

October 31, 2010 by Steve Brandon



Restored to Life

Ruth 4

1. Redeeming a Family (verses 1-17)
2. Redeeming a Nation (verses 18-22)
3. Redeeming a People (Matthew 1:5-6)

I love stories with a happy ending. I love the story of the Christmas-time classic, "It's a Wonderful Life." It has a happy ending; George Bailey gets to live again. "The Wizard of Oz" has a happy ending. The Scarecrow gets a brain, the Tinman gets a heart, the Lion gets courage, and Dorothy gets to return to Kansas. "Annie" has a happy ending. She gets to live with Daddy Warbucks for the rest of her life. Now, that's not to say that these stories were free from conflict or tensions. No, they are filled with conflicts and tensions. In fact, that's what makes the ending so enjoyable. George Bailey was ready to kill himself and wished he had never lived. Dorothy was in the hands of the Wicked Witch of the West, to be disposed of when the hourglass ran out. Annie was almost taken away by Rooster and his girlfriend. But, in the end, it all turned out well.

As we come this morning to the fourth and final chapter of the book of Ruth, we will experience a story with a happy ending. Boaz and Ruth will marry. Ruth will have a child. The family line of Elimelech will be preserved. God will eventually give a king to Israel. From the line of David will come the Messiah. But, that's not to say that everything will be without conflict and tension. Oh, there will be tension. But, in the end, I'm telling you, we have a happy ending. That's what makes Ruth a great story. That's one of the reasons why the Jews read it each year during the feast of Pentecost.

By way of review, I want to set the stage by reading to you a version of the story that has been written for children. The book is entitled, "I love Ruthie".

It can't be true, I can't go on,
Oh everything we had is gone
Naomi wept, poor Ruthie cried,
Naomi's precious sons had died.
And oh one precious priceless son,
Naomi's son,
that very one
Was Ruthie's husband.

Lord above--Our one and only one true love.
Now sometimes when it rains, it pours,
And this time it would pour for sure.
For evil people ruled the land,
As evil people sometimes can.
And sometimes will and sometimes do
When you and I allow them to.

From here to there, from there to here,
The food began to disappear.
It filled the people full of fear,
Yes, full of fear from ear to ear.

"Orpah! Ruth!" Naomi cried,
"The time is come, we must decide,
We have to leave, we cannot stay,
We cannot stay not now, no way!
From north to south, from west to east,
The men are gone, extinct, deceased."

"Without a man," Naomi said,
"We're all about as good as dead.
Just look at me, I'm old and wrinkled,
Sagged and bagged, and crooked and crinkled,
Crumpled, puckered, nooked and crannied,
Rip Van Winkled, grayed and grannied.
Oh there is just no hope in sight,
To find another Mister Right

Or even just a Daffy Duck,
An Elmer Fudd or Mr. Yuck.
The time is come, the time is now,
The time is come right now and how,
You must return, you must I say
Return back home right now today."

Naomi prayed that they would bite
And hoping you that she was right,
She packed her bags without a fight,
And left for home that very night.
But oh, not Ruth, not her, no way,
She had a thing or two to say,
"I can't return, I want to stay,
I will not go right now, today!
For where you are, is where I'll be,
And when you stay, you'll stay with me,
And when you die, I'll die with you,
And that is what I'm going to do.
Your God will be my God, and He
Will surely care for you and me."

Oh what a thing for Ruth to say,
A kind of thing can make your day,
And make you shout "hip hip, Horray!"
They hugged and kissed and packed up tight,
And left for Bethlehem that night.

Naomi? Is it really true?
What happened Girl! Just look at you!
Your hair, your clothes, your shoes, your toes,
Your eyes, your ears, your mouth, your nose,
You're lookin' pale! You're lookin' thin.
In fact if we may say again,
You're really looking more a kin
To something that the cat dragged in.

