruth, in chapter 2, goes into Boaz's field by chance, as we saw last time, and gleans Boaz's field.

This law in Israel provided for the sustenance of the poor, and not just the poor. Go back there to the Leviticus 23:22 and you will see that it adds, "and the stranger"—the poor and the stranger. Ruth was both poor and a stranger, being of Moab, and by gleaning the poor or the stranger received a hand up. It was charity. It was something that the owner of the field was supposed to do to help those who needed it so that they could change, or at least get a start in changing, their situation or their status. That they could then have the wherewithal to begin improving their lot so they would not stay poor or, in the case of a stranger, so they would not stay a stranger. We will see that in Ruth.

Could we say that the gleaning law or one of the reasons for the gleaning law, was to help them redeem themselves toward a better life? I think we could say that that was probably one of the reasons. God did not want them to die. Once you are dead, you cannot do anything. You cannot improve your lot in life. But if you get some help from the people around you, enough to sustain you so that you can then do good work or whatever it is, better work, you can then change your lot in life. We will see that in Ruth 2 that that is exactly what happens.

The passage in Deuteronomy 16:12 ends with God charging the Israelites to remember that they had been slaves in Egypt. That is a lowly and dreadful situation, to be a slave. That is something that none of us would like to have in our resume. "Oh, I was a slave and worked for nothing, just for my my daily bread. And I had to get up when the master said 'Get up' and I had to go out in the fields when the master said 'Go out in the fields.'" That is not a way to live. That is not something that God wants. God wants us to be free and He shows that by freeing His people from slavery in Egypt.

That is the thing that God wanted them to remember. Not necessarily that they were slaves, but the implication that they were slaves no longer. And how did that come about? That had happened because God Himself had redeemed them from it, and He had brought them, led them to the Promised Land and that He had given them a land of milk and honey—full of blessings. He had protected them and done all of these other things to give them a good life, a life where they were free.

On top of that, Deuteronomy 16:12 also says that they were to take care in observing God statutes. Of particular interest here is that God was telling them to make sure that they kept the feasts. Feasts are statutes in God's law. God was saying here for them to do these two things: remember they were a slave and remember the feasts. Remember to keep the feasts because that would keep alive in their minds, if they understood how these what these feasts represent, their relationship with God. Because the first one in which they are supposed to remember that they they were slaves in Egypt leads to, "Oh, yeah, we are no longer slaves because God took us out of it, redeemed us from it, and we now owe Him. We now have an obligation to Him to do what He says."

Then the second one just amplifies that. That if we keep the feasts and understand that they represent what God has done for us in all these parts of our lives and all throughout history, then we are again obligated to do what He says, and to learn and to grow so that we mature and become complete, because the process is not finished. We need to remember what we were brought out of by God, and we need to be motivated to keep on. And that is what these feasts do.

So in this feast, that is the Feast of Weeks that we call the day of Pentecost, God wanted them, and He now wants us, to focus on Him as Redeemer. Remember that we were slaves in this world and He has pulled us *out* of this world. And He also wants to us to remember our obligations to Him. And therefore, and I am throwing back to the gleaning law here, our obligations to those He is also redeeming. Remember the burnt offering? The burnt offering goes to God as dedication to Him, but it also shows our dedication to fellow man. So He wants us to understand this in the day of Pentecost.

We will see in Ruth that both Naomi and Boaz illustrate how this is done. This is one of the reasons why it is the Megilloth of Pentecost because it so completely shows us the meaning of Pentecost. Both Naomi and Boaz constantly reference God's blessings that are upon them or upon other people. Both of them see God at work in their lives. They see Him in the little things and the big things. Both support and care for the stranger who is among them. Ruth, obviously. That is who we are talking about, and they instruct her, and this is important, they help her join the redeemed, as well as to eventually prosper. But a great deal of what they do, and we see this most in Boaz, although it is there in Naomi as well, they go out of their way to make Ruth—a stranger, a poor stranger, and a woman and a Moabite, of all things, one of those who whom the Israelites really looked down upon—feel welcome. And then they began to integrate her into Israelite society, into God's Family, into God's people.

Let us go to Ruth. I know you are itching to get there. I am. That is probably why I have been stumbling over my tongue this whole time. We are going to read verses 1-7 of chapter 1. We went into this last time but we looked at it in terms of God's providence. But it also is good for us to study it in terms of redemption, because there is a hint of redemption here that is just under the surface and we have to understand a few things while we are reading it. But once we understand that, it begins to become clear. It is a little obscure, like I said, but I think it is there enough for us to see and understand what God is aiming at.

