

Redemption in Ruth

Ruth 4:13-17

PW Emerson – 03/10/2019 – Ten:27 Ministries

I want to tell you the story of Ruth.

Personally, I think this book in the bible should be called Naomi.

It is a story of redemption.

The book of Ruth is set about 70 years before King David, during the time of the Judges.

Let me set the stage:

There is a man living in Bethlehem named Elimelech. He has a wife, Naomi, & 2 sons. But at that time there is a famine in the land.

So Elimelech moves to Moab.

He moved

- Away from the place he knew
- Away from the people he knew
- Away from anyone who worshipped God

This is NOT a smart thing to do.

People having problems today often move, because they think that will help them escape their problems.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Running away doesn't solve problems – it trades old problems for new problems.

Problems aren't caused by a place, rather by the way we are, sometimes by our circumstances.

Don't think that moving will solve all your problems because it never has
The grass is only greener on the other because it's over the septic tank.

So one dumb action Elimelech did was to move away.

Another dumb action was to move to Moab.

The tribe of Moab got started by Lot (in the book of Genesis) when he got drunk and had incestuous relationships with his daughter.

They had a son and named him Moab.

- Moabites are descendants of him
- They worship the god Chemosh – and they make human sacrifices to him

So Elimelech gets to Moab, to a place where there is

- No church or congregation to worship with
- No bible studies
- No prayer meetings
- No potlucks
- No church fellowship

In fact, no one knows the God of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob

Elimelech moved to Moab because of economic opportunity...

- Not because it was God's will
- Not because it was wise in the scriptures
- Not because it would be a good place to grow spiritually

Elimelech moved to Moab because of economic opportunity

That also happens to people today ...

When there is trouble they are concerned first and foremost about economic concerns.

You want to put money first and God further down on the list – God will let you. But that’s not a smart move.

Money doesn’t fuel the heart.

Elimelech and his family live there for 10 years.

His sons marry Moabite women

- Oprah
- Ruth

Then ... Elimelech and his sons all die.

This leaves 3 widows to fend for themselves.

In that time in history, that was practically impossible.

Naomi hears that the famine back home in Bethlehem is over decides to move back and

Ruth goes with her

Naomi knows that God’s people are there.

Naomi is angry at her situation. She was also angry at God.

Ruth 1:12-13

¹²Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons— ¹³would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD’s hand has turned against me!

Tradition back then would be for a widow to marry the brother of her dead husband.
But Naomi doesn't think she'll have any more sons, no one for the girls to marry.

Naomi is clearly angry – verse 13

the LORD's hand has turned against me!

Ruth goes with Naomi anyway.

When they get to Bethlehem, the women recognize Naomi

Hey Naomi! It's great to see you! How's it going?

But Naomi is still angry.

Ruth 1:20-21

²⁰“Don't call me Naomi,” she told them. “Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. ²¹I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The LORD has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me.”

Names back then always had meaning.

The name Naomi means pleasant or sweet.

Mara means bitter.

It doesn't take a biblical scholar reading this to see that Naomi is still angry.

Keep in mind that the women were destitute.

Without men to care for them, they had nothing.

So we read in Ruth 2:2

²And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor.”

Naomi said to her, "Go ahead, my daughter."

That the equivalent of saying that I'm going to the soup kitchen or the food bank.

Leviticus 23:22

²²"When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I am the LORD your God."

Now it's dangerous for a woman to go out by herself.

Doing so, Ruth is trusting

- The people – which she knew to be God's people

This is already showing one of the highlights of the book

- Elimelech didn't trust God – moved to pagan place and lost his life and life of his sons
- Ruth trusts God

In trusting God we see that Ruth is not disappointed.

It's another reminder of God's providence.

When we are having difficult times, we need to trust God.

When need to put God ahead of economic considerations.

That's the only way you'll see God's goodness.

Ruth finds herself in a field owned by a man named Boaz – his name means mighty man of strength.

