

Ruth 18-03-15

This today, Thursday evening, is March the 15th, 2018. Am I right? Yes. And we continue our study in the book of Ruth.

We have been covering chapter 3 and tonight we're going to be moving into chapter 4. Let's take a moment as we begin to ask God's blessing on our study and our fellowship and our metabolization of God's Word and then we'll begin. Father, as always, we are thankful for your providing grace, your watch care over us, your protection, the logistics that allow us to navigate each day and to come to this time of fellowship and of spiritual nourishment from your Word. We thank you for the Lord Jesus and the tremendous standing we have before you in him and the opportunities that we have, the potentials that are possible for us because of his wonderful work on the cross and his continuing work of intercession on our behalf.

We await with great anticipation his return to take us to himself and bring us before you and we pray that our study tonight will help to qualify us and enable us to be worthy, not only to vindicate the way we have invested our time and lived our life here, but to qualify us and equip us for service in the ages to come. We thank you for this portion of your Word and we ask that you will bless it to each heart through the power of your Holy Spirit. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.

You'll remember that the entire book of Ruth has a chiastic structure that's centered on what we looked at last time in the first part of chapter 3, which was Naomi turning a corner and realizing that there is in fact hope. There is in fact the possibility of redemption and renewal, continuation. Instead of the death that she has experienced over the previous decade, there is life in prospect.

And this is the focus of the book, that through the provision of God's Word, through the provision of God's law, God has made it possible for there to be a resurrection of the family of Elimelech. And it is in a sort of improbable, unexpected, perhaps unorthodox way, but she didn't see it coming. All she could say when she returned is instead of calling her pleasant, call her bitter.

The events of the preceding years and losing her husband and her sons had left her with no vestige of hope. But it is because of the response to the God of Israel of Ruth and her loyalty to her mother-in-law Naomi that all of this is possible. If Ruth had not returned, this would not have been possible.

And I cannot help but think of what Paul says in Romans when he says, talking about Israel and the church, and he says, so that without us they are not made complete. God's perfect plan of salvation, which starts with Israel, isn't complete without the opening up of the opportunity to the Gentiles and the building of the body of Christ that is taking place in our time and in our age. So you'll remember that it almost gets spoiled, this is my view, because Naomi decides that

now that she has seen this afar off, she's going to engineer it in the way that Abraham wanted to engineer his own heir, and in the way that Jacob wanted to engineer his own marriage.

And instead of looking to the Lord, you think about the women in the Bible who are notable for their faith. You think about Hannah coming up, you've got Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, and what's the opening chapter of the very next book about? It's about Hannah, who is similarly facing a lifeless situation. She doesn't have the ability to conceive.

And there's Paninah, and Paninah's having children the way that Leah did, and Rachel there, barren. And so Hannah doesn't just give up and quit, what does she do? She goes to the Lord. She goes to the Lord in prayer.

Your Bible is full of examples of faithful people who, when the chips were down, went before the Lord. Good King Hezekiah, remember when he got the rob shock on all the rest of these guys, talking to him, telling him about all the impending devastation, and it's all bleak, and every other nation's been rolled up, and their gods didn't save them. What makes you think, what did Hezekiah do? He took the letter that he got from the Assyrians, and he spread it out before the Lord.

And he said, Lord, what do I do about this? And God sends Isaiah with a message of hope. So here, when Naomi realizes that there is in fact something which, as you know, is provided by the law of Moses. This is because God built it into the law of Israel, that there is the Levirate marriage concept, and that descendants can be raised up, and property can be recovered in the name of Elimelech.

This is because of God's word. It's because of God's law in Israel. And once she sees that, then she says, oh, and it can't be her.

She can't raise up an heir in the house of Elimelech, but Ruth can. It's only because Ruth returned that there is this hope. So she sees it, and so she's ready to more or less dress Ruth up and shove her in Boaz's direction, and hope that when she pitches, Boaz is going to catch.

But it's not as simple as that, and there are some things that Naomi is apparently unaware of, or has chosen to overlook, that Boaz does know. And so this is what we're going to see unfold now in chapter 4. I just want to point out something here. You remember the instructions at chapter 3, verses 1 through 8, at the center of your chiasm chart, and Naomi says in verse 2, Boaz is our relative.

He's winnowing barley. Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment, and go down to the threshing floor. Wash yourself, anoint yourself, dress yourself.

There's the possibility that Naomi has still been wearing what they used to call widow's weeds. In the ancient Near East, and even in more modern times, there was a period where people who were in mourning would dress in somber tones for months. And it is apparently not that long ago that Malon passed away, and certainly Ruth has not been wearing her good clothes to

go out and glean.