Well things looked bad the way things can,
But listen now, God had a plan.
"Oh Naomi, please don't cry,
Oh please don't cry,
I'll tell you why.
I'll find a farm, I'll be real nice,
I'll ask them once or maybe twice,
To take our jugs and jars and sacks,
And fill them full of treats and snacks.
Yes, crumbs and morsels, flakes and flecks,
Leftover kernels, crumbs and specks,
A black banana, bagels, locks,
Some cheese stuck to a pizza box.
I'll beg and plead, I'll sob and bleat,
I'll ask them for a tasty treat,
An ittsy bitsy, teeny weenie, tiny scrap for us to eat.

So off she went, she did her thing,
She did it, never noticing
That someone had been fastening
His bulging eyes on everything.
"Who is that girl, out in my field,
And what's she doing!" Boaz squealed.
"Look at that hair, look at those eyes,
Excuse me just one minute guys,
I'd rather go and socialize."

He shaved his toes, he licked his lips,
He checked his teeth for cracks and chips,
He combed the bugs out of his hair,
Yes, Don Juan, double-debonair,
With savoir fair--extraordinaire.

Now don't be too quick to judge, Amen!?

Don't think what your thinking then,
For Boaz was a gentlemen.
"Please stay with us, take what you need,
Take what you need, and more indeed."
He loaded up all Ruthie's sacks
And jugs and jars with treats and snacks,
Yes it was true love at first sight,
A double thumping heart delight.
She headed home, oh what she found,
Her world was turning upside down.
She ran the whole way back to town,
About ten feet above the ground.

I'm telling you, tonight's the night,
Naomi grinned and if I'm right,
There's only one thing left to do
To get that man to say "I do."
So do they did, oh did they do,
They fluffed and puffed, they crimped, they curled,
They powdered, sweet perfumed and pearled,
They thanked the Lord, they sang His praise,
They marveled at his wondrous ways.
And off she went into the night,
To have and hold her Mister Right,
Her Mister Shining-Armored-Knight,
Her straight-from-heaven-sent delight.

Now as I'm sure that you suppose,
Boaz said "yes" when Ruth proposed,
Yes, Ruth proposed, that's what I said,
Just look it up, go right ahead.
They tied the knot and lived to be
Quite happy ever after-ly.
And soon God blessed them with a son,
A precious little baby one,
But wait! The story's far from done,
Because their son, he was the One
Who had a son who had a kid,
Known as King David, yes he did!
And David was the great, great, great, great, great,
Times three times one plus eight,
Great grand dad of a man who's wife
You've probably heard of all your life.

A man who's son to be precise
Was Jesus. No! Yes! Jesus Christ!
Just take a second. Think it through.
Oh what God will go and do.
For God is Love. And love is kind.
The kindest that you'll ever find.
The kindest that you'll ever see.
That's something else, don't you agree? [\[1\]](#)

Well, there's the story of Ruth. In search of a better life, Naomi and her husband Elimelech, departed for Moab with their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. But, while there, all three of these men died. So, after a decade away from her home, Naomi returned to Bethlehem with her daughter-in-law Ruth, defeated and downcast. In order to survive, Ruth heads out to glean in a field during the days of the barley harvest. The field that she first happened upon was the field owned by Boaz, a close relative of theirs. He took a liking to her and blessed her, not only for a day, but for the duration of the barley harvest and throughout the entire wheat harvest as well.

When the harvest was over, Ruth did a strange thing (to our ears, at least). She watched Boaz celebrate the end of the harvest celebration, observed where he lay down to sleep, approached him in his sleep, uncovered his feet, and lay down at his feet. Sometime in the middle of the night, Boaz was awakened from his sleep to see a woman at his feet. When Boaz found out that it was Ruth, he rightly understood Ruth's gesture. She was requesting redemption. She was requesting that Boaz purchase the land belonging to Elimelech. Furthermore, she was requesting that Boaz marry Ruth and raise up offspring for Naomi. To this request, Boaz replied, ...