Boaz was

- Single

- Godly
- rich

When Boaz hears who she is, Boaz praises Ruth because he has heard about how good Ruth has been to Naomi.

Ruth 2:11-12

¹¹Boaz replied, "I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. ¹²May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge."

So Ruth is able to gather a good amount of grain and takes it home to Naomi.

Naomi is thrilled

Ruth 2:19-20

¹⁹Her mother-in-law asked her, "Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!"

Then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one at whose place she had been working. "The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz," she said.

²⁰"The LORD bless him!" Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. "He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead." She added, "That man is our close relative; he is one of our guardian-redeemers."

The concept of a guardian-Redeemer is from Leviticus 25 – the idea of taking care of people who need help.

Leviticus 25:35-36

³⁵“If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and are unable to support themselves among you, help them as you would a foreigner and stranger, so they can continue to live among you. ³⁶Do not take interest or any profit from them, but fear your God, so that they may continue to live among you.

That’s why last Sunday we took crock pots full of soup and gave it out to people we know who weren’t here – it’s is our obligation to help them!

Yes, they are interested in each other.

And they date.

Both nothing inappropriate happens!

In fact, he won’t marry her until the right person in the line of Elimelech declares publicly that he doesn’t want to marry her.

Ruth 4:5-6 This takes place in front of the town elders, for witnesses

⁵Boaz said, “On the day you buy the land from Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the dead man’s widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property.”

⁶At this, the guardian-redeemer said, “Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it.”

Then in verse 8

⁸So the guardian-redeemer said to Boaz, “You do it.”

I love that!

- Even though they were both head over heels for each other
- Even though they probably wanted to get married
- Boaz did nothing inappropriate
- He did what was right – giving the dead man’s relative the right of first refusal

It’s a wonderful demonstration that Boaz is a godly man!

It was rare to find someone with that character back then.

It is rare to find someone with that character today!

By the way ... I should point out ...

The man who had the right of first refusal (he is unnamed in the bible) SHOULD have been taking care of the women

- Should have been providing food
- Should have been checking in on them

He didn’t live that far away.

Yet he wasn’t living up to his responsibilities.

But Boaz picked up the ball and ran with it.

Boaz was a man of God.

Boaz married Ruth and they have a son.

Ruth 4:13-15

¹³So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.¹⁴The women said to Naomi: “Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you

without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! ¹⁵He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.”

The book of Ruth is truly a story of redemption.

Naomi thought she was ignored by God, left to die in a foreign pagan land.

Yet back at home she is cared for and looked after.

Ruth came from a pagan land, was an outsider, a foreigner.

Yet she was embraced because she was a HUMAN BEING!

Boaz didn't look at her and say

- She'd be good to have around for the harvest
- She'd be good breeding stock

Boaz saw part of God's creation and treated her as such!

Together, Boaz & God raised Ruth up from the land of Moab to be a respectable godly woman.

This is a wonderful story of redemption from God.

Do you think God noticed?

Do you think God recognized Boaz' character and the godly choices he was making?

God recognizes what we are doing.

God knows when we are making godly choices and when we're being foolish.

God sees what we put our finances at a higher priority than God.

God saw Boaz and all that he did.

Ruth 4:16-17

¹⁶Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. ¹⁷The women living there said, "Naomi has a son!" And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Naomi went from being an angry bitter woman to being an excited grandmother!

And the baby was Obed ... who was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

You don't know what God will bless you with when you live a godly life.

But rest assured, God knows you and your life.

God's already redeemed you!

PRAYER

God, I thank you that you are a father who loves us first, and then it is your kindness that leads us to repentance, and that you don't hand us a list of religious rules. You hand us redemption. God I pray you would send your Holy Spirit so that we can understand redemption and that we would understand it in light of Jesus.

Lord God, we come to you, as Ruth came to Boaz. We trust you, Lord Jesus, and we thank you for the redemption that you have given to us as a loving gift.