Let us also understand that this is the introduction to the book, so there is a lot of juicy detail here and a lot of impressions and implications that we are supposed to understand before we get into the meat of the book. So he is laying things out here, whoever the author happens to be, ultimately God, but

what is being laid out here is the symbolic or the theoretical or the theological basis for what is going on. That is why this bit about redemption is a little bit hard to see because it is doing it in terms of all these physical things that are going on. But if we are sharp enough, we can see it.

Let us read these and I just want to bring back to your remembrance that Elimelech means "God is king." Just have that in the back of your mind.

**Ruth 1:1-7** Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there. Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other was Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died. So the woman survived her two sons and her husband. Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread. Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.

Elimelech, because of this famine, removes his family to Moab. The text specifically tells us that they *remained* there. I get the impression maybe that Elimelech had perhaps heard that the famine had ceased, but he had remained there. We also find out later in the book that Elimelech had sold his property in Judah, in Bethlehem. Now, obviously, if you were going to remove yourself from one place and go to another, you need some cash. But we also find out here that they were Ephrathites, and that means that they were basically the aristocrats of the area, you might say. I mentioned that I think in the first sermon. So they were a family that was substantial, most likely. So he did not necessarily need to sell his property to get the money.

I am assuming some some things here, but if you look at Boaz, who is a near kinsman and the other nearer kinsman, they had money. And why would you not assume that Elimelech was probably of the same stature as they were? It is a pretty plausible assumption. So why did he sell his land if he was just going to go out, go to Moab during the famine, and then come back? I think the implication we get here is that Elimelech was *permanently* moving. He was getting out of there. He was not thinking about coming back. Now again, I am making assumptions there. But the wording here tells us that he *remained* there. He did not even try to go back. You get no indication of that. And the fact that Mahlon and Chilion married Moabite girls sounds as if they were going to stay as well in Moab. And they were perfectly fine in integrating themselves into the life of the Moabites by becoming part of them.

So Elimelech and his family are living in Moab among the world. They are not among God's people. They are not in the Promised Land. They had sold their holdings in the Land and now were living as expatriots and were taking on the lifestyle, the way of life of Moab. What does it take to bring Naomi back? Death—three deaths. The most important of those three deaths was the first one—Elimelech. Elimelech, like I told you, means "God is king." It took the death of God to bring them out of the world and back to God's people.

That is the idea of redemption that I am trying to get here. There is a hint here that God is showing us, in this introduction, that the real redemption that He is talking about here in the book of Ruth is the voluntary giving of the life of the Creator God, who is our king, so that we can be redeemed from the world, from sin, and been brought into the Promised Land eventually, just like Naomi was. The cost of redeeming Naomi from Moab, a type of the world, were these three deaths.

So here we have the idea immediately in these first seven verses, that to come back into the Promised Land after removing oneself, in this case, or bringing a person to be among the people of God, bringing someone, as we would say, out of the world and into the church, has to be paid for by the death of God. And as we know, Jesus Christ gave Himself for us so that could happen. So deliverance from sin, deliverance from death, deliverance

from this world requires the death of our Creator God. It is a little bit obscure, but it is there. It is underneath what is actually going on in the physical comings and goings of these people.

Let us go back to the book of Peter and just see how this is said in a New Testament context. Those of you in Chicago and those who were there in Salado have this probably more more recently in your brain because I gave these scriptures in my Bible study.

**I Peter 1:17-21** And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

In New Testament terms, this is exactly what happened. We were redeemed from sin and death and from this world, not by anything of paltry value by any means, not by any kind of mere matter like silver or gold, even though men put a value upon it. But we were redeemed by the incalculably valuable blood of our very Creator, Jesus Christ, our King. Our King had to die to redeem us and become our Savior so that we then could have this wonderful future and this hope in what God is going to be doing with us.

Let us go to Titus 2 where I said we would go later on in the sermon. And here we are.

**Titus 2:11-14** For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

This passage concentrates on Christ giving Himself, that is, redeeming us, from every lawless deed, every sin we have committed. But we cannot stop there because Paul does not stop there. Obviously, Paul says that He, Jesus, redeemed us from every lawless deed. And then he has "and." It was not done then, just by forgiving our sins, or dying so that our sins will be forgiven. It says that He gave Himself for us that, once redeemed from past sin, we can be purified for God's purposes and be taught or prepared to do every good work with *zeal*. It was not just the redemption that He wanted. He wanted the redemption to accomplish something to put us in a position for more so that we could be further redeemed.

