

Ruth 18-03-22

This is March the 22nd, 2018, and we're continuing our study in the book of Ruth. We're going to pick up this evening in chapter four, and we're at the point where Boaz, surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses at the gate, is negotiating with the nearer Redeemer. And we have just come to the point where they are going to finalize their contract, as it were, and determine who is going to exercise the right of Redeemer for the property of Elimelech and the widow of Mahlon.

So we'll be picking up this evening in chapter four, specifically verse seven. But let's take a moment as we begin to go to the Lord in prayer and ask His blessing on our fellowship and on our study, and then we'll get started. Father, how grateful we are for this time to spend together looking at the truth of Your Word and seeking its pertinence and its applicability to our own lives.

We recognize that Your Holy Spirit is both the one who teaches us and the one who makes it real and understandable in our own souls, and we ask that He will be active in our group tonight and in each heart so that we can glean from Your Word those truths that will energize us and motivate us and cleanse and refine us so that we can be useful in Your service. We can draw more closely to the Lord and the example that He set of faithfulness and obedience, and we can prepare ourselves for life with You in the eternal future. We ask Your blessing on this portion of Your Word to each heart, and we ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. So you'll remember in chapter four that after Naomi sent Ruth to the threshing floor to basically make her intentions known to Boaz, and see what he would do in response, Boaz responded very favorably and very kindly and graciously, and he took great steps to preserve his own integrity and Ruth's reputation, and both of those were in danger on the threshing floor. It wasn't a good time, and it wasn't a good place, and it wasn't a good way.

These were manufactured by Naomi, and recognizing that Naomi here symbolizes in many ways the nation of Israel, Old Testament Israel, as Paul says in Romans, they had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. They could see the righteousness of God, but they sought to try to achieve their own, and so many times in Old Testament you see the people of God getting ahead of God. Abraham not willing to wait for Sarah in her old age.

He thought that was a pretty dim prospect for her to ever get pregnant, and so they go the route of Hagar, and you see Jacob thinking that he can work his way to the wife of his dreams with Laban, and he ends up with Leah and does another seven years. You see Judah trying to ensure his own progeny and his own line by refusing to marry his youngest son to the widow of his previous two sons with Tamar and Er and Onan, and Shelah, his youngest son, he doesn't want to put at risk, and we find something of the same instinct now in Ruth chapter 4 as in chapter 3 we saw Naomi looking to circumstance and trying to manage circumstances to bring about the will of God instead of, wouldn't it be wonderful just as a suggestion, and believe me I'm not picking on Naomi here, but what we don't read in Scripture is at the point that she hears the story of Ruth gleaning in the field and Boaz smiling on her and being kind to her and gracious and providing for her and being very favorable in his disposition, what does Naomi not do that you can think of that would be a good thing to do at this point? How about a prayer meeting? How about, remember Hannah when she was faced with a no child situation? What did she do? She went to the house of God and she prayed and she prayed fervently and she prayed in faith, and this just by way of omission sort of stands out. Naomi recognizes that God exists and she begins to have hope, but then she immediately starts the plan of Naomi, and I have often pushed the plan of Sam. I think you've probably often thought, you know, the plan of fill in your name here was a great way to go, and wouldn't it be great if we could pause and stop and especially thinking about this example because God overcomes her stratagem and prevents it from being a tragedy which it easily could have been.

If Ruth had been discovered at the feet of Boaz on the threshing floor, every bigoted belief about the Moabite women would have been brought to the fore. His integrity and the possibility of him serving as the Redeemer for the house of Elimelech would have been compromised if not destroyed. If anything untoward had happened on the threshing floor, and there have been many people in more modern days who have said, well, this in olden days, you know, they would just go ahead and commit some form of hanky-panky in this regard.

It absolutely did not happen. There is nothing in the text to suggest anything other than great caution and great care, great grace and great character on the part of Boaz in making sure that nothing such as Naomi may have envisioned. Well, if you can wait until his heart is merry and his guard is down and you're dressed to the nines

and you've washed and perfumed yourself and you're so attractive that he can't resist, you will snare him in your feminine trap and he will have to push the kinsman-redeemer thing out of a sense of obligation.

