

A Restorer of Life

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[0 : 00] I wonder, can you say, without a doubt, I know Jesus died for me.

Can you say that without a doubt? That I know Jesus died for me. That he took my place. That he paid my debt. That he removed my shame and removed my disgrace and brought me into his family.

If you can say that, that's a basic understanding of Christianity. Now, as we grow in our Christian faith, as we read and study, our faith ripens to maturity.

And words begin to take on greater meaning. We begin to acquire new understanding and become acquainted with new terms, bigger terms, Bible terms, like atonement.

[1 : 12] And propitiation. And justification and substitution and reconciliation.

And the word that we keep hearing in Ruth, redemption. Redemption. Redemption. And through this beautiful picture of this true story in the history of Israel, we see another side of redeeming. What redeeming looks like for people. That redemption is not merely some cold, bland, theological term that's kind of out there somewhere.

But the story of Ruth reminds us that redemption is not merely just a business transaction, a paying and a buying of something.

But it's a love affair of the heart. It's a sacred romance. It's God loving and seeking and doing what he must to redeem us, to bring us out of our shame, bring us out of our disgrace, bring us out of our hopelessness.

[2 : 39] God loves us so much that he sends his son to pay that price and to redeem us.

And so what I want to capture in this book of Ruth, not capture, but is already in the book of Ruth, and I just want to reveal that, is this sacred romance that's happening.

We see this lovely picture between Ruth and Boaz. And Ruth had gone down to propose to Boaz. And the suspense and the tension is there.

Will he say yes? And the story, of course, turns out we're rooting. But remember how this story has flowed.

Ruth shows us a personal compassion of Yahweh. We see Naomi transformed from her ruin to her recovery.

[3 : 40] Act 1, as I mentioned, was Ruth's, excuse me, Naomi's ruined, where she herself says, the hand of Yahweh has gone out against me. He has made my life bitter.

Don't call me Naomi pleasant. Call me Marah bitter, because I'm bitter. I haven't stopped believing in God. I believe very much in God.

I take God very seriously. And it's God who has done this to me. Because God is almighty. He took me out full, and He brought me back empty.

He's made my life bitter. He's taken away what I had. He took my husband. He took my sons. And now I am left bereaved with nothing. I come home empty.

Of course, in her ruin, and in her depression, and in her despair, she can't see any good. She seems to be blind to the fact that here is this Ruth with her.

[4 : 42] And Ruth will turn out to be God's tool. So then we come to act two, where Ruth now takes initiative.

Ruth has come to be with Naomi. She's committed her life. Where you go, I will go. Where you live, I will live. Your people will be my people. Your God, my God. Where you're buried to death, do us part.

Where you're buried, I will be buried. Fully committed to you. So she goes out then to reap.

Because as the author puts it, it just happened that they came at the time of the barley harvest.

And as she goes out to glean, she just happened, her lucky stars, to go into the field of Boaz. What a coincidence. What a karma.

What good luck, whatever. Of course, the author's playing with us. These patchwork of fields, she just happens to come to the one that belonged to Boaz.

[5 : 46] And of course, she didn't know Boaz. She didn't know the field, according to Ruth. She just didn't know. It just happened. And so she does there, and Boaz being humility meets grace, being the gracious man that he is, he not only allows her to glean there, but he instructs his workers to pull out extra stuff for her and pile it on for her.

And she goes home with 29 pounds after it's pounded out of barley. Enough to feed for 50 meals, something like that.

But Ruth, in bowing before Boaz in Act 2, is fully humbled. Why are you gracious to me?

Why are you being kind to me? And Boaz says, I know you. You're Ruth. You came back with Naomi, and we all know Naomi.

Naomi, we've heard about you, how you left everything. You left your family. You left your land. You left your gods. And now you're seeking refuge under the wings of Yahweh.

[6 : 55] That's how Boaz interprets what she has done. You've not just devoted yourself to Naomi and Naomi's God. What you're doing is converting to this Yahweh.