Ruth 3:11-13

"Now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you ask, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence. Now it is true I am a kinsman redeemer; however, there is a kinsman redeemer closer than I. Remain this night, and when morning comes, if he will redeem you, good; let him redeem you But if he does not wish to redeem you,

then I will redeem you, as the LORD lives. ..."

And right here is where I left you hanging last week. Will Boaz redeem Ruth? Or, will this other kinsman redeem her?

Now, before we read chapter 4, and discover what took place in the lives of these people (as if you didn't know already), I want to address this whole idea of redemption, as this really is the main theme of the book of Ruth. In fact, I believe that it is one of the main reasons why we find the book of Ruth in our Old Testament! It teaches us about "redemption." It puts flesh and bones onto this idea of "redemption." See, when God teaches us, he doesn't merely teach us by precept only. Rather, he teaches us by story and example as well. He doesn't merely say, "You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). Rather, He also shows us the vanity of idols when Dagon the fish god fell down before the ark of the covenant (1 Sam. 5).

God doesn't merely say, "You shall not steal" (Ex. 20:15). But, He also shows us the tragic consequence of Aiken, who took what was under the ban (Joshua 7:20-21). God doesn't merely say, "You shall not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14). But, He also shows us the devastating effects of such a sin when David does that very thing (2 Sam. 11-12). So likewise with the book of Ruth. God doesn't merely set forth the principle of redemption. He also gives us an example of one who is redeemed, as is the case with Ruth.

Now, in the book of Ruth, this word, "redeem" or "redemption" appears more than 20 times! "Kinsman redeemer" appears eight times; "redeem" appears eleven times; and "redeemer" appears two times. The repetition of this word signals for us the major theme in the book. That's why I have entitled the theme of the book, "Restored to Life." I took this phrase straight from chapter 4, verse 15, "May he also be to you a restorer of life," because, that's what happens in redemption. Lives that were broken and in need of help, were restored through the kindness of another.

Now, fundamentally, the idea of redemption comes from the market place. When you purchase an item, you redeem it. But, beyond things, the Bible speaks often of the redemption of people. When the people of Israel were brought out of slavery in Egypt, they were "redeemed" (Ex. 6:6). When a slave was purchased and released, he was "redeemed" (Deut. 7:8). When one of the Israelites became so poor that he could no longer provide for himself, another Israelite could "redeem" him; and that's what takes place in the book of Ruth.

It's a bit like the situation described in Leviticus 25:47-49, ...

Leviticus 25:47-49

'Now if the means of a stranger or of a sojourner with you becomes sufficient, and a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to him as to sell himself to a stranger who is sojourning with you, or to the descendants of a stranger's family, then he shall have redemption right after he has been sold. One of his brothers may redeem him, or his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or one of his blood relatives from his family may redeem him.

Such was the case with Ruth and Naomi. Ruth and Naomi were so poor that they couldn't care for themselves. They needed help. And they turned to Boaz for help. As we come to chapter 4, the big question on the table is this: will Boaz redeem them?

Well, let's read chapter 4 to find out.

Ruth 4

Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there, and behold, the kinsman-redeemer of whom Boaz spoke was passing by, so he said, "Turn aside, friend, sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down.

He took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. Then he said to the kinsman-redeemer, "Naomi, who has come back from the land of Moab, has to sell the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. So I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy it before those who are sitting here, and before the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if not, tell me that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am after you.'" And he said, "I will redeem it."

Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the deceased, in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance."

The kinsman-redeemer said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, because I would jeopardize my own inheritance. Redeem it for yourself; you may have my right of redemption, for I cannot redeem it."

Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange of land to confirm any matter: a man removed his sandal and gave it to another; and this was the manner of attestation in Israel.

So the kinsman-redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself." And he removed his sandal.

Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses today that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon. Moreover, I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, to be my wife in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance, so that the name of the deceased will not be cut off from his brothers or from the court of his birth place; you are witnesses today."