The initial redemption is a kind of legal action that puts us in a position where we are acceptable before God. We have been put in a different category. We have been made special. We have been sanctified, if you will, made holy because God says so. He says, "Okay, as Judge, I am accepting the death of this perfect Savior, My Son, and His blood covers all your past sins. And because of this action that I'm taking as Judge, you are now in a position for better things, for more things, to move forward." Because God does not call us, justify us, and then let us stagnate. That is not God's way. God wants growth. All the language, it seems like in the Bible in which theological matters are discussed, are done in terms of things like plants and buildings that are built and plans that are fulfilled, completed. That initial part is necessary, and it is good, but then He wants us to move forward into better so that He can then bring us into His Kingdom.

And so we have an initial redemption here, in which God, our King Jesus Christ, gave Himself for us. But that was in preparation for a necessary step so that we could grow, overcome, produce fruits, and eventually be among the firstfruits of God. That requires us then to be purified for Himself. So it says here, "as His own special people," and we are "zealous for good works." He is preparing us to be priests in His Kingdom, to do all those things, and He had to redeem us and now He is *continuing* to redeem us and He will *ultimately* redeem us. And we will be "kings and priests to our God."  
(Revelation 5:10)

This is the reason why Paul said in verse 12 that we have to live righteously, soberly, godly in this present age because we have to start doing the things

that make us acceptable before God. We have to start living the life of Jesus Christ in ourselves. So to put this all in kind of a nutshell, the redemption that Christ affected there with His death started the ball rolling on an amazing process of sanctification that ends in *complete* salvation, *complete* redemption, *complete* sanctification, *complete* justification, and glory. What He is doing now is, we have been redeemed from this world, redeemed from sin. Now He is redeeming our minds, our character from all the rot that we have taken in over these many years that we have been alive, and He is trying to change us so that we have the mind of Christ. He is buying back all that filth, as it were, that we lived in in our previous lives. And because we are carnal, we still have a lot of that in us and He is trying to redeem our minds, redeem our character to the point where we are acceptable to be waved before Him.

Let us go back to Ruth and get into more good stuff here in chapter 2. Again, redemption might be a little bit difficult to see here, but I want you to focus on the fact that Ruth is a Moabite woman. She is a foreigner, and she even says she is not like the Israelite women. She is different. She looks different, and frankly, she acts different—better.

**Ruth 2:8-13** Then Boaz said to Ruth [This is when she has come onto his part of the field and he asked the servant who this was. And so Boaz is going up to meet her for the first time.], "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here but stay close by my young women. Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn." Then she fell down on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, "Why I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?" And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. The Lord repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge." Then she said, "Let me find favor in your sight,



my lord; for you have comforted me, and you have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants."

I do want to note that in just about every case in which Ruth is mentioned for the first time in a scene, she is called Ruth the Moabitess. So here, in verse 2 she is called Ruth the Moabitess, when the servant talks to Boaz he calls her the young Moabite woman, and that she came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. It is a double whammy there. She, of course, says, "I am a foreigner." Boaz mentions that she comes from another land, the land of her birth. In verse 13, she mentions again that she is not like one of the maidservants. And then, if we would go down to verse 21, she is called Ruth the Moabitess again, and she is called that twice more in chapter 4 when Boaz is going through the redemption of Ruth and the land.

So it is very clear that the author wants us to understand that she is not an Israelite. It is very clear that it is an emphasis here, that she is different, she is foreign. She is not like an Israelite. She is a Gentile, and that is something that we have to go into this with this very clear in our mind. She stuck out like a sore thumb, you might say, because she was so different.

Boaz, we now have to remember too, that he is a type of Christ. But what does he do here? His first thing that he does after noticing her and being told about her by his foreman there, is that he begins to instruct her. His first words to her is, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not?" That is the approach of a teacher. "Okay, kids, listen up. I've got something to tell you here." Then he begins to give her instructions about how she should act. And you know what he tells her? To act like an Israelite. Notice what he does. He says, "Stay in my field, glean in my field. Don't go anywhere else." From the parables we understand the field is the world. But he does not say that this is the world here. He is talking about a smaller world. This is Boaz's world that we are talking about. He tells her to stay in *his* field, the one he already has possession over.

Then he tells Ruth to stay by his women. Women are often a symbol in the Bible of an organization, structure, but it is a structure that is owned by Boaz. These people belonged to Boaz in some way. They are connected to him. And so he is telling her that she needs to stay with his people.