And so Boaz has seen her in her working habit, her working clothes, and sweaty. And when she comes in halfway through the day to take some shade and refreshment, you know, anybody that's baled hay knows what you're like after you've been working in a field. And so even then, she attracted Boaz's notice.

So you can only imagine what's going to happen when she washes herself, anoints herself, puts on her good clothes, and goes down there. And you have to think about this a little bit, because she says, do all of this, and go down there. But then she says, do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.

Then it shall be when he lies down, notice the place where he lies, go in, uncover his feet, and lie down. He'll tell you what you should do. Well, Naomi knows, she's a veteran of decades of these barley harvest feasts, that the time that she is talking about, after he has eaten and drunk and has gone to go lay down, and these people, they're still at the threshing floor.

They don't undress, they don't bring their pajamas, it's not a slumber party. He's simply going to lay down in his clothes and take his sandals off and just cover up his feet. He'll throw a mantle or something over his feet and lay down, but he's fully clothed.

Everybody on the threshing floor, it's not an orgy, everybody's fully clothed, but it's too late to go home. What's to go home to? They just lay down at the threshing floor. But Naomi knows that by the time this happens in the late evening, it's pitch dark.

So when she says, go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man, what she's saying is, do not make known our plan, your reason for being there, that you're basically indicating that you are willing to marry him. Don't make yourself known in the sense, don't make your intention known. Don't make our cunning plan known, that's here in verses 1-8 at the center of the chiasm.

Don't reveal that. Don't catch him at sundown and say, you know, Naomi and I were talking, but she is going to be seen. She is anointed, she's perfumed, she's dressed to the nines, and so she will be visible to Boaz.

Boaz knows she's at the feast, but she does not approach him and she pretty well stays out of range of conversation. So she's there, Boaz knows she's there, but she doesn't make herself known. Her intention is going to be made known when she lays down at his feet.

And she didn't have to dress up for that. It's pitch black. The man doesn't know the face of his friend this time of night.

So she said, all that you say to me I will do. She went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. And notice she said, she went down to the threshing floor, in verse 6. As we start our chapter tonight, we're going to notice a contrast

to that.

But the people who go to the threshing floor go down to the floor. We saw last time in verse 8, it happened at midnight, the man was startled and turned himself, and there was a woman lying at his feet. He said, who are you? It's pitch black.

And she says, I'm Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing. She has put herself physically under his wing, under his mantle that was covering his feet.

And she says, I would like you to do this in the metaphorical sense. Take me under your wing. And we saw that conversation when Boaz first spotted her in the field and said, you're blessed because you have come to Israel and allowed yourself to be taken under God's wing.

And so this is going to personalize that and Boaz is going to be God's instrument for actualizing that figure. So they have the close relative talk and she lays at his feet until morning in verse 14. She arose before one could recognize another, a man could recognize his friend.

And he said, do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor. Now, she came secretly. Nobody knows she's there.

So Boaz doesn't have anybody else to tell, don't let it be known. It's still so dark that nobody can see anything. There are only two people awake and talking at this point.

And so when Boaz says, do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor, this is indirect discourse really. I'm not sure it should really be in quotation marks. Boaz told Ruth, told the woman, don't let it be known that you came to the threshing floor.

And he said, bring the shawl that is on you. The last piece of dialogue was Boaz talking to Ruth. The next piece of dialogue is Boaz talking to Ruth.

Nobody else has been introduced in the story. So, and it's a little weird to Western ears, but it's fairly clear in Hebrew that he's still talking to Ruth here. But it's just interesting that he says, the woman, he doesn't say you.

But it's because any woman in those circumstances would have a stain on her virtue, shall we say. Do not let your good be spoken of as evil. Nothing has happened, but the appearance would be bad.

That's why Naomi said, you've got to communicate this to him in secret. And you've got to be gone before anybody finds out that you have been here. Because if there is advanced contact, it is going to really complicate the issue of Boaz's integrity, Ruth's integrity, Ruth's virtue.

Everything comes into question. And this was Naomi's failure to realize that picking this time and this way could jeopardize the entire enterprise. There is a time and there is a way, and this probably was not it.

But Boaz overcomes the bad plan of Naomi and ensures that it still comes out right. Much as God does throughout the Old Testament, there are many bad plans that still come out all right. And it's a comfort to us that sometimes our heart's in the right place, but our implementation is not that good.

Then you remember the six ephahs of barley. And numbers are important in Ruth. We're going to see another important number coming up here as we begin chapter four.

But the six, you remember, six is the number of completed work. Six days God completed his work of creation. In six days, shalt thou labor and do all thy work.