You're seeking refuge under this Yahweh. And so when Ruth comes home that evening after gleaning all day and comes home with that huge sack of barley as well as the doggy bag from lunch, Naomi's eyes get big.

Where have you been? What field did you find? So she tells her about Boaz. And the name Boaz brings Naomi back to life.

At the beginning of Act 2, she had two words to say to Ruth. At the end, she has 67 words to say. She's come alive. She's been revived.

She sees the kindness of God, a huge sack of thing. And then Boaz, Boaz, he's one of our redeemers, which leads us to Chapter 3.

[8 : 07] We're Act 3. Now Naomi is concerned about Ruth. Boaz is one of our redeemers. Dear, let's wash you. Let's get you dressed. Let's get you all nice and clean. Let's put some perfume on, or at least some oil.

And then I want you to go down and you're going to do some really strange things. But just trust me. Just do this. And when you do it, he'll know what you mean. You're going to uncover his feet after he's slept so that he'll get the chill of the night and he'll shiver and wake up, which is exactly what happened.

You'll lay at his feet. He'll tell you what to do. And what he's going to do is say, who are you?

Because it's so dark he can't see her. She says, I'm Ruth. Put your cover over me because you're my redeemer.

And Boaz, instead of being displeased or thinking some evil thought of her, realizes she's offering marriage.

She's proposing. She wants me to cover her, to protect her, to bring her into my home and give her security. And therefore, by means of that, give to Naomi security as well.

[9 : 23] And his response is, your last love is greater than your first love. Your first love was to Naomi and giving her all that you've done, sacrificing everything for her.

Now I think this one's better than that one because you're going after an old man. One without anything.

You're not going after younger men. You're going after me? You? And everyone knows how worthy you are. Everyone knows what integrity you have.

Everyone knows you're a catch. Even though you're a Moabite. He's a Samaritan. You know, it's worse than a Samaritan. And so he makes a promise to her, as Yahweh lives, I will redeem you.

There's another redeemer closer than me, but if he won't do it, I will. It will get done. I will rescue you and your family. Now we come to Act 4.

[10 : 33] So we've gone from the ruin to the refuge, the remedy, now to the restoration of Naomi, where the women say to her, Yahweh has not left you.

He's not abandoned you. He's not left you without a redeemer. He has provided for you. And so we see her restoration with the child on her knee.

This beautiful picture. Now as we focus in on chapter 4, this final act, we see that this redemption that Boaz promises and enacts is what restores the hope and soul of Naomi.

In the resolution of the story, two biblical themes jump out. I want to show you these themes. One, obviously, is the theme of redemption. He redeems.

The word redeem is, I think it comes 14 times in this chapter. So pretty much safe to say the theme of redemption is in chapter 4. But then there's another theme that follows.

[11:45] In the first 12 verses, we see Boaz taking care of the business. He makes this negotiation. He makes it happen. He spends it a little bit in his own favor. You know, kind of holds back some information.

And, you know, he wants Ruth. But then after they're married and after the child is born, the women respond in a surprising way.

They interpret the events not theologically, but personally. because they say, Naomi, she's not left without a redeemer.

And what that means is now she has restoration of life sustaining in her gray hairs or her old age. The text really says about her gray hair.

I guess gray hair means you're old. Is that what the Bible said? No, diet? Oh, yeah. Doesn't matter. God still sees what color your hair is.

[12:47] So we have these two themes, restoration and redemption. So let's look at redemption first, the first part. See what Boaz does. By the way, Boaz's name means quickly.

And at the end of chapter 3, end of act 3, Naomi had said to Ruth, wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out for the man, Boaz, will not rest but will settle the matter today.

So remember, that happened in the middle of the, in the morning. Remember, she had proposed at midnight. They stayed there and then came up and then in the morning, he sent Ruth home to Naomi with another gift.

to Naomi. And so, this is the very next morning. So when they get up, Ruth goes home. Boaz goes right to the gate. He doesn't even go home.

He just goes right back out of the field into Jerusalem to the gate and sits down and waits for the other Redeemer guy to come by. So we see in these first opening verses, redemption.