This seems to be the implication, and if we're being unfair to Naomi I'll apologize to her when I see her in glory, but that's what it looks like. Boaz, when he wakes up and discovers who's at his feet, he says, look, I'm already anxious to do this, but we have to do it right. That's the upshot of the last half of the chapter.

This must be done right. You can't cut corners, you can't skip steps, you can't leave out the fact that there is a nearer kinsman, and this has to be formally and legally and publicly resolved. This has to come first, and he is aware of what Naomi doesn't mention and is possibly not aware of.

There is someone who stands closer, and you have to think maybe Naomi does know this. Maybe she doesn't like the man who stands nearer and she likes Boaz's chances and she just wants to tilt the table in his favor, but for whatever reason Boaz is completely aware and he does things right. So we pick up now tonight in chapter 4. Let's just read the first few verses and then we'll move into the part we're covering tonight.

So Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there, and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, "Come aside, friend." Remember that from last time? Come aside, Peloni Almoni.

Unspecified, what's your name? Come aside, so-and-so, and his name is omitted from Scripture. He is the nameless one. "And sit down here."

So he came aside and sat down, and Boaz 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."

And notice how the word brother is used in Hebrew to refer to any near relative. And this is true in the Levirate Law when you go back to the brother who will raise up an heir to his kinsman who has died. Brother often just means kinsman.

In the same way that father can mean grandfather, great-grandfather, or even further ancestor. These terms were much more flexible. They didn't have second cousin once removed and a lot of the fine distinctions that we make.

So he says, "Our brother Elimelech." Well, obviously Boaz and this near kinsman are not both from the same parents as Elimelech. They are simply near kinsmen.

"I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy it back.'" And that's where the quote should close. "I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy it back.'"

"And I thought to do so in the presence of the inhabitants and elders of my people. If you will redeem, redeem." And notice it is in italics.

If you will ga'al, this is the verb G-A-A-L that is translated redeem. Ga'al, how many times have I talked about how you make an I-N-G word, a participle, so to speak, in Hebrew? Instead of putting I-N-G on the end and say the one ga'al-ing, you say go'el.

It's the O-E infix. So ga'al becomes go'el, and it turns the verb into a noun. So you have the one redeeming or redeemer.

"If you will ga'al, if you will redeem, redeem. But if you will not redeem, then tell me." And notice redeem is mentioned three times.

This is the number of divine completion and perfection, just like the Trinity itself. If you will redeem, redeem. If you will not redeem, tell me that I may know.

There is no one but you to redeem, and I am next after you. And he said, "I will redeem." Now you've had the word redeem five times in one verse.

And I think that's a record in the whole Bible. The word redeem in verse four occurs five times. So what is the ultimate and most important and significant and salient subject in the book of Ruth? Redemption.

That is exactly right. Redemption. And you see it emphasized here.

So Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance." So along with redemption of the land comes redemption of the family name and the family posterity. This is a threefold redemption.

The land is preserved within the family and the clan and the tribe. The name of the dead is raised up. And we'll see this a little bit further in the chapter where you think, well, isn't his name just his offspring? No, his name counts for something.

And then thirdly, posterity: raise up a son, raise up a line to the dead. So this is a threefold redemption. So on the day you buy the field, redemption number one of the land, you must also buy from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead, redemption number two, through his inheritance.

Inheritance goes to the offspring, the firstborn son. So that's redemption number three. And the kinsman said, "I cannot redeem."

Now in verse four, he said, "I will redeem." Now he says, "I can't redeem." I will, but I can't.

What changed? Verse five. What is the subject of verse five? Ruth the Moabitess. As soon as Ruth is entered into this, his disposition changes.

And what was something he was willing to do now becomes something that he claims is impossible. "I cannot redeem for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance." We're not given the details of how or why this would ruin his inheritance, but in his mind, marrying Ruth ruins his inheritance.