Then, he tells Ruth to drink from the water that his servants, his young men have drawn. Water in the Bible is often a symbol of the Holy Spirit. But it is, I do not know if we could take it that far at this point with Ruth, although many people believe her conversion happened when she told Naomi, "Entreat me not to leave you," "your God will be my God," that sort of thing. But he is telling her, "Take your sustenance from my servants," and then later just to kind of add to this, we did not go over it, when lunch time comes around, he personally feeds her. He gives her the parched grain to eat from his own supply.

I should mention another one before time gets away. As we get to the end of the chapter here, he heaps blessings upon her that she could barely carry home. He gives her so much grain that he has to actually pick it up and load it on her because she cannot pick it up otherwise. It is that much grain. I have heard estimates of how much grain it was, but it was a backbreaking amount. And she goes back to Naomi struggling under this weight, "This is what we've got to eat for the rest of the harvest." And so he blesses her then, and he makes her aware that working under Boaz is going to be a blessing to her. She is going to have plenty. He says he does all this because he has heard that she has attractive character and that she has done wonderful things for Naomi, even though she could have gone back to Moab. He sees her potential, that there is something special about this young woman.

So, in other words, Boaz is carefully helping her become accustomed to God's Word, God's way of life, God's people, and God's blessings. She is being integrated into the life of God's people, and he takes a hand in doing all this first thing. He has picked her out of the crowd, and he says, "Work in my field, work with my people, drink what my servants have drawn, eat with me." You see all the spiritual things that God does to us. He does the same thing to us. He calls us out of this world. He puts us among His people. He gives us fellowship with the people to help us. And then, of course, He pours out his Holy Spirit, and He feeds us constantly of His way, of His Word.

We see Boaz doing the same sort of thing with Ruth. Even though she is a foreigner, it does not matter. He is going to bring her out of her foreignness. She is not going to be strange anymore. She is going to be one of his people, and he does this first thing. That is what is so amazing. He sees her. He sees

her being industrious. He knows of her character and says, "This is what I want." And he begins paving the way for her not to be a foreigner anymore, but to be one of his people.

Let us move on to another one. Let us go to Ruth 3. I picked one in each chapter here, so we cover the book more fully. We are going to read verses 8-13 and then down in verse 18. I should just tell you that Naomi gave her instructions about what to do and you kind of wonder exactly what it all was what she had to do, but she follows them to a T. Another man with lesser character might have tried to take advantage of her or something. We see Boaz does not.

**Ruth 3:8-13** Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. [That is another one of those, Whoa! What a coincidence. But here it is.] And he said, "Who are you?" [It was very dark.] So she answered, "I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative." Then he said, "Blessed are you of the Lord, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman. Now it is true that I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be that if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you—good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the Lord lives! Lie down until morning."

**Ruth 3:18** [She had gone back to Naomi.] Then Naomi said, "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."

Ruth had done this thing where she uncovered his feet and lay down at his feet until he woke up and said, "Whoa, who is this?" If nothing else, this practice that Naomi told Ruth to do, perhaps it was a practice, perhaps it was something that Naomi just came up with on the spot because she knew it would work. I do not know. But even though it is a kind of a brazen way to

do it, because uncovering a man's feet has certain sexual connotations to it in ancient Israel, what she was saying though to Boaz was very important. What she was saying, ultimately, is that she was willing to marry Boaz if he would act as her *goel* to redeem Elimelech's property. She was not just asking him to redeem the property, she was saying that I will freely give myself to you if you act as the redeemer.

Now you remember, there is quite an age difference here. Boaz was probably about the same age as Elimelech. That is the best guess I could give, that they were near enough kinsmen that they were also near in age. So it is thought that Boaz was probably of Naomi's generation. And so she was telling him that despite his age, despite everything that might be against their becoming husband and wife, she was willing to overcome all that, actually just push it aside if he would redeem the property. And, of course, he says right away, "Blessed are you for this" because he probably thought that all his chances to marry and have a family were gone.

But, this pleases him to no end that this young (I guess), beautiful woman (if nothing else, she was beautiful in character), would be willing to have him. And he says, "for you have shown more kindness at the end," meaning in that situation, "than at the beginning." I think probably the idea there is that she went with Naomi. That was the thing that she had done in the beginning. That was her kindness, her initial kindness. But now she was giving this old man life. So he says, "You have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich." Now that is a merism, "whether poor or rich." It means young men of any kind from poor to rich.

But the big one is "young men" here, men of Ruth's own age, ones that have the same amount of energy and life that she does. But she instead went after this older man, an established man—granted a wealthy man—but she was more willing to be with him than with a younger man. Now, younger men here in this particular spot are symbols of self-gratification for Ruth. These are the attractive young men that would normally attract a young woman. And so if she had gone after one of these young men, then she would have been gratifying herself.