There's this model of human history that 4,000 years from Adam to Christ, 2,000 years from Christ to the Millennium, and then the Millennium, the 7,000, is the time of rest. Creation finishes in these 6,000 years, these six millennia. A day with the Lord is 1,000 years, and that's the model.

We're a little fuzzy on the actuality of that. It's difficult for us to document time past. But there is sort of a clear implication of that in Scripture.

And so we like to think that since it's been 2,000 years from when the Lord was on the earth, that we might be getting very close to the instigation of that 7,000. I like that idea, and I stick with it even in the face of opposition. So, six measures of barley.

Barley, of course, is the first fruit's harvest. This is the day of Pentecost, and she takes this home to Naomi. It is for Naomi.

Don't go to your mother-in-law empty-handed. And so, carrying the work of Boaz in her hands, Ruth approaches Naomi. And in the same way, it's fun to think of the fact that we have so many ministries now where Christians are preaching and teaching Christ to the Jews.

And you have Messianic congregations, and you have Jews for Jesus, where they are sharing the news that their Messiah really has come. And that this is the hope of the future, not only for national Israel, but also for those individuals who come to Christ in faith. So now we begin chapter 4. That's our rapid review.

It says, Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there. Remember, he said, I will get this thing resolved tomorrow. He says, in the morning, verse 13, it shall be that if you perform the duty of a close relative, good, let him do it.

If he does not want to perform the duty for you, I will perform it. Lie down until morning. So the next day is going to be the day of redemption, one way or another.

Boaz says, lie down until morning. Tomorrow I'll get this resolved, either in favor of the other Redeemer, or if not him, then me. So Boaz went up to the gate.

Now, which direction did Ruth go to go to the threshing floor? Down. Which way does Boaz go

to go to the gate? Up. You have this up and down.

You've observed in the past that in Scripture, any time you're heading toward the promised land in general, or Jerusalem in particular, you always go up. And threshing floors, remember the threshing floor of Aronah is up on the top of Mount Zion? And threshing floors were there on heights because that's where you've got breeze. You can separate the wheat from the chaff and all of that.

And so it's possible that the threshing floor was actually higher than the gates. The gate was the most accessible point of entry into the town of Bethlehem. And it's probably not going to be.

If the wall goes up and down, if you've ever seen pictures of the Holy Land, you know there are very few flat places. A calm sea is about the only flat place in that part of the world. Otherwise it's always hilly.

And if you've seen the walls of Jerusalem or other ancient towns, they follow the contours. And so the gate was probably actually lower than the threshing floor. But it is like the city of Jerusalem, like the temple itself, its importance means that when you go to it, you go up.

It is up in the sense of importance. If you ever thought, by the way, of these words up and down and how often they occur, this isn't particularly spiritually meaningful. But as an English major, you're going to get it anyway for me.

When you think about the English language and all of the different ways that we use up, I tried to add up all the ways and I couldn't sum it all up. But you make up or you apply make up. You can top up your tank, you can give up, you can catch up, you can hold up, you can back up.

How do you back up? Vertically? But we don't just back, we back up. You can build up, you can step up, you can end up, you can break up, you can be up front, you can pop up, blow up, dress up, shore up, round up, get up, roll up, set up, put up, heads up, look up, come up with, ramp up, bring up, be up to, line up, sign up, fed up, hook up, hang up, clean up, conjure up, pick up, take up, follow up, wind up, up to date, come up, go up, turn up, pull up, wrap up, stand up, keep up, screw up, show up, look up to, you can be up in the air about something, you can turn it up to 11, you can be up all night, etc. But don't get worked up over that list.

And you can do the same thing with down. Double down, lay down, turn down, face down, bring down, wind down, bear down, step down, cut down, put down, upside down, etc. So it's important in Scripture when you see these words, they're not there just extraneously or superficially or as something that doesn't count.

He goes, Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there. He went up and sat down. And behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by.

Remember this is the nearer relative, the closer relative. So Boaz said, Come aside friend, sit

down here. Now I want to read through these first few verses.

Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there. Behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. Boaz said, Come aside friend, sit down here.

So he came aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, Sit down here. So they sat down.

Then he 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. 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 is no one but you to redeem it, and I am next after you. And he said, I will redeem it.

Boaz said, By the way, on the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy from Ruth the Moabitess. The guy had not really fully thought it through that not only does Naomi have a claim on the land which she is either sold or about to sell, it is basically up for sale at this point. And the perfect tense up there where he says Naomi sold, this is just a tense in Hebrew that can be translated a number of different ways.

It could easily be translated is selling. She has come back because it says buy it back from the hand of. But it has to leave.