He doesn't say, "I can't marry her because I'm already married." He doesn't say, "I can't marry her because her, our son would be in competition with my existing son. I have one or more children." He gives no reason. He simply says, "It would ruin my inheritance." Now, the last time we saw an inheritance ruined through the Levirate Law is something that people are going to allude to here in a few verses later on in the chapter.

And that is Judah's firstborn and secondborn sons. They married Tamar and inheritance was ruined. And this began to look like a sort of a jinx or a curse or a danger.

And if the only reason is the acquisition of Ruth into the family, and we know that more than one wife was not uncommon in the days of the Judges. Again, Hannah and Peninnah. This isn't an obstacle.

It's something about Ruth, the Moabitess, and the superstition, the lack of clear understanding of what the Levirate Law entails and what constitutes acceptance for a woman in Israel. They have the immediate example, just two generations back, of Rahab from Jericho, right? There's no obstacle to marrying a woman who is not of Israelite stock.

If she is pledged to the people of Israel and to the God of Israel, that trumps all other factors. And they've got an immediate example in the recent past, and they all know this. So his objection is something in his own mind and in his own heart that's not explained here.

So now verse seven, and this is really interesting. I'm going to spend a little time here because now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging to confirm anything. One man took off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was a confirmation in Israel.

Now notice the italics in verse seven. "Now this," and then "was the custom" is supplied. So what it says literally in Hebrew here is, "Now this in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging," and you just have to supply the rest.

This is what happened, this is how it was, some verb of being, but it's left out. The Septuagint supplies this by putting in the word *dikaion*, which you may recognize. It's the Greek word for righteousness or, in some cases, justice.

And so when they put this in Greek, they said, "Well, we've got to help this some kind of way," and of course they didn't have italics. So they just put in the word, "This is how justice was done, this is how righteousness was maintained," if you will, and they just threw the word in there. And so later scholars have said, "Well, there must have been a word that fell out, maybe *mishpat*, the noun that means justice, used to be in the Hebrew text and dropped out and the Greeks had it in there." Now they just wanted to smooth it out, in my view.

So, why is that important? Because when it says in former times, this is a very interesting claim. In former times, there are some other things that were done in former times. It goes back actually originally to the law, and it may have even predated the law, but you can turn back to Deuteronomy chapter 25, because it says to confirm anything in our verse, but that's not really what it says in Hebrew.

It means to confirm anything with regard to redeeming and exchanging, redeeming and acquiring. And this goes back to Deuteronomy 25. So let's keep our place in Ruth and turn back quickly to Deuteronomy 25, because what we have in Ruth doesn't match what we have in the law.

So, beginning in verse 5, this is right after "don't muzzle the ox while it treads out the grain." Then in verse 5 of Deuteronomy 25, if brothers dwell together and one of them dies and has no son, this is our case, right? Mahlon died and had no son.

The widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family. Her husband's brother, i.e., near kinsman, nearest kinsman you would expect, shall go into her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. Notice this does not say if unmarried, it simply says the next nearer kinsman, this is his duty.

He will raise up the firstborn son, which she bears, will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. That his name may not be blotted out. What happened to Palti Almoni here?

His name, in his effort to not blot out his own name, "my inheritance will be ruined," his name has been blotted out of Scripture. He had a name, Boaz called him by his name, but because he would not fulfill his duty under the law, his name has been blotted out of the Word of God for all eternity.

If the man does not want to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders. So under Deuteronomy 25, what should we be seeing in Ruth chapter 4? Who should be at the gate? You can say it, who should be at the gate according to Deuteronomy 25, confronting this Redeemer guy? What does it say in verse 7? Let his brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders and say, "My husband's brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother." Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him.

If he stands firm and says, "I do not want to take her," which is exactly what this Palti Almoni has done, right? Then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his face, and answer and say, "Thus shall it be done." Not to the man whom the king delights to honor, thus shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house.