[13:58] of the hopeless by one who is willing and able. Boaz will redeem Ruth and by extension, Naomi and by extension, Naomi's husband and by extension, Ruth's husband.

He's not just saving Ruth, he's saving Naomi. He's not just saving Naomi, he's saving the family name. Because remember, we have widows here who have lost their husbands and have no children, so the name will continue, will no longer exist.

Elimelech stops with Elimelech. And so what we're really asking for is to save the name, to perpetuate the family is one of the issues. So three steps happen here.

First, Boaz calls a conference at the gate. Goes to the gate. The gate is where business happens. Now even though Bethlehem is a small village, it was still surrounded by a wall.

It was still a fortified place. Even before David was born there and took over there. It's a fortified place, so the gate is really a big gate.

[15:14] We picture kind of a little swinging gate. You know, Bethlehem's a little swinging gate. No, it's a fortified gate. There's stone walls going up on the sides. There's a gate in the middle.

There's chambers for the guards to be meeting. It's a fairly large place, so it's easy for Boaz and this other redeemer and the ten elders to meet together in one of the rooms there, which is what they did.

The gate is where they did business. It's the court of law. It's the town square. It's kind of where business happened, where meetings happened at the gate.

And so we see in verse 1 that behold, surprise, oh my, just in time, here comes the other redeemer. And notice he doesn't have a name. He's never named. which is interesting. Maybe he's because he kind of turns out to be not the hero.

[16:17] He says, no, I'm not willing. Maybe it's to save his reputation in time that others might look down on. I don't know. He's not named. He's called Bethlehem Bob, so to speak.

In Hebrew, it's kind of a, it's a Poloni Almoni. Hey, Poloni Almoni. It's kind of like Joshmo, Billy Willi. You know, it's kind of this rhyming anonymous name. So he calls him over. He sits down. Verse 2, now he calls 10 of the elders to be witnesses.

There's a quorum. They can do business. They will witness the legal agreements. They will hear Boaz's negotiation. So in verses 3 to 5, now Boaz presents the negotiation. He tells, okay, here's the, here's the thing. Naomi has a field. She's going to sell it. Verse 3, Naomi has come back from the country of Moab.

[17:15] She's selling a parcel of land. Actually, technically, she's already sold it. In the Hebrew, it's in the perfect action, so it means it's completed action.

Apparently, she's already sold it outside of the family, and that's why they need somebody to buy it back into the family. So, being desperate, Naomi gets back, and she, she doesn't have anything, so she sells the field outside the family before she thought about Boaz or any of that, see.

So Boaz wants to buy it back. Anyway, there's a field, parcel of land that God has, remember, God has allotted land. It's all God's land, but he's allotted some, a parcel to us, and it belonged to Elimelech.

And so, I thought I would tell you about it, buy it in the presence of those sitting here, in the presence of the elders of my people. If you redeem it, redeem it, but if you will not, tell me that I may know for there's no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you.

So you'll get first choice. You have the right of refusal. So do you want to buy the land? By the way, he only brings up the land and poses the question, so he draws him in. Want the land?

[18:25] Yeah, I want the land. Yeah, I'll take land. Cool, I can more crops, I'm more income. Okay. Ah, almost forgot to tell you.

Verse five. There's a condition. There's a stipulation. You also have a moral responsibility, not a legal responsibility.

This is not a true kinsman-redeemer situation brought up by Deuteronomy 25. This is kind of outside of that. But you do have a moral responsibility.

Watch how he praises it. The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also are acquiring Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead. Why?

Why? To perpetuate the name of the dead. See, so his line doesn't run out, so the name doesn't stop there. In other words, you're saving the family. The other implication of this is, when do you buy that field for, from Naomi, for Ruth, whatever child you have with Ruth, gets that field.

[19:41] In other words, you're buying it not for you, you're buying it for your future son, who's not your son. It's going to be a liminelex son. So in other words, you must perform a selfless, sacrificial act for this family to carry on the line, to carry on their inheritance, so the field stays in their name.