And if they don't redeem it, then she's got to sell it to whomever. You must also buy it from the hand of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance. 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. This was the custom in former times, and they throw the sandal. So let's go back now.

Boaz sees the guy come by. Now Boaz went up to the gate and got there early in the morning. In fact, if you remember, I may have mentioned at the end of verse 15 in the previous chapter, Ruth 3.15, after he lays the six measures of barley on her, your Bible says then she went into the city.

The Hebrew says he. Boaz went into the city. As soon as he gave her the grain and sent her in Naomi's direction, he, Boaz, went to the city.

So he went straight to the gate. And so he's watching for this guy. He is not going to miss this guy.

If he misses him in the morning, he's got to wait until he comes back out, perhaps in the late part of the day, in the evening. So Boaz wastes no time. He takes the initiative and he gets to

the gates as soon as they quote unquote open.

And he's waiting. This guy does indeed come down, comes by, and Boaz says, come aside friend. Hebrew here is not friend.

This is two Hebrew words. And it is poloni almoni. Come aside poloni almoni.

And you think, well, this must have been the Italian branch of the family. This guy's name is poloni almoni. But it's a really interesting phrase.

It doesn't mean friend. It basically means, the first part means someone who is identified, and the second one means someone who is hidden. And it comes to be used, it's only used a few times in scripture, but it means so and so.

It means, what's your name? Come aside, you who shall not be named. And what it tells us is, Boaz called the man's name. But in the account, his name is consciously and purposely left out.

Come aside, so and so. Come aside, what's your name? Except he didn't forget the name. We're just not given the name.

He is anonymous. And the reason is, and I'll give you the reason that is commonly given, and then in a minute I'm going to give you why I think it's left out. The common reason is that it's sort of shameful that he wouldn't redeem the land.

And actually he was willing to redeem the land, but when Ruth comes into play he changes his mind and he says, you redeem it. And this is sort of a looking askance at him. And there's a lot to commend that.

If you think about what it is to have a name. What it is to have a name in the Bible. Names mean something.

We almost always look up names. But it's not just name in the sense of what do people call you, but what is your reputation? What are you known for? And all you have to do is think about the book of Revelation. And when you get to chapter 2 verse 17, to him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna and I will give him a white stone and a new name written on the stone.

The Lord Jesus himself has a new name in Revelation. You remember that? There is a name that is only known to the Lord Jesus and to those whom he grants it to. So you have in Revelation 2.11 the one who is victorious and is not harmed by the second death is going to partake of these things.

In Revelation 14.3 they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures. No one could learn the song except those 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. This song is kind of a secret.

There are things that are not revealed. It's a new name and we're not told what the new name is yet. Jesus says in Revelation 3.12, the one who is the overcomer, I will make a pillar in the temple of my God.

He will never again leave it. Upon him I will write the name of my God and the name of the city of my God and my new name. These who are church age overcomers have three names written on them.

It is God's name, the city of God's name and the Lord Jesus' new name. Revelation 19.12, he has eyes like blazing fire. Remember this is the Lord coming in glory right before Armageddon.

He has eyes like blazing fire, many royal crowns on his head. He has a name written on him that only he himself knows. Names mean something.

But this name of the Lord Jesus, this new name is not given. You think, well why don't we have his name? Well, this attaches to my idea about why this guy's name is not given. The guy that turns down the redemption opportunity.

So back to our passage here. I thought to inform you in verse 4, buy it back in the presence of the inhabitants. Notice how many elders did Boaz recruit to witness this transaction, this judgment in the city gate? There are ten.

Now how many people does it take to what? I see, so you're just taking my punch line aren't you? So the number of elders that are recruited to be witnesses far exceeds what the law requires. How many people does it take to establish a thing? In the mouth of two or three witnesses. How many does Boaz get? Ten.

What does the number ten represent in scripture? If you go to Bullinger, there's a great book by E. W. Bullinger, it's a hundred odd years old, talking about numbers in the Bible, and figures of speech used in the Bible and so on. The number ten is the number of completeness of the divine order. You've got ten fingers, you've got ten toes.

Jacob complains to Laban, you've changed my wages ten times. There are a lot of examples of ten being a number of an order and of completing that order. Once you count to ten, or you count down from ten, we do this even today.

And so these ten elders, and they're all from Bethlehem, you figure it must be a fairly large community because there are ten elders that he's able to recruit just on that morning. And they come and sit down in the gate. The gate wasn't just like a gate through a cyclone fence, it was part of a large city wall, there was an alcove, it was shady, breezes came through there, and so people would gather there and things were adjudicated.