Notice here, that if they would not take that widow and raise up a child to the dead brother, the widow thrice shamed him in public. First of all, she took his sandal off, and we'll talk about that in a minute, but that is a shame. Secondly, she spits in his face. Not hard to imagine.

Remember what God said to Moses when Miriam had been bad-mouthing him, and God said He was going to judge her, and Moses said, "Oh, please don't." And the Lord said, "Look, if she had spit in her face, she'd be outside the camp so many days." Remember that? Spitting in the face is a great shame.

And then, "his name shall be called in Israel." This is the third shame. Remember, there were three forms of redemption that he would not fulfill.

He won't take the land, he won't take the wife, and he won't raise up a descendant. He won't raise up a name. So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house, and his name shall be called in Israel, the house of him who had his sandal removed.

And all of us with Native American roots, we like these story names. Wolf with no toes or whatever. They always had these very descriptive names that they would come up with.

Well, this guy's name is no longer a single word. It is now, the house of him who had his sandal removed. And in Hebrew, this is a bit shorter, but it is Bet Kalutz Hanahal.

And I wondered if he's Kalutz. That's the part that means who has had his sandal taken off. And I thought, well, you know, klutz is a word.

It comes from Yiddish. And I thought, well, did klutz come from that? But it turns out that the Germans had a word called klotz, which means block, and it's kind of a blockhead type of thing. And the Yiddish picked it up from the Germans, allegedly.

I still suspect that somewhere in the Yiddish mind was a nice harmonization of kalutz, which means, we say somebody has a screw loose. Well, kalutz means it's loosened. Everything's not wrapped up tight.

It's not battened down. You know, there's a few sandwiches short of a combo plate or whatever. So his name is Bet Kalutz Hanahal, which means the house of him who has had his shoe taken off, had his shoe loosed.

Now, this is a very significant phrase, very significant idea, very significant picture. Feet and sandals figure large in Scripture, do they not? Just give yourself a few seconds to think of portions of Scripture or verses that you know that say something about feet, foot, footstool, or sandal.

There is a verse in the Psalms that is quoted six times in the New Testament, six times. "Sit thou at my right hand until" what? Say it with me. "Until I make your enemies your footstool."

Remember the end of Ephesians chapter one, we do not yet see all things put under His feet. He is the head of all things to the church. That's Ephesians one.

But we do not yet see all things put under His feet. First Corinthians 15:27, God has put everything under His feet. When it says everything has been put under Him, it clearly does not include the one who put everything under Him.

So the Lord Jesus is second only to God Himself, which is an interesting concept in Corinthians 15 because who's one of the most colorful pictures of Jesus in the Old Testament? That's your hint. Joseph, right?

And Joseph was second only to Pharaoh in the land of Egypt, right? And here Paul reminds them that everything has been put under Jesus' feet. To have something put under your feet is a sign of victory. Psalm 110:1 is the source from which those six quotes in the New Testament come.

The Lord says to my Lord, and the Lord Jesus Himself quotes this when He says, "If David calls Him Lord, how can He be his son?" Because there is a dual perspective on Him being the son of David and also being David's Lord. Two different aspects of a single Messiah, of a single Lord Jesus, right?

And we see this over and over again in Scripture. Joseph is the son who died, and the evidence is the bloody coat, and yet he is the son who lives and is the savior of all of his people. And the verse in Psalm 8, Psalm 8:6, "What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that you visit him? You crown him with glory and honor, you make him to rule over the works of your hands, you have put all things under his feet," right?

And this was the original command to Adam to fill the earth and subdue it. It is a process, and that process culminates and is fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. We can never subdue the planet.

All we've done is make a big mess of it, as any environmentalist will tell you, and we'll continue to do so. We're sort of a plague. The whole creation groans because of us, and it's going to continue to groan until we are redeemed, and with us, Christ redeems the earth.

So the sandal, you remember when Joshua had his army come by and put their feet on the necks of the enemies that they had overcome? Because it is a sign of domination, of victory, of authority over. What form, this is a trivia question now, you're going to have to dig back, this is your Genesis knowledge, Abraham, what was the phrasing, what is the wording of God's title deed to the land for Abraham? What did God tell Abraham he would inherit and own and possess when he left Ur of the Chaldees? How did God tell him what part would be his? Everywhere you put the sole of your feet.