All the people who were in the court, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel; and may you achieve wealth in

Ephrathah and become famous in Bethlehem. Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring which the LORD will give you by this young woman."

So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went in to her. And the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed is the LORD who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel. May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him."

Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her lap, and became his nurse. The neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi!" So they named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Now these are the generations of Perez: to Perez was born Hezron, and to Hezron was born Ram, and to Ram, Amminadab, and to Amminadab was born Nahshon, and to Nahshon, Salmon, and to Salmon was born Boaz, and to Boaz, Obed, and to Obed was born Jesse, and to Jesse, David.

My message this morning has three points. They all focus upon the main point of redemption. The first of these focuses upon the main plot-line of the story, which has to do with Ruth and Naomi and their plight for a kinsman redeemer.

1. Redeeming a Family (verses 1-17)

This is what we see. We see Ruth and Naomi being redeemed.

Now, one of the things that we notice is that their redemption was a very public event. According to verse 1, "Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there." Cities in the days of Ruth were surrounded by walls. And if you wanted to find somebody, you stationed yourself at the gate, especially in the morning, when so many would be passing by on their way to the fields. And sure enough, Boaz found the closer relative passing by. Boaz said to him, "Turn aside, friend, sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down (verse 1).

Once he found his man and secured his attention, Boaz also found ten elders of the city and said to them, "Sit down here" (verse 2). At this point, court is convened. Boaz wanted to make this a very public matter. Then, in verse 3, Boaz begins to explain the reason why he has called this meeting. In the hearing of all, Boaz said to the closest relative, ...

Ruth 4:3-4

... "Naomi, who has come back from the land of Moab, has to sell the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. So I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy it before those who are sitting here, and before the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if not, tell me that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am after you.'"

Until this point, nothing, really, has been said about any land that needs to be sold. But, when you put two and two together, you begin to realize that this was Ruth and Naomi's ticket out of poverty – to sell the land that Naomi owned. And within the workings of Israel, land wasn't merely up for sale for anyone to purchase. No, the land belonged to the LORD. He had allotted portions of Israel to each of the tribes. Any selling of land must be made within the tribes, with the closest family member having the opportunity to make the purchase. And to our shock, this close relative was willing to make the purchase!

Ruth 4:4

... And he said, "I will redeem it."

At this point in the story, we are compelled to shout out, "No! That's not the way that it's supposed to be! Boaz is supposed to redeem Ruth. We like Boaz. He is a noble character. Everything that Boaz has done has been with others in mind. Surely, he will take good care of Ruth. But, we know nothing about this guy." In fact, even in the text, we aren't even given the guy's name. Notice back in verse 1, when Boaz called him, he said, "Friend, sit down here." Now, that's a very generous translation of this term. Better is something like this, "Hey, buddy, sit down here" or "Hey, you, sit down here" or, as one commentator said, "Hey, Mr. So-and-So, sit down here." [\[2\]](#)

Now, at this point, we don't understand fully what it meant to redeem the land. But, Mr. So-and-So did. He was able to calculate fairly quickly the costs involved and the benefit that he might gain from redeeming the land, and he was willing and able to redeem the land. However, just when we might begin to despair that this man would get the land, Boaz continued on, ...

Ruth 4:5

... "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the deceased, in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance."

Now, upon hearing this, it was too much for the nearest relative, ...

Ruth 4:6

The closest relative said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, because I would jeopardize my own inheritance. Redeem it for yourself; you may have my right of redemption, for I cannot redeem it."

Again, what was going on here is beyond us knowing for sure. Somehow, this closer relative had the means to purchase the land. But, wasn't willing to take Ruth with the deal. He said that such a purpose would "jeopardize" his inheritance. Perhaps the man was already married. He didn't want another wife. Perhaps the man thought that Ruth and Naomi would over-extend him. Responsibilities for these two women might be too much. Perhaps the fact that Ruth was a foreigner was detestable to him. There was a cultural stigma against the Moabites in their day. Perhaps there was even some other reason that we don't know of. We simply don't know why he was unwilling at this point to redeem the land. But, we do know that he was unwilling to redeem the land and Ruth at the same time. And so, in the presence of the 10 elders, this man forfeited his right of redemption to Boaz!

