

Our Near Kinsman

Ruth 1-4

I. Introduction

1. Have you ever fallen so far, you don't think you'll come back again?

What is the heart-cry of the dishonored leader? The fallen pastor? The son who lets his father down? The student who drops out of college? The athlete who chokes with the game on the line? The general who bungles the battle? The addict? The prostitute? The desperately alone?

- REDEMPTION is the cry of the human heart. We yearn to rise again, to purity and honor.
2. Christ restores us to our original, created value, at cost to Himself
 3. This quality of Jesus is illustrated in the OT romance of Boaz and Ruth

Redemption turned the *tragedy* of Naomi and Ruth into a *triumph*.

II. Tragedy and Triumph: Three Acts of an Ancient Romance

A. The Widow's Fiasco—Ten years to lose it all: (1:1-5)

1. Plenty to famine
2. Secure to homeless
3. Healthy to sick
4. Married to widowed
5. Mother to mourner
6. Sweetness to bitterness
7. Fullness to emptiness—READ 1:20-21

***How it ends: two widows straggle back home, penniless, powerless, hopeless, childless.

B. The Widow's Favor: When Ruth found favor with Boaz, she found redemption.

1. Why Boaz Should **Not** Have Favored Ruth
 - Race—Moabite, foreigner

Deut. 23:3: “No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the LORD. Even to the tenth generation, none of them may enter the assembly of the LORD forever”

- Age—she was 10 years past marriageable age
- Socio-economic status—she was poor, desperate, gleaned from HIS crops
- Options—there were other, more suitable, Jewish “young women”

2. What Happened When Boaz **Did** Favor Ruth

- Took notice—“whose young woman is *this*?” (2:5)
- Made a distinction—“I have found favor” (2:13)
- Gave comfort (v.13)
- Offered protection--“charged the young men not to touch you”
- Shared fellowship—eat roasted grain, dip in wine
- Loaded her with blessings—an *ephah*, 22 liters, 50 pounds of barley

C. The Widow’s Family—not only Ruth was restored, but Naomi *and the dead*

Redemption was:

1. Pursued—“the man will not rest but will settle it today” (3:18)—face like flint
2. Costly—“imperiled inheritance” (4:6)
3. Public—“Boaz said to the elders and all the people” (4:9)
4. Lawful—“right of redemption,” “the manner of attesting in Israel” (4:6-7)
5. Fruitful—“a son has been born to Naomi, and they called him Obed (worshipper).” (4:17)
6. Everlasting— “Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David.” (4:22)

Redemption returned what was lost—“all that belonged to Elimelech, Chilion and Mahlon” (4:9)

Redemption gave more than was lost—“*better to you than 7 sons.*” **READ 4:13-17**

(2:20): “May he be blessed by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken *the living or the dead!*”

III. The True Redeemer—**Jesus**, like Boaz, is:

1. A kinsman to all mankind
2. A person of worth and holiness
3. A suitor who wins our trust with good gifts and kindness
4. A giver of grace and mercy, especially to the undeserving
5. A provider of bread to the hungry
6. A loving husband to a Gentile Bride
7. A protector of the poor and weak
8. An avenger of the blood of His people—*ga'al*
9. A redeemer to all who sit at His feet—“spread your wings over your servant” (3:9)

***How does Jesus look at His people, when they have fallen so far? Suspicion? Skeptical?

- As a bridegroom welcomes his bride down the aisle
 - He sees the white dress under all the stains.

His redemption returns what was lost, and gives back more than was lost.