The sole of your feet is ownership, it is possession, and in our context it's the idea of possession. Now, burning bush. What's the first thing Moses hears as he approaches the burning bush to see this great sight?

He says, "I will turn aside and see this great sight." Then he hears a voice. What does the voice say? "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place you're standing on doesn't belong to you." See how that works?

You can't walk on God's ground with your sandals because you don't own it. This is God's mountain, this is God's holy ground. He didn't say take off your hat, he didn't say bow your face, he said take off your sandal.

You've got to understand that this ground, which he will return to, to receive the law of God, and his face is going to shine, but this is God's holy mountain. So, highly significant.

There's many others. If you want an interesting devotional exercise for the next week, look up the ones I've not talked about. I'll give you one just because I don't have time to talk about it as much as I would love to.

How did John the Baptist compare himself to the Lord Jesus? There is one coming after me who was before me, and what else? His sandal I'm not worthy to unloose.

His sandal is going to take possession. God is putting all things under His feet. Don't be looking at me as though I'm a great prophet and I've got great credentials.

Everybody came out to hear John and they were starting to blow him up into something that God never intended. He said, "Look, it's the one coming after me. I can't even touch the latch of His sandals." And he picked sandals for a reason.

Now, I'll give you one more. The night Jesus was arrested, something happened related to feet. What was it? Jesus girded Himself about the waist, and what did He do?

He washed the disciples' feet. He said, "As I have done for you, so you should do for each other." It's a picture of forgiveness.

Peter said, "Well, wash me all over." And He said, "You don't need a bath. You're already saved. You need the accumulated dirt of the day forgiven and cleansed."

And as I have done for you, you should do for one another. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." But what else? Why else would Jesus wash their feet?

We've always thought about the picture of forgiveness, but how beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring the good news. What is Jesus doing there in anticipation of Matthew 28, 19, and 20? He is sanctifying their feet so that as they go, what did He tell them if they went to a town that didn't accept their message? They were to go outside and do what? Take off your sandal and shake the dust out.

Right? So it's a really interesting and significant concept, and it's reflected here, right in the middle of this very powerful story of redemption. So, it's in custom in former times, verse 7 of Ruth 4, concerning redeeming and exchanging, not to confirm anything. Simple contracts weren't confirmed with the sandal ceremony.

This is specifically the Deuteronomy 25 situation. But it says, "One man took off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was a confirmation in Israel." Well, you can imagine that nobody wanted to stand there and have a woman take off his sandal and basically beat him over the head with it, spit in his face, and make his name unknown in Israel.

So, they said, if we're going to not exercise the right of redemption, we need to take care of this before the widow gets riled and calls us to the gate. Let's be proactive. Let's be responsible.

Let's work this out between us men, because if Tamar has to go to the lengths she went to to get Judah to do what's right, I don't want some woman dragging me to the gate, grabbing my sandal, spitting in my face, and telling everybody I don't have a name anymore. Right? So, it became the custom in ancient times from probably shortly after Deuteronomy 25 was read, the men all got together and said, "Let's not wait till we come to this extreme. Let's settle this, and we'll get witnesses, and I'll just hand you my sandal."

How's that? And so, that's what they did. So, in verse 8, the close relative said to Boaz, "Acquire it yourself." It doesn't say buy.

This is the word that means acquire. This is the Hebrew verb *kanah*, Q-A-N-A-H. Now, the first time you have *kanah* occur in the Bible is the first time anybody named a firstborn child.

What was that? Quick now. Firstborn child ever. Cain.

You know how Eve came up with his name? Eve spoke Hebrew, and she said, "I have acquired a man from the Lord," and she called him a variation on the verb *kanah*, Q-A-N-A-H. It's no accident here when he says acquire for yourself, he's saying you raise up a firstborn son to Elimelech.