You don't get it. You're going to put the money out for it. When the son's old enough, he inherits it. You want to do it now? Still want that field?

Well, I won't recoup my loss. I won't really be mine. So, he says, verse 6, I can't.

It'll impair my own. It'll, you know, if I could get the money, I can't. Actually, he's unwilling. See, Boaz puts it in a way to try to compel him to face the moral obligation.

Not the legal. It's a completely voluntary, so he can say no. But it still looks bad because morally, he's not willing to help this family.

[21:05] His brother. His relative. His kin. I can't. What do you mean you can't? You could afford to buy the field. Yes, you could.

No, I can't. Because then it's not mine. So I can't. Because it's about me. On the other hand, there is another guy that we're rooting for.

Boaz. He's not about himself. He is a selfless. He is one willing to sacrifice. So he says, where are we?

Verse 8, 6 to 8. I can't. So then they do the sandal ceremony. That's kind of interesting, right? They take off the sandal. Originally, the sandal ceremony was done by the widow.

So it would have been Naomi who would have taken off his sandal, threw it at him, and then spit in his face to shame him for not fulfilling his responsibility. But since this was not a legal, but more of a voluntary thing, it's kind of like, okay, yeah, I know.

[22:12] This is humbling. I can take my shoe off and give it to you. So in other words, I'm not walking on that land. It's your land. It's still humbling, which again might be why they hid his name.

Poloni, Almoni, Joe Schmo, Willy, Billy, Billy, Billy. But Boaz is willing.

Verse 9 and 10. Boaz said to the elders, and all the people, you are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belong. Now notice, it's all family here, not just Naomi.

From Naomi, all that belong to Elimelech, her husband, and all that belong to Kilion and to Malon, her two sons, who would have inherited all that. And I've also acquired Ruth, the Moabite, the widow.

Now we find out she's the widow of the firstborn son, Malon. I bought her to be my wife or acquired her. She's not a slave. He's redeemed her.

[23 : 17] He's paid the price for her. He's paid the dowry for her. He's acquired her. Just like Christ has acquired us. In order that the name of the dead may not be cut off.

What a gracious thing. And so the elders say, yes, we're witnesses. We agree. You have done this voluntary sacrifice. You've saved the name.

And then they give the significance. And here's where it gets really interesting. Notice what the elders say in verse 11 and 12. They don't just say, we're witnesses.

Then they give a prayer. They say, may the Lord make the woman, talking about Ruth, the woman who's coming into your house, into your Beth.

In Hebrew, the word house is Beth. Beth. So it's Bethlehem, house of bread. He's going to use this word Beth. Coming into your Beth, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the Beth house of Israel.

[24 : 23] May you act wordily in Ephrathra. Ephrathra is where Rachel died, by the way, and Benjamin was born, right just outside of Bethlehem, part of the vicinity of Bethlehem.

And may your name be renowned in Bethlehem. Bethlehem, another house. And may your house, Beth, be like the Beth of Perez. So he keeps talking about the house.

It's about the house. God bless your house. What's he mean? He means your family. Your family. And look at what comparisons they make.

May your house be like Rachel and Leah. Who's Rachel and Leah? Those names go back somewhere. Other historical names go way back to Genesis.

Rachel and Leah. Seems like they were in the story somewhere. Jacob. Abraham. Isaac. Jacob. Jacob went away out of the land and worked where his father-in-law got tricked.

[25 : 24] Remember? I want Rachel to be my wife. He goes in after seven years and gets Rachel and behold, it's Leah. and he works another seven years for Rachel.

He has two wives through whom those two wives are born who? The 12 tribes. So he, they're saying, may Ruth be like the matriarchs of our nation.

Rachel and Leah. They're putting Ruth into some pretty mighty company. Rachel and Leah. Rachel and Leah.

And that's not all. Look what he adds further. Verse 12. And may your house be like the house, not just the house and family of Rachel and Leah and the whole 12 tribes, but like the house of Perez. Who's Perez? Perez was born to Tamar by Judah. Who's Judah? There's another name. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.