Boaz was willing and able to redeem Ruth and the land. But, this man was not willing to redeem. How ironic is it, now, that this man, who was so concerned about his own future, fades off into oblivion. His name died when he died. But, Boaz, lives on! More than 3,000 years later!

Again in verse 7, we see one of those customs coming up again. At least this time, we are told of the custom.

Ruth 4:7-8

Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange of land to confirm any matter: a man removed his sandal and gave it to another; and this was the manner of attestation in Israel. So the closest relative said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself." And he removed his sandal.

This isn't how we make deals today. Instead, we write up contracts and sign them. Or, we shake hands. But, we aren't too often in the habit of handing over a sandal. Can you imagine? "I'll purchase your house, here's my shoe." This custom wasn't only done in Israel, there are some ancient near Eastern documents that show this same thing in other countries as well. The best explanation of why they did this is because a sandal represented where one walked. Giving the sandal was an expression to the privilege of walking the land. "With this sandal, I have walked the land. It is now your privilege to walk the land." The sandal was the token of the transfer of ownership.

And then came the public declaration of Boaz' intent to redeem Ruth. Verse 9, ...

Ruth 4:9-10

Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses today that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon. Moreover, I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, to be my wife in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance, so that the name of the deceased will not be cut off from his brothers or from the court of his birth place; you are witnesses today."

There it was. Boaz had declared his intent to redeem Ruth. By purchasing the land, and by marrying Ruth, by raising up offspring for the deceased, he would redeem. In some ways, this was a bit like their wedding ceremony. One of the purposes of a wedding ceremony is for the union of a man and a wife to be a public matter. Often at weddings, the one conducting the ceremony will stand before everyone and say something like this, "Friends and family, we are gathered here in the sight of God and in the presence of these witnesses, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony. We have been gathered to witness and to bless their union in marriage."

In many ways, this is what was taking place. Boaz declared his intentions publicly. And in verse 11, we see the witnesses affirming his intentions and giving a blessing.

Ruth 4:11-12

All the people who were in the court, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel; and may you achieve wealth in Ephrathah and become famous in Bethlehem. Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring which the LORD will give you by this young woman."

Note that by this time, there are more than the 10 elders who were observing what was going on. This matter has gained the audience of many in the city square. And they approved of the union with a blessing. The blessing here goes back to the times of the patriarchs. Rachel and Leah were Jacob's wives, from whom the entire Jewish nation came.

But, remember, these things are taking place in Bethlehem, the land of Judah. So, it is only natural for the blessing to trace back to the house of Judah as well. Thus, the mentioning of Tamar and Judah. But, there is another, more subtle reason. Tamar was the wife of Judah's son. He married her as a result of the death of Er. The circumstances are a bit similar to Ruth and Boaz.

Now, fundamentally, this was a blessing seeking fertility. Not only was this a primary motive for Boaz in marrying Ruth. Verse 7, "in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance." But also, you need to remember that Ruth had been married in Moab and had come back to Bethlehem childless. Like many of the women in the Bible, she was a barren woman. There is every reason to seek the Lord's hand in seeking a child. And this prayer was answered. Look at verse 13, ...

Ruth 4:13

So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went in to her. And the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.

The sovereignty of God is all over the book of Ruth. But, it stands out in two instances. The first comes in chapter 1, verse 6, when we find out that "the LORD had visited His people in giving them food." And here, we see that "the LORD enabled her to conceive" (4:13). He gave

life to the land. He gave life to the woman.

And this pregnancy brings the book to a happy ending. God had provided a redeemer for Ruth and Naomi. And now, the future is looking bright! Look at the women's blessing in verse 14, ...