This is not just get the land. In fact, the land is not really even in view. The whole issue here is who's going to marry Ruth, and he says, "I can't. I see ruin in that path."

So, he backs away, and he says, "You *kanah* for yourself. You raise up," and in his mind, it's going to be Cain, and there's going to be death. And what is he leaving out? What is he leaving out?

Grace. God's power. Why is Boaz unafraid to marry Ruth? Because Boaz knows that in so many cases of redemption, God's power overcomes human circumstance.

What happened when Cain did kill Abel? And remember we talked about how many times it takes two things to fully communicate the Lord Jesus. One of the very first pictures in all of Scripture is Abel dies, but Seth lives.

And the quote-unquote godly line, you can't stop the forward progress and the seed, capital S, of the woman coming by killing Abel. He's just going to come back as Seth. And so, what's between Abel and Seth?

*Kanah*. You have Cain. Cain didn't exercise his opportunity as the very first firstborn son to carry the inheritance and the blessing and the opportunity to reflect the glory of God.

Cain turned it down, just like Pethai Almoni did. And so, Pethai Almoni says, "You *kanah*," when in fact he is doing the Cain thing, and he says, "Well, you do it." So, he says, "You acquire for yourself."

So he took off his sandal. Boaz said to the elders and all the people, and notice this saves Ruth from coming down there and doing all three things. Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have acquired all that was Elimelech's and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's from the hand of Naomi."

Now, all that was Elimelech's, that's redemption number one, that's the land, right? And all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's from the hand of Naomi, that again is all of the possession. "Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife to perpetuate the name of the dead."

That's redemption number two, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. That's the name. Remember I said we're going to talk more about the name, his position at the gate.

This is being a presence and an influence for good and for justice. What does the gate represent? What are they doing at the gate? This is justice.

This is righteousness. This is doing the right thing before the Lord and honoring the Lord's commands and ordinances and statutes and the law and ensuring that God's purpose in Israel is fulfilled. So Elimelech's place in the gate is now going to be filled by Boaz and by Boaz's son and his son's son and his son's son's son and ultimately David himself.

What happens when David gets displaced? How does that happen? How does Absalom accomplish it? He goes to the gate and he starts offering alternative justice.

You remember that? That's how Absalom started his rebellion, was at the gate. But from Boaz all the way down to David, Elimelech's place in the gate going all the way back to Judah is maintained, it's established, it's his name. And then, of course, the inheritance.

"You are witnesses this day," and all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, "Witnesses." They don't say we are, they say witnesses. "The Lord make the woman who is coming to your house"—notice what they begin with—the redemption is in and through Ruth.

Without Ruth this really can't happen. Boaz can't marry Naomi and raise up—he could do two of the three redemptions, couldn't he? He could try to raise up the name of Elimelech by marrying Naomi.

He could acquire the land that belongs to Naomi, but what can he not do? The third part of the redemption, which is perpetuate the name and the inheritance with a son, with a child. Only Ruth can do that.

Only Ruth can fulfill that fruitfulness. You remember what Ephrathah means in Hebrew? Fruitful. What do the people say here?

"The Lord make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah." By the way, these people, who are they all descended from in terms of the two wives of Jacob? Which one are they descended from?

Who is Judah's mother? See, we got to keep reviewing these things so we don't forget. Judah is the son of which wife? The easiest way is process of elimination.

Who are Rachel's sons? Joseph and Benjamin. So all the others have to either be a concubine or a wife. Judah, the ruling tribe, isn't going to be descended from a concubine, so who has to be his mother?

Leah. But notice who they mention first. "The Lord make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah."

Because Bethlehem and Ephrathah are associated with Rachel, and they recognize that it is Rachel's son Joseph that made it possible for all of the nation to survive. Like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel, may you prosper in Ephrathah, fruitfulness, and be famous in Bethlehem, the house of bread. May you prosper and be renowned.

May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah because of the offspring which the Lord will give you from this young woman. It begins in verse 11 with the woman who is coming to your house. It ends in verse 12, this young woman.