[26 : 32] 12 sons of the fourth son was Judah. Judah would be the line of Messiah. Judah.

Now who does Judah have a son with? Tamar. Tamar was not his wife. Tamar was his daughter. And he didn't intend to have a child by Tamar. Tamar's husband had died. Judah had evil sons, so he gave his next son to Tamar and then he died.

He lost like two or three sons that died because they're evil. God just took them. And then he had one more son to give to, to do this whole Redeemer thing. Go and perpetuate the name.

And he wouldn't give his last son because he's out of sons. God's taken them all. He's out of sons. He won't give his last son to Tamar. And Tamar waits around, waits around. Judah said, I promise I'll give you when he's old enough, I'll give you.

[27 : 43] And he doesn't. So she goes and plays the harlot and tricks him. He goes to a harlot.

He doesn't know is Tamar. Finds out, oh, by the way, Tamar's pregnant. She's played the harlot. Okay, bring her in. Let's get it. And then she comes in and she's got his belt, right, and his cane. It's like, to whom do these belong, my lord? To which he says, leave her alone. She's more righteous than I. She actually was right.

I broke my promise. That's where the child comes from. And now they're saying, out of that scandal comes blessing. May Ruth's family and house be like Tamar, who was also an outsider, who got blessed in this kind of strange situation.

line of Messiah. Burp. Line of Messiah. Burp. Another foreigner. Another foreigner. Do you know there's several scandalous names in the genealogy of Jesus?

[28 : 57] There's a prostitute. There's Tamar. There's Ruth. There's one that's not even named. She's just simply called the one of Uriah.

You know, the one David got pregnant. When his, right, Bathshabbat. But in the genealogy, she's not named. She shall, who shall not be named.

So is that scandalous? These are names in the line of Messiah. What does that tell us about the Messiah? Outsiders come in.

It's not just Jew. It's outsiders. It's outsiders. Yeah, it's going through Jewish lines, but outsiders are coming in all the way along.

Which is why by the time Jesus dies and buys the church, the church is not just Jew, but it's Jew and Gentile and outsider. They're all included. Ruth is a picture of that.

[30 : 00] Here she is named with the matriarchs, with the people who built the house of the nation. May she be like that because she's that important and she's that included.

She's not a Moabite anymore. She's an Israelite. She's an Israelite. Just like Tamar. Just like Leah and Rachel.

Okay. So, why is redeeming tied to marriage? See, talk about redemption. Redemption is simply buying somebody. You could buy somebody out of slavery.

You could buy somebody out of trouble. You can redeem things. Why does it connect to marriage here? Why is marriage part of it? Because it's not just a legal situation.

It is a love affair of the heart. God is showing a sacred romance because God himself does the same thing. Listen to Isaiah 54. God's redemption is personal.

[31 : 06] It's about relationship. It's about rescuing from past shame. Here's what Isaiah 54 says. God's speaking to his people. Fear not, for you will not be ashamed.

You will not be confounded, for you will not be disgraced, for you will forget the shame of your youth and the reproach of your widowhood.

You will remember no more. Why? For your maker is your husband. Wait a minute. Your maker's your maker. No, it's different now.

Your maker is your husband. It's relationship. The Lord of hosts is his name and the Holy One of Israel is your redeemer, your husband, your redeemer.

The God of the whole earth he is called. So you don't mistake which maker you're talking about. Oh, the maker. You mean not just the maker, you mean the maker.

[32 : 03] The big maker. He's the husband. He's the redeemer. For the Lord has called you like a wife deserted, grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she has been cast off.

That's who God's calling. He's calling the cast off. He's calling the deserted. He's calling the grieved. For a brief moment, God said, I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In overflowing anger, for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says the Lord, your redeemer.

Well, that sounds just like Naomi. for a while. But it was a brief moment. Then I came to embrace you, to love you, to take you to my own, to have a sacred romance with you.

A holy love. God seeks us the same way. He seeks us to take away our fear and our shame and our disgrace, our desertedness.