You remember this is where Absalom goes when he's going to subvert people and overthrow the king, who is his father. Let me just duck here real quick. We may operate on divine power but my laptop does not.

So these ten elders are witnesses now, and so he says, buy it back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. And you get the idea that once these ten elders sit down and Boaz and this other guy sits down, all of the other people passing through the gate realize something is up and it gathers a crowd. And so this is witnessed by an assembly of, they are surrounded by a so great cloud of witnesses, if you will.

And he says, I thought to inform you, this in Hebrew is kind of a fun phrase because it literally means, I uncover your ear. It's like, I want to be sure you hear this, so I'm pulling the hair back from your ear, I'm taking your turban up to be sure this gets in your ear. I wanted to uncover your ear.

Saying, buy it back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders. 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. He said, I will redeem it. So he is ready to purchase the land back, pay Naomi and Ruth, unbeknownst to himself, the purchase price for this land.

But you notice that Boaz has only mentioned Naomi thus far. Naomi's got land, you're in a position to buy it back and redeem it. There is no one but you to redeem it, and if you're not going to, I'm next in line.

So he said, I will. Boaz said, on the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy from Ruth the Moabitess. Remember how all through chapter three it didn't identify her as a Moabitess? But he doesn't say Ruth the widow of Malon.

He doesn't say Ruth the daughter-in-law of Naomi. He says Ruth the Moabitess and brings this issue to the fore. The wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, to perpetuate the name.

This man is consciously unnamed. He is given the opportunity to redeem and raise up and perpetuate a name. Names mean something in the Bible and it's central in this portion of Ruth.

So the close relative, again unnamed, said, I cannot redeem it for myself lest I ruin my own inheritance. I cannot redeem it for myself lest I ruin my own inheritance. This is commonly thought to mean that if he redeems it, it's going to put him in some financial difficulty.

He will have to then divide his estate amongst the heirs of Ruth or whatever. But that's not really found in the Bible. When you go back and read what the law says, it is the firstborn son will succeed the name of his dead brother that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.

In Deuteronomy 25 verse 6, this is where you go for the Levirate Law. He could marry Ruth and raise up a son and it doesn't change the inheritance of his current estate. He is willing to spend the money to redeem the land, so it's not a question of the purchase price of the land.

And yet he says, it will ruin my inheritance. And this is a real interesting turn of phrase. And it reminds us of what happened in Genesis 3. It reminds us that in Genesis 3, it says that Judah took a wife for Ur, his firstborn.

Her name was Tamar, but Ur, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord and the Lord killed him. That is harsh. Judah said to Onan, go into your brother's wife and marry her and raise up an heir to your brother.

Onan knew the heir would not be his. So he made sure that there would be no heir and lest he should give an heir to his brother. The thing which he did displeased the Lord, therefore he killed him also.

Then Judah said to Tamar, the daughter-in-law, remain a widow in your father's house till my son Shalah is grown. For he said in his heart, lest he also die like his brothers. So Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

So Judah says, he never did let Shalah marry Tamar because that would ruin his inheritance. Well, what has happened to the sons of Elimelech who went and married Moabite women? Moabite women. Killion and Mallon died.

So it is at least possible, and this is sort of my thinking on the matter, that this guy says, he's fine with redeeming the land, but when it comes to a marriage with Ruth, would it be one of his sons that would marry Ruth? Or he himself marry Ruth? It sounds like he's probably already got an inheritance, meaning he's already got a family, so it would have to be one of his sons. And you get the idea, he's got the Judah, and where are we by the way? In Judah? Who are these people in Bethlehem all descended from? Bethlehem of Judah, right? So what story is going to be fresh in everybody's mind? If two guys from the family have died, and one of them married this gal, if my son marries her, that may destroy my inheritance. I could end up with nobody to leave.

I could be in the boat that Elimelech is in now. So ruin my inheritance, to my way of thinking, and I wouldn't die for this, but I think his hesitation is, I am afraid of a marriage with a Moabite in my family. Look what happened to Elimelech.

You know, that's a notorious story already. But for whatever reason, he turns it down. So he says in verse 8, buy it for yourself.

So he took off his sandal. Boaz said to the elders and all the people, you are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's and all that was Killion's and Mallon's from the hand of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mallon, I have acquired as my wife.

And remember I said that Naomi has sold the land of Elimelech. Well, she was in the process of selling it. Well, he has not married Ruth.

He is in the process of taking Ruth as his wife. So this is how the Hebrew tenses work. They are

flexible.

I have acquired as my wife, Ruth the Moabitess, 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. And yet when you trace the lineage of David and ultimately of the Lord Jesus, it's not Malon's name that's mentioned is it? It's Boaz.