Now you will remember that in chapter 1, Naomi blessed Ruth. In chapter 2, Boaz blessed Ruth. In chapter 3, Boaz blessed Ruth.

And now in chapter 4, the people bless Ruth. She's got a threefold blessing and there's a double blessing from Boaz right in the middle. The blessing begins with Naomi and it is taken up here in chapter 4 by all of the people in the gate and the elders.

So what do we conclude from this? The foremost idea here again is what? Redemption. We have been purchased out of death, out of slavery, and not with mere silver and gold.

What does Peter say we were bought with? The precious blood of Christ. So how valuable are you? If God had paid four shekels for me, I would estimate my value fairly low.

But if God purchased me with the incomparably valuable blood of Christ, you know how they say something? I think about this every time I think about Barbie collectors. Things are not worth what I think they're worth. They're worth what someone is willing to pay.

Right? They can find a coconut that somebody off on an island someplace carved 600 years ago and to a collector of Guamanian artifacts or something, that thing is worth thousands. I would not give you a buck fifty for a carved coconut shell. I don't care who carved it, how long ago or where.

It's not worth it to me. But what is the value of that coconut? It's what somebody is willing to pay. So what was God willing to pay for us?

What does this redemption really mean? We were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. And if you don't think that God is interested, that He is paying attention, that He is for all intents and purposes focused, we can't imagine God being exclusively focused on all of us at the same time because our minds aren't big enough to contain God.

So we have to forget about everybody else and realize that God, through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, has redeemed us personally and individually. He has a personal individual plan for us. He loves us like He loves His Son because we are in His Son.

And the Lord Jesus is the firstborn among many brethren. And we share that sonship. We share His status as an heir.

We share His priesthood. We share His rule that is coming to this earth. We share His Spirit and all of the power and the insight that comes with that.

We share the riches of the truth of His Word. These are intangibles, but they are inestimable in terms of their worth. And if you get too busy looking at your checkbook or your bank balance or your circumstances, and you say, "Well, my parts don't work as well as they used to.

My eyesight's not as good as it used to be. I'm on the downhill side of human existence like so many of us are." And of course, people older than me say, "You ain't seen nothing yet." And I'm sure they're right.

But don't forget what we gain day by day. Our treasure in heaven isn't an abstraction. It is a real thing.

It comes to us through the Lord Jesus. And as we partake of Him, as we enter into His work as our go'el, as our Redeemer. And what I think is amazing about that word is God consciously constructed it so that it is an I-N-G word.

He is the redeeming one. He is still redeeming us. He began our redemption at the point of our salvation, but we are still being redeemed.

We are still being delivered. We are being purchased. And on the day that Boaz married Ruth, that wasn't the end of the redemption.

It was the offspring. It was the possession and the exploiting of that wonderful inheritance. It was the raising up of not just a son, but a grandson and a great-grandson and things that extended into the future.

All of these things reflect what the Lord Jesus does for us. Ongoing. Continual.

And to lose sight of that is to miss so much of the value and the beauty and the reasons for which we love the Lord Jesus and we love God the Father for sending Him on our behalf. So Boaz is a tremendous picture of that.

We're going to pick this up next week and take a look at the, as they like to say in literature, the denouement. After the climax of the story, what is the wrap-up? The aftermath?

The continuation? What are the consequences of this? And we'll look at that next time. But let's close here for tonight in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank You for the wonderful truth of Your Word and the manifold ways that it reveals to us, Your Son, the Lord Jesus, our Savior. We thank You for this tremendous story and its preservation down through the centuries. It lives and it breathes as freshly to us today as it did when it was in the living memory of the people who witnessed it.

And we thank You for that. We thank You most of all for the Lord Jesus and His ongoing work of redemption and intercession on our behalf. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will remind us of these things and cause them to live and move and motivate us and encourage us as we seek to redeem the time and to make the most of the opportunities You give us to grow in grace and knowledge, to lay hold of righteousness by faith, and to reflect Your glory and the glory of our Savior now and in the ages to come.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.