[33 : 17] He calls us like a wife. He calls us with compassion and love. How do we know? Because He loves us so much that He sent His Son to redeem us.

He sent His Son to pay the price for us, to buy us from our shame, from our disgrace, from our desertedness, from our hopelessness.

So we see the first theme here in the first 12 verses, the theme of redemption. Redemption of the hopeless, even the outsider, by one who is willing and able.

Now we see a second theme and it gets more personal. Now it's turned toward Naomi. Verse 12 verses, He took care of the legal business, which was a redemption.

It was a legal trade. It was a legal purchase. But as we see, it's more than that. It's not just cold business. It's personal. It's a wife. Not just setting her free, but taking her in and going to perpetuate the name and love her and care for her and keep her secure.

[34 : 30] So now, verse 12, verse 13, now we come to the second part of this, the next scene here and we have kind of a summary of nine months in one.

So, Boaz took Ruth, he took her to be his wife. They were married and she became his wife and he went into her and the Lord gave her conception and she bore a son.

So notice something here, first of all. note that Yahweh enabled the conception. What does that imply? Imply she was barren.

Remember, she was married for 10 years to the son. No children. Just like Sarah was married to Abraham and had no children.

Just like Abraham's son Isaac was married to Rebekah who was also barren and had no son. Just like Isaac's son Jacob married Rachel who was also barren and could have no sons until God gave the gift.

[35 : 42] Leah kept having kids. But Rachel, whom he loved, the one whom he had chosen, had no. We have this theme in Scripture of barren, barren, barren.

In other words, miraculous birth, miraculous birth, miraculous birth. When Christ comes, two miraculous births, right? Elizabeth in her late age and then Mary who's a virgin.

Just a kind of a picture. So here's Ruth. God enabled. In other words, God blessed this marriage. God blessed this marriage.

And he gave, he gave her conception. Which, by the way, side note, every conception is a gift. Every conception is in the hand of God.

Every conception, every life is a life from God to be treated as sacred. Just a side note. So then, so we have this, okay, oh, they had a child.

[36 : 54] What does all that mean? Verse 14, the women tell us what it means. Remember the women? We haven't seen them for a few chapters. They were back in Act 1 when Naomi and Ruth returned. Remember the women?

Oh, it's Naomi, Naomi, Naomi's home. Oh. Naomi's had a hard, hard time. So we haven't heard from them since.

Now, they're excited again. Okay? Now the women, what, why are the women? Well, the women are interpreting what's happening. They can see what's happening. They're outside. They can see what's happening.

So what do they say? Then the women said to Naomi, blessed be the Lord, Yahweh, who has not left you this day without a redeemer. He's not left you.

He's not abandoned you. You're not empty. He's not against you. They remember all the words she said. They remember all the words she said. He's left me.

[37 : 51] He's against me. He's made my life bitter. Naomi, remember what you said? He's not against you. He's not made your, okay, bitter for a while, but he's not left you.

He's not abandoned you. He's not given up on you. So they show the significance. God has not left you without a redeemer.

He's given you a redeemer. The women can see God's hand. This is God. And then they pray for the implications of verse 15. He shall be to you, or it's more probably a prayer.

May he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age. May he be to you a restorer of life.

Literally, may he return your soul. The word life there is soul. And I believe when the Scripture uses the word nefesh, soul, it has a particular meaning to it.

[38 : 59] It's the inner part, the deepest part of us. Remember when God made us out of dust, he breathed into us his life, and then we became soul.

Life, yes, but more than life. Passion and desires and affections. Not just biology, but life and identity.

And so soul is where we feel the deepest, where we feel our highest joys and our deepest lows.

With our soul, we pant after the Lord, we thirst after the Lord, we bless the Lord with all my soul, but my soul is also that which is cast down.

Why are you cast down, oh my soul? Why are you depressed? Why are you in the mire? Why are you in the dirt? Because that's where the soul goes. It's just the soul.