Because that's just the way it works. He becomes the lineage. And all the people at the gate and the elders said, we're witnesses.

The Lord make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel. And may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. May you be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah.

You think this story wasn't in people's mind? Because of the offspring which the Lord will give you from this young woman. And what you find here, and this is our point tonight, is in my view, I offer you this thought. The nearer kinsman is afraid of death in this process.

Boaz is not. Now, we've talked about the correspondence and what a beautiful foreshadowing and anticipation and picture that it is. Of Naomi representing Israel, Ruth representing the church, Boaz being the kinsman redeemer.

And through the marriage, through the uniting of Christ with his body, Boaz with Ruth, the deliverance of Naomi is achieved. And she who could not bear and has no son now has one. And that's that beautiful symmetry in archaism.

Well, here's always been the fly in the ointment of that picture for me. All of that makes beautiful sense until you get to this nearer kinsman. Why is the nearer kinsman even in the story? Why did he exist in real life? Why didn't Naomi say, well we have a kinsman redeemer? Go present yourself and Boaz says, oh I'm glad that you didn't go after younger men.

I will certainly marry you and redeem you. And they all lived happily ever after. A goodly portion of chapter 4 is taken up with the interaction with the nearer kinsman and his initial acceptance of doing the land.

But when the issue of Ruth comes up, he reneges. Well, what does that represent, anticipate, picture, and foreshadow? I'm ready to take ideas. Well, if Naomi and the house of Elimelech is Israel, and they've come to a dead end, so to speak, and who is in a nearer position than the Lord Jesus to redeem the name of Elimelech, the house of Elimelech, Naomi's future, and be the husband to Ruth.

In the story, somebody is closer, but doesn't do it. And the issue here, in my view, is he's thinking about Ur and Onan, and he's thinking about Kileon and Malon, and he's looking at Ruth. He was fine with redemption until Ruth came into the picture.

But he's thinking about Tamar. He's thinking about all of these deaths that have occurred in this Leveret situation. And he's saying, whoa, wait a minute.

If it involves marriage with this Moabite woman, I could ruin my own inheritance. I could lose my sons like Judah did and have nobody to carry on. And so he pulls out at that point.

It's at the point where, in my view, he's looking at the risk of death to his own household. But he's a nearer kinsman. Boaz says, I can't be the redeemer until we find out what the nearer kinsman says.

Where is the analog in the Lord Jesus as the Messiah to Israel and as the Savior and head of all things to the church? Was Satan up in heaven and he had first shot at being the Savior? And then he said, no. And so Jesus came. I mean, that doesn't work.

We've got no biblical support for that. So who is this guy? Who is old so-and-so? What does he anticipate? I have puzzled over this for years. But I would like to offer you a thought.

And I've given you all of the clues. So some of you are probably already anticipating the answer that I'm going to offer. I'll give it to you in one word.

Ezzazel. Ezzazel. Does that help you? What is Ezzazel? What's another word for Ezzazel? What's our English equivalent? The scapegoat? Remember? For the sins of Israel to be borne out of the land, there's a goat that has to die, but there's also a goat that has to leave and go into the wilderness.

And the blood of the one goat is put on the other goat and then he goes into the wilderness with all the sins. In order to accomplish the picture of what Christ is going to do, you've got to have two goats. Remember the cleansing of the leper and the breaking open of the bird and the spilling of his blood into the living water in a bowl and all the rest of it? And it's a picture of the Lord Jesus.

And the reunification of the leper with Israel and his new birth on the eighth day when he shaves off all of his hair like a baby and all the rest of it. If you remember in Leviticus 14, the picture of the cleansing of the leper, there are not one dove but two. It takes two because one is dead and one is alive.

And in order to complete the picture, you have to have two. The work of Christ is manifold. And to picture it, you've got a lamb in the morning and you've got a lamb in the evening.

You have the offering of a bull or an ox, but you have the grain offering. You can't foreshadow and picture the complete work of Christ in a single offering. You've got to have a bunch of offerings that show the different aspects in order to properly anticipate.

And even then, it's just a shadow. Well, what I'm going to suggest to you is my own unique figment of my imagination, and you can take it for as much as it's worth. I think both of these

men foreshadow and represent the Lord Jesus.

The nearer kinsman to Naomi is the Lord Jesus in his own image. And the nearer kinsman to Joseph is the Lord Jesus in his own image. And the Lord Jesus is the Lord's ancestor.

You know, we have two genealogies of the Lord Jesus. One in Matthew and one in Luke. Two lineages.