But that was not Ruth's way. Ruth, we find throughout this whole book, was wise and responsible and faithful. That is one of her big, big character traits. She had more covenant loyalty than the Israelites did. She was full of *hesed*. It is often said to her that she had kindness. That is *hesed* in Hebrew. And so she had not looked at physical things. You know, the good looks of these young men or whatever. She was wise in her approach and chose Boaz.

Obviously, we are putting these things on spirituals level too. That here was a young, newly converted woman, or about to be converted, however you want to put it, and she chose Christ instead of some other savior, some other redeemer. And of course, Christ had all the attributes that are wonderful and good and Boaz obviously does too here in the way were shown in the book.

He quickly assures her that he will do all that she requested because she is virtuous and everyone knows it. I mean, what we are seeing here is Boaz saying, "You are a prize. You are something I value, everybody does, because you're such a wonderful woman. You are full of good character." And that he desired it. She had proven herself to be humble and caring and industrious. And most of all, as I mentioned a few minutes ago, she displays *hesed*—love, covenant loyalty, kindness, however you want to put it.

She was a gem, and the more I think about it, I believe that Proverbs 31 was written about her. Because there, where it says she is a virtuous woman, the only two places I believe in the whole Bible where this particular phrase is found is in Ruth 3 and Proverbs 31. So maybe, maybe not, but it fits. I mean, Proverbs was written by Solomon and Ruth was his great great grandmother.

Back to Ruth 3. There is a nearer kinsman. Boaz makes it clear that he is eager to redeem her. He desires *her*. Notice, it is not the land he really mentions here, it is her. He does not need the additional wealth. That is not important to him. He wants Ruth. The Hebrew of verse 13 makes it very clear. The New King James translation here just bungles this terribly. It should read something like this: "If he, that is the nearer kinsman, will redeem *you*, fine. But if he does not desire to redeem *you*, then I will redeem *you*." The emphasis is on you, you, you. You are the one I want. I want to

redeem *you*. I do not care about the land, that is just part of the deal. But you are the one I want and he ends it with an oath, "As the Lord lives!" He is going to do this if it cost him his life. Well, in the spiritual realm, it did.

And as Naomi says, knowing Boaz's character, he will not rest until he had accomplished her redemption. I will quickly read a verse from Luke 12. I had it in mind and I thought I had it completely memorized.

**Luke 12:32** "Do not fear little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

There is also the whole of John 17, Christ's prayer where He is telling God how much He wants these people, His disciples and those others the disciples will help to convert, there with Him. And that is the same feeling we get from Boaz in this. Jesus Christ has no greater desire than to have us in His Kingdom, and He is going to go after us the same way that He has gone after Ruth.

**Ruth 4:3-6** Then he [Boaz] said to the close relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. And I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy it back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not redeem it, then tell me that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am next after you.'" And he said [that is the near kinsman], "I will redeem it." Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead through his inheritance." And the close relative said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem it."

**Ruth 4:9-10** And Boaz said to the elders and to all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead

through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day."

So Boaz redeems the land. But more important to him, he redeems Ruth. He is really slick in the way he presented this to the near kinsmen, dangling the land in front of him and getting his hopes up and then mentioning kind of offhand that the land and Ruth are a combo deal. They cannot be divided out, and the nearer kinsman, of course, refuses to act as redeemer because it might ruin his inheritance. You can see his character here. It is all about him. And without getting into any of the possible reasons he may have had thinking that it would ruin his inheritance, the bottom line of all of it is that he did not love Ruth. Well, he did not want Ruth. Whereas it appears that Boaz not only respected Ruth for being a virtuous woman, but that he had already grown to love her.

Remember, he had first seen her early in the harvest, and this was now Pentecost time. He had seen her over these weeks. Plus then she had miraculously pretty much proposed to him the night before! He loved her and he was willing to do whatever it took to secure her for himself. To him, the way he proposed this to the nearer kinsman, it was flipped. She was the better part of the deal by far! And he was going to secure her no matter what it took.

We see this in the parables in Matthew 13. We get a symbolic picture of what he was thinking in these two parables.

**Matthew 13:44-46** "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for the joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

This was the attitude that Boaz had toward Ruth, the same attitude Christ has toward us. He really did give up everything, even His life, *especially* His life, to redeem a people for Himself. And now that He possesses us, He is intimately involved in freeing us completely from this world and bringing us

into His Kingdom. He is working with us to become pure and righteous as He is because He wants a bride that is His equal. He fervently, like Boaz, desires that we become the firstfruits of God, living with Him, working with Him for all eternity in the Kingdom of God.