It's affected. You can't live by the soul. You can't follow the soul, because if you follow the soul, like Jesus said, if you love your soul in this world, you're done.

[40 : 08] You have to hate your soul in this world in order to save your soul. You can't follow your soul. You've got to guide your soul. You've got to direct your soul and pray for God to revive your soul.

And that's what they're praying for Naomi. May he return your soul. May he be a returner of your soul. We remember how you came. You were dead. You were bitter. You were angry.

You were done. Now, may this child revive you. May this child bring your soul back to life. May you feel passion again. May you feel joy again. May you feel that what you have deep down that got pushed way down back out.

May this child be the instrument that does that. Shannon, does a little child do that for you? Bring you a little joy, a little life. Yeah. Yeah.

[41 : 12] Bring you from bitterness to blessing. And it's by seeing God's hand. Restoration of the soul comes by seeing the Lord's kindnesses.

See what God has done. The women are saying he's not left you alone. And may God through this child restore your soul. And then they add sustain your gray hair.

Does that mean they're going to keep coloring your skin? In your gray hair time, may that child be that smell. And just that sustainer that gives me endurance.

Yes, I'm going to press on for this beautiful child. I'm going to keep going. I have motivation again. Why? Notice what they say at the end of verse 15.

May he be a restorer of life and a nurser of your old age. Why? For your daughter-in-law. By the way, they've noticed this daughter-in-law. She's Moabite.

[42 : 17] Yeah, but we know who she is. Because your daughter-in-law. Oh my. Your daughter-in-law. She loves you. She really loves you.

And you know what? We know you lost two sons. Get it? That's irreplaceable. That's grieved. I don't even know how hard that could be. But that has to be super hard.

We get it. That's grief. That's loss. But what God's given you in their place is better than seven sons. I don't know what Melon and Kilion were like.

I don't know. They were not told. But we are told what Ruth is like. And she is exceptional. Extraordinary.

Extraordinary. She is better than seven sons. And she's given birth. Then we see the resolution that comes in verse 16 as Naomi, you get this picture, Naomi took the child and laid him in her lap.

[43 : 27] Probably more laid him on her breast. You know, like grandmas do. clinging to him, just holding him. That's the picture.

And then we're told that she held him and she became his nurse. Now that's interesting. His nurse. But the word for nurse is really, really interesting. It's a Hebrew word you actually know. Can I hear a amen?

That's the word. She became his amen. She became his faith, his trust, his firmness, his believer. I mean, it's one of those Hebrew words that's big. It's big. You know, we say, amen, because we, I believe that.

[44 : 31] I trust that. I stand on that. Yes. She became the child's yes. Because now she's a believer in God's kindness.

she had been robbed of that belief early on. She was a believer in Yahweh, but Yahweh had taken everything away.

Yahweh meant bitterness. Yahweh meant pain. And now Yahweh has restored her. And now Yahweh means, oh, yeah, he can do that.

But he can also do this. So then the women, another interesting thing, it's usually the parents that name the child, but here the women name the child.

What's that? I don't know, but the women name the child. The women just kind of take over.

Apparently in Bethlehem, the women run things. The men sit there in the gate and the women do everything else.

[45 : 32] I don't know. Kind of the Proverbs 31 women, they're doing everything. The man sitting in the gate. Yeah, you know what kind of wife I got? I got a great wife. She's doing everything. Right? Isn't that Psalm 31?

That's how it goes. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I got a wife. Sorry, all right. A son has been born to Naomi. No, a son was born to Ruth.

No, they're not into the legality of this. They're into the personal. Naomi, God's not left you.

Naomi, he's going to sustain you. He's going to return your soul. Naomi, you got a son. Not legally, personally. Personally.

This is personal. This is a love affair. this is a sacred romance. God is wooing her back. He's wooing her back.

[46 : 32] A son to Naomi. So they named him great name, Obed. Anybody name their children Obed? It's a great name.

It means servant. And he becomes a servant to Naomi. because he's going to restore and all that. He also becomes a servant to the nation.