And his human lineage through what would normally be his father is cut off. There's the curse of Jeconiah, the Coniah curse. And so his legal lineage through Joseph, his father, is not actual.

Joseph is not his actual father, he's his legal father. He is his mother's husband. But he is not his actual father.

God is his father. And then you have the other lineage through Nathan of Mary. But it takes two to fully explore the origins of the Lord Jesus and to explain what he is and what he isn't.

And in the same way, the nearer kinsman is more closely related in the flesh to Naomi and to Elimelech. Jewish tradition has it that this is Elimelech's brother and that Boaz is a cousin. And so the man, he probably called out from the gate, if that is true, hey uncle so and so, come sit with me.

The brother of Elimelech would be more closely related than a first cousin. But regardless of that, this man is more closely related. And he says, I will redeem when it comes to the land.

When it comes to being the redeemer of Israel, when it comes to being David's greater son, when it comes to being the Messiah, if that was all that the Lord Jesus was going to do, this nearer kinsman could have done it. But in the broader plan of God, when it comes to the plan of salvation for the Gentiles and calling out a unique people and God the Father making those people who is us a gift and all of the three-dimensional perspective we have of the Lord Jesus as not only the Messiah to Israel but as the Savior of the whole world. He is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

You can't get there with one goat. You can't get there with one lamb. You can't get there with one offering.

And you can't get there with one kinsman redeemer. There are two kinsman redeemers. And the first one, and you can't press this too far in my mind, but he says, well if I were to try to do all of this, I would have to die.

I would lose my own inheritance. What Boaz is willing to do, this first kinsman can't do. He can't see himself on the other side of this.

And in the humanity of Christ, this is a death without a resurrection. And so there is a sense in which both of these kinsman redeemer are willing, but one of them can only go so far. And it's only Boaz who is going to accomplish this.

And he is the picture of the resurrected Christ who is the redeemer because he has completed the transaction. He has made the commitment not only to raise up the house of Elimelech and Naomi, but Ruth. The first guy was ready to do the Naomi half, but was not able, for sort of an unspecified or vague reason, to do the Ruth part.

And so I would suggest that all of this does foreshadow and anticipate the picture that we've been reviewing as we go through. And this portion is that it required something extraordinary for this redemption to take place. The Lord Jesus had to be willing to come to earth and die, not only to save his people from their sins.

Remember that in the Nativity story? You shall call his name Yeshua. Why? He will save his people from their sins. Well, the sin was departing the land.

The sin was putting yourself in such poverty that you had to sell your property. And he came and was willing to do that. But it's a bigger mission.

It's a broader vision. It's a more complex task. And Boaz is the picture of the Lord Jesus going beyond that original kinsman redeemer who was willing.

That's what really throws you. He was willing until Ruth comes into the picture. And the idea here is that God's plan encompassed not just delivering Israel, all Israel shall be saved, but this wonderful dispensation in which we live and redemption being extended to all peoples of the earth in the broadening and unfolding of the plan and purpose of God.

And Boaz does that. So I'm back now to old so-and-so and the Polony Almoni. Why is his name not given? Well, why is the new name of the Lord Jesus not given? Israel is going to find out when they are raised.

You know, Israel died in the wilderness so to speak. And when they are raised, Daniel 12.1, you know, the time is coming when many who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. And when they awake, they're going to find out that the redeemer has two names.

It's Yeshua, the Messiah, and it is the new name that reflects everything that is still happening in this incompleting dispensation. And we won't know the new name until the work of Christ is complete now. We won't know what our new name is until we get to glory and it's the judgment seat of Christ.

And if we qualify, if we're an overcomer, if we're faithful, and the Lord Jesus himself hands us. He didn't say I will see to it that an angel gives it or I will see that it comes in the mail. He says I will give him of the hidden manna, I will give him a white stone and a new name written on the stone.

I will give him. So this is that potential yet to be fulfilled in that new name idea. So if I were asked at gunpoint explain the nearer kinsmen in Ruth, what else suggests itself to our minds? It isn't that there was Michael the archangel or some other entity in heaven who was more

human or more able or more apt to come, but it presents the Lord Jesus in his relation to Israel.

He is more closely related to Israel than he is related to us. Remember the thing Jesus was a Jew? He is more closely related to Israel. But in his redemptive role, he's one step removed from that, but because he's one step removed, he is able to bring Ruth into the picture in a way that the first Redeemer could not.

