Bible Study Group **The Right Of Redemption** **Ruth 4:1-6**



Time to Reflect

- In our studies of the book of Ruth, what has impacted you the most about Boaz?
- In your experience, what are some of the reasons that people have for helping those in need? Think of some examples of excellent charity / mission work. What makes them so special?

Last week our attention was drawn to the second half of Ruth 3 and we focused on the themes of promise and provision. We considered the importance of character and reputation. This week we move to reflect on the subject of redemption as we begin our journey through the final chapter of the wonderful book of Ruth.

"Redemption, as we are seeing in the book of Ruth, is personal. This fact is one of the things that makes the book of Ruth so significant…As we consider the theme of redemption, we find God acting on behalf of the weak and helpless out of his divine love."

(Tony Merida, *Ruth For You,* p93)

Specifics

- In our last study we concluded by observing how Naomi instructed Ruth to simply wait and let Boaz take action. Remember how Naomi reflected that "…the man (Boaz) will not rest until the matter is settled today (3:18)."
- This week we observe the steps that Boaz took as he sought to enact the right of redemption.
- Redemption is a theme that resonates strongly throughout the Bible. It speaks of freedom and reminds us that there is a price to be paid. We see this revealed in the story of Ruth.
- What we encounter in Ruth 4 is a remidner that redemption is personal and intimate. It is powerful and relational.
- Tony Merida writes, "The first half of the chapter (4:1-12) shows us Boaz seeking to resolve the matter of there being a closer relative who may choose to marry Ruth. These verses do not feature Ruth herself but show us the legal process by which Boaz redeems her. This may seem disappointing to anyone hoping for a wedding scene.[1]"
- The scene is set in (v1). Boaz made his way to the town gate and sat down there. This was a strategically significant place. Legal transactions and proceedings were often conducted at the town gate (e.g. Genesis 23:18).
- This was a spacious place and an assembly point. Many people would have gathered here during the day and significant volumes of business would have been conducted. Boaz knew that this was the place where he would find the other potential redeemer.
- This man does indeed appear and Boaz greeted him by calling him 'friend.' He invited the man to sit down with him (v1) and then he asked ten elders of the town to join them (v2).

[1] Tony Merida, *Ruth For You* (The Good Book Company, 2020), p109.

- The other potential redeemer is not named in the passage. Perhaps the author of the book of Ruth sought to keep him anonymous in an effort at saving him from embarrassment, or due to his self-centredness and failure to act on behalf of one of his relatives (v5-6).
- We do get more detail in regards to the conversation that took place. Note how Boaz did not begin with Ruth. Rather, he focused on Naomi (v3).
- Merdia focuses on this and he concludes, "Raising the issue of Naomi's property first may be an intentional strategy of Boaz – he may be playing his cards carefully, diverting attention away from Ruth, in order to win Ruth for himself.[2]"
- This would be a very strategic and measured move, highlighting the business mind of Boaz. It is also a revelation of the genuine love that he had for Ruth, and remember that he also had a genuine concern for Naomi.
- The majority of Boaz's opening statement to the other potential redeemer is focused on the issue of land (v3-4). This was a piece of land that belonged to Elimelech (Naomi's late husband) and must not have been sold before he and his family left for Moab.
- The fact that Naomi was selling this land is an indication of the desperate situation that she found herself in (v3). She needed the money and it was the duty of the nearest relative to buy the land, keep it in the family, and help alleviate the suffering of family members.
- This provision was made in the Jewish law (e.g. Leviticus 25:23-34) and Merida observes that this was "…a law of love, not a means of financial gain, designed to prevent people taking advantage of the poverty of others.[3]"
- Undoubtedly, there is an economic and business element to this transaction. This was a bargain deal, with little real risk. Years of productive and profitable harvests could come from this land.
- It is, perhaps, unsurprising that the other potential redeemer agrees to Boaz's proposition (v4b) and the town elders would have witnessed the agreement.
- It is at this stage that Boaz plays his ace (v5). He mentions Ruth and refers to her as "Ruth the Moabite." He reminds the other potential redeemer that there is more to all of this than just the land. In doing so, Boaz reminded the other man of the spirit of the law and how it rightly applied to this situation.
- Merida points out, "…redeeming the property would involve more than personal gain. It would also involve sacrifice. To be sure, it would cost money to redeem the property; but redeeming Ruth by marriage as well would require resolve and even the risk of losing a good reputation (since, as Boaz emphasizes, Ruth is a Moabite)[4]."
- This sacrifice was too great for the other potential redeemer (v6). He was unwilling to count the full cost that applied to the right of redemption. He was only interested in what there was to gain for himself and his family.
- There is a powerful reminder in this example that a true redeemer is one who is willing to pay a price for the good of others. Such a person doesn't think of themselves but is focused on the welfare of others.
- The ultimate example of someone who willingly paid the right of redemption is Jesus Christ. Max Lucado concludes, "God was never more sovereign than in the details of the death of his Son…your Father left this message: 'I did it for you. I did it all for you.'[5]"

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[2] Merida, *Ruth For You*, p110.
[3] Ibid, p111.
[4] Ibid, p112.
[5] Max Lucado, *He Chose the Nails*, pp150-151