Ruth 4:14-17

Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed is the LORD who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel. May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him."

Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her lap, and became his nurse. The neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi!" So they named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Isn't it a great story? It's the story of God Redeeming a Family (verses 1-17) Naomi's life was restored. This child would sustain Naomi in her old age. The family name would continue on!

To be sure, the story began with great sorrow. It doesn't get worse than "Do not call me Pleasant, but call me Bitter, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me" (1:21). But, it ends with great joy, just like many of the other stories that we have all come to enjoy, "It's a Wonderful Life", "The Wizard of Oz", "Annie".

But, don't stop there. Because, there are five more verses that we need to read. And, how easily they might be neglected.

I remember as I was studying this book in preparation to preach it, we read through this book on a number of occasions in our Family Worship time. After we read it a few times, there was one occasion when we arrived at verse 18, that one of my children said, "OK, we can stop reading now." I said, "Why is that?" This child said, "Because the rest of the book is only a genealogy." But, I said, "No, we can't stop reading here, because the whole point of Ruth is in the genealogy." In other words, I believe that the reason that Ruth is in the Bible is because of verses 18-22. If the book were merely a story of a distressed woman who ends up getting a grand-child and living happily ever after, we could easily miss the significance of Ruth's life. Her life wasn't so significant in herself. Rather, her life was significant because of who her great-grandson turned out to be.

Furthermore, if we neglect verses 18-22, we might be led to believe that such is the plan for all of our lives whenever we face the storms of life. "Surely, things are bad now," we may say. "This is not the life that I was planning to live. But, I'm sure that God will turn things around for me. After all, he turned things around for Ruth, right? Isn't that what I'm to expect?" Well, "Yes, ... and No." If you are believing and trusting in Christ, God will surely show you better days. However, those days may not necessarily be here upon the earth.

There are plenty of saints who died, while anticipating better days. We will see this when we get back to the book of Hebrews. Hebrews 11:13 tell us, "All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth." In other words, many of God's saints, who have longed for experiencing the full blessing of the promises of God never saw them fully. Rather, they died in faith, merely anticipating them.

Right after a list of those who "experienced mocking and scourgings, ... [and] chains and imprisonment" and torture and pain and death, the writer says, "And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised" (Heb. 11:35-39). Better days may not come. Now, by God's grace, they often do, as is the case with Ruth. And for this, we may be thankful. But, we cannot so presume. And I believe that this is the message of verses 18-22.

The story of Ruth goes beyond Redeeming a Family (verses 1-17). It continues on to ...
2. Redeeming a Nation (verses 18-22)

So, let's read the genealogy.

Ruth 4:18-22

Now these are the generations of Perez: to Perez was born Hezron, and to Hezron was born Ram, and to Ram, Amminadab, and to Amminadab was born Nahshon, and to Nahshon, Salmon, and to Salmon was born Boaz, and to Boaz, Obed, and to Obed was born Jesse, and to Jesse, David.

There is only one name in this genealogy that is important. It's the very last name; it's the name of David. Ruth is the great-grandmother of David: the king of Israel, the sweet Psalmist of Israel (2 Samuel 23:1), the man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14), the one who would take Israel out of the dark days of the judges and into her glory days. And in king David, all of the prayers of the witnesses were answered. Look back at verses 11 and 12, ...

Ruth 4:11-12

All the people who were in the court, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel; and may you achieve wealth in Ephrathah and become famous in Bethlehem. Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring which the LORD will give you by this young woman."

Those things happened. David achieved great wealth. Do you remember a few weeks ago when we looked at 1 Chronicles 29? David was

the major contributor to the building of the temple. David achieved great fame. Bethlehem has come to be known as "the city of David."

So also were the prayers of the women answered as well. Look at verses 14 and 15 again.

Ruth 4:14-15

Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed is the LORD who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel. May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him."