So I think it really answers a lot of questions and explains the space in the book of Ruth that is taken up with this story of the interchange and with the recognition on the part of the elders and the people of the community that this is a good thing and a right thing and they pronounce blessing on it. And they see that there is a continuation in it, there is a resurrection in it as there was in the days of Judah and Perez and as there was in the days of Jacob with Rachel and Leah. And in the death of Rachel when she's giving birth to Benjamin near this place, you have life in her son Joseph.

There are two sons of Rachel and one continues to live and the father protects him and holds him close. The other seems to have died, but he hasn't really died. And you have both Benjamin and Joseph representing the father's relationship to the Lord Jesus.

It takes two sons to show how much Jacob loved and what Joseph had to go through in order to be the Redeemer and the Savior of his people. So I see this as falling into that same pattern. So what do we conclude from all of this? God's plan is like His ways.

His ways are higher than our ways. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. And His implementation of deliverance doesn't always compute.

It's not always visible and easy for us to see at first blush. And we think, well, this isn't the way it should be. But you think about it.

David would not have been the man that he was if he had been descended from Malon and Elimelech. Instead he's descended from Boaz. And by the way, you know, four is the number of completeness in the earth and David is the fourth generation from Boaz.

You have four generations from Boaz to David. And Boaz is the ancestor, not Elimelech who died, not Malon who died, but Boaz who lives, who is a man of integrity, who watches over Ruth even before she knows that he can be more to her than just a kindly landowner. But Ruth put herself in the position to receive all of these things and in so doing brought salvation to the house of Elimelech and to the name of Elimelech and to Naomi herself without really meaning to.

She didn't know that by her leaving her homeland and her people and her gods and her family and coming to Israel that she was going to be in the line of kings and of the Savior. She didn't know what was coming. She saw God and believed in Him.

She saw Israel and wanted that to be her nation. She saw Naomi and wanted that to be her

family. She, like Abraham, getting up out of Ur of the Chaldees and going to a place I will show thee, a place he hadn't seen before, but he heard the call of God and responded.

Ruth heard the call of God and responded. And because of that, look at all of the unforeseen things that God was able to do in and through her. Boaz name lives forever.

The man who here said it would endanger my inheritance and my name is unnamed. The man who was working the hardest here, and this really represents almost Israel's expectation of what the Messiah would be and do. And if he was just simply going to look out for interests in the traditional Israelite sense, it's not going to succeed.

It takes a man like Boaz. And the limited expectation that the Jews had that he would be a certain kind of Messiah, he would be born in a certain place, he would have certain accouterments, certain appearance, and the Lord Jesus did not meet those expectations to the generation. He came unto his own and his own received him not.

But God knows what he's doing and he always blesses faith and obedience. And if you get nothing else out of the book of Ruth, you can see what happens for Ruth and through Ruth via Boaz because of that faith and because of that obedience. Not only on her part, but also on Boaz's part.

And it's interesting that she went down and claimed that right. The right of redemption and the right of the Leveret Law was exercisable at any time, but it didn't get exercised here until it was claimed. Ruth went and claimed it.

There were rights of property in Israel, but you didn't have them until you claimed them. There were rights of forgiveness in the Levitical system. God was ready and willing to forgive and to cleanse, but you had to go and claim it.

You had to go take your sacrifice and claim that right. It was always available. The law provided for it, but it wasn't yours until you claimed it.

And in many cases, bringing the best of the flock or the best of the herd was an act of faith. But that faith and that obedience and making the claim on the promise of God, this is how this redemption works. We don't know how this would have turned out if Ruth had not made the claim.

I think the claim could have been made in a different way, in the same way that Jacob could have received the blessing that was his all along by faith from Isaac. But the principle remains the same. Jacob knew that inheritance was important.

He valued it and God made sure that he got it, even though he kind of scrambled the means. But the end was claim on that. It's not Abraham, Isaac, and Esau.

It's Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob because Jacob wanted it. Ruth raised up the house of Elimelech

because she wanted that. And it is a matter of two things, faith and obedience coupled with making the claim.

That right of redemption could have been there until those kinsmen redeemers all died. They had to make the issue and say, this is what the law says, please do it. Remember Tamar made that claim and Judah erred.

That's a pun by the way. Judah erred in not honoring that request on the lever of law. And God saw to it that he ended up honoring it anyway.

Well, it's interesting and fruitful food for thought and reflection. But let's close here for tonight. We'll see the denouement here in chapter four next time.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the wonderful promises that are ours in Christ when we are qualified to claim them and when we come before you and lay claim to them. We thank you for his work on our behalf.

We thank you for our access to you through him. We thank you for his intercession. We thank you for his soon return and the wonderful prospect we have of the future life in your presence.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will make these things real to our hearts and souls. Help us to see their pertinence and application in our current circumstances and in the days ahead. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.