Because we read, who is Obed? Who's Obed? Is he anybody big? No, he's not a big name, but he's really important because, see, they named him Obed, and he was the father of Jesse, who was the father of David, and there's a big name.

So this little story just became really big with the mention of David. This is no longer just a little story about how God worked in this one woman's life through another remarkable woman and a very gracious older man.

It's a story about the whole nation. It's a story about how God once again saved the line of the Messiah through an outsider who acted more like an insider than all the insiders because she got it because she sought refuge under the wings of God.

[48 : 03] What difference does all this make? David makes the story bigger, brings in the historical significance. He reminds us that there's a greater, even greater hope and even greater redeemer that's coming.

What difference does this story make for us? Did you like the story? Was it a nice story? Did it move you? Did it bring you to, you know, did you hold in suspense? Did it show you Jesus?

I hope it did. At least reminded you. Boy, that sounds really familiar. It really sounds familiar. I know somebody else that loves like that. It's really gracious like that. And lays down their life sacrifice.

I know, so who is that? So can God do the same for you? I get Naomi.

I get it. I understand bitterness emptiness and emptiness. And knowing God did it because I believe in God that seriously.

[49 : 13] He is who he is and he can do whatever he wants. Reminded me really important, really significantly the second time I got cancer.

It's like, okay, he can take me anytime he wants. And I thought he was going to take me. So I get Naomi. Can he do the same for me?

Can he do the same for you? Can he bring you out of that? Even when he's put you in it? Listen to Psalm 103.

Oh, I hope this lifts your soul. Psalm 103 is a call for all of us to sing. Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me.

Bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, oh my soul. Bless him. And forget not all his benefits. Like what? Who forgives all your iniquity.

[50 : 18] That means the twisted stuff. Your iniquity. Not just your failure. Who heals all your diseases. Who redeems your life from the pit, from the grave.

He brings you back to life. Who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy. Who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagles.

The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. Don't we need to hear that today? The Lord works righteousness. So I don't depend on man to do that.

The Lord works righteousness and justice. For all who are oppressed. That's where justice comes from. He made known his ways to Moses.

He acts to the people of Israel. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever.

[51 : 18] He does not deal with us according to our sins. Oh, oh, oh. By the way, this isn't Romans, this is Psalms. In the Psalms, it says, he will not deal with us according to our sins.

That's not for everyone. That's for those who fear him. That's for those who trust him. That's for those who know him. That's for those who are in relationship with him. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.

So when I mess up, he doesn't come and get me. Well, attack me. He comes and gets me. Yes, you understand.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, how high is that? So great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west, how far is that? So far does he remove our transgressions from us.

And just as a father shows compassion to his children, so Yahweh shows compassion to those who fear him, who take him seriously, who really trust him no matter what happens.

[52 : 30] As we sang today, even when he doesn't part the waters, when I want to go through, I'll still trust him. For he knows our frame and he remembers that we are dust.

He remembers, yeah, that's right, they're dust. far from perfect, weak. I remember.

I made him that way. Can God do the same for us? He has. In Jesus, God has shown us the same love that forgives, that redeems, that shows compassion, that satisfies us, renews our soul, gives justice to the oppressed, mercy and grace for our iniquities.

He's done it. And this is a sacred romance. It's a love affair of the heart. This is God.

The maker of heaven and earth has a sacred romance with us. He loves us.

[53 : 47] He seeks us. He sends his son so that we may enter into relationship with a holy, merciful God who abounds in love.

Do you have that? Did you have it and forgot it? Okay. Ruth reminds us.

still there. He's still there. He's still there. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your revelation of your love, your redemption, your salvation, which sometimes we forget are just these big terms that show incredibly what you've done for us, but they kind of lose their passion.

passion. And we thank you for the story of Ruth that reminds us that there's passion in those words.

There's a heart and relationship in those words.

And so, Father, help us. For those, Lord, who are lost, bring them back. Show them your kindness.

For those who have forgotten, remind them, draw them, woo them.

[55 : 03] Show them, open their eyes to your kindness. This is our prayer today. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.