They prayed far better than they knew. Again, we see a prayer for fame, which was answered in a few generations. Indeed, he restored her life. Indeed, he sustained her in her old age. And this was not lost on David. I believe that he knew full well of the blessing of God upon his life.

Turn over to Psalm 36. Here is a Psalm that speaks of the wickedness of men and the lovingkindness of the LORD. We don't have time to look at the entire Psalm. So, I turn your attention to three verses: verses 5, 6, and 7. As I read them, think about Ruth.

Psalm 36:5-7

Your lovingkindness, O LORD, extends to the heavens,
Your faithfulness reaches to the skies.
Your righteousness is like the mountains of God;
Your judgments are like a great deep
O LORD, You preserve man and beast.
How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God!
And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings.

The first time that Boaz saw Ruth, he said, "May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge" (Ruth 2:12). When Ruth asked Boaz for his hand in marriage, she said, "I am Ruth your maid. So spread your wings over your maid, for you are a kinsman-redeemer" (Ruth. 3:9). My guess is that David was thinking of the stories that he had been told of his great grandfather and great grandmother. God's lovingkindness had been extended greatly to them, because they sought refuge under His wings.

But, I believe, the book of Ruth is bigger yet. It's more than a story of God Redeeming a Family (verses 1-17). It's more than a story of God Redeeming a Nation (verses 18-21). It's also a story of God ...

3. Redeeming a People

The only place where the name of Ruth is mentioned in the New Testament is in the opening pages of the book of Matthew. So, let's turn over there. I won't burden you with the entire genealogy. Rather, let's merely look at verses 5 and 6, ...

Matthew 1:5-6

Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of David the king.

There we see Ruth's name, she is the great-grandmother of David. But the genealogy doesn't stop there. It continues on, until verse 16, ...

Matthew 1:16

Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

The name of Jesus has great significance. Look down at verse 19, ...

Matthew 1:19-21

And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

Here is the great reality of why Jesus Christ came. He came to "save His people." And how did Jesus "save His people"? He redeemed them! He purchased them. He provided for them. Just as Boaz redeemed Ruth, so also does Jesus redeem us!

And this fact is not lost on the writers of the New Testament. Over and over and over again, we read of how Jesus Christ redeemed us and purchased us with His blood. Listen to a few instances, ...

Hebrews 9:12: "[Jesus] entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

Galatians 3:13: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us."

Romans 3:24: "[We are] justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

Revelation 5:9: "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with

Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation."

Titus 2:14: "[Christ] gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed."

1 Corinthians 6:20: "You have been bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body."

Romans 8:23: "We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body."

Church family, like Ruth, we have been bought with a price. Like Ruth, we have been restored to life through Jesus our Lord. May our hearts ascend in praise and honor and worship and love to Him!

This week, my wife was going through a bunch of the Scripture passages that teach about the redemption of Christ. I want to share with you a definition that she derived from the many texts that speak of redemption. She wrote: "Redemption is Christ's purchase of us with His blood to forgive our sins and set us free from the law. Through this purchase we are His possession and adopted children." That's a great definition of redemption, especially as it is derived from the language of the Bible.

Consider the words to this song.

"The Greatest of All"

The greatest of all transactions,
The costliest purchase price.
Father, You Son's atoning death
Was given in payment for mine.
To buy me back from slavery,
To set me free from my chains.

Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it.
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.
Redeemed through Your infinite mercy,
Your child and forever I am.

Now I'll never know Your judgment,
My Savior was judged for me.
Jesus, Your death and Yours alone
Has cancelled the debt that I owed.
You satisfied the law's demands
And New life's been given to me. [3]

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on October 31, 2010 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] "I Love Ruthie: The Story of Ruth (Perfect in His sight)", Phil A. Smouse.

[2] F. B. Huey, Jr. Expositor's Bible Commentary, p. 541

[3] "The Greatest of All", Chorus by Fanny J. Crosby, music and additional words by Pat Sczebel.