

Sacred Romance & Redemption

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[0 : 00] Romance. Can you talk about such things in church? Is God really romantic with us?

Well, He does woo us. He draws us to Himself. He breaks down our hardship, our hard hearts by His tenderness, His patience, His mercy, His kindness.

Yes. So, let me ask the man, it's Father's Day, just so happens here we are in this chapter about romance. I guess that doesn't have anything to do with being father, but about a husband.

Guys, do you remember how you proposed to your wife? Was it romantic? Was it suspenseful? Was there tension? Could it have gone another way? It was for me.

[1 : 11] Dylan and I had been dating a while. Yes, I can remember that far back. I did have to ask my wife, what year was it? I knew the year we got married. I just couldn't remember how far I had proposed before that.

Anyway, Dylan and I had been dating a while. That took a long time to convince her to even do that. But we had talked about futures. We had, I kind of tested the waters because I was planning to go into the ministry and not everybody wants to go that road.

I was planning to be a lowly youth pastor, which meant no money, no home probably, old cars, which was a long time.

Belinda was, at that time, dean of a Christian college. And I was preparing to graduate soon at the same college. And I was preparing to go away to seminary and then into youth ministry.

So we had kind of talked about things and I decided it was time to propose. And I had planned this for some time.

[2 : 21] I wanted to surprise her with a ring. I wanted to make a grand gesture. A friend of mine, a very good friend of mine, their family knew this family down in L.A.

that were Armenian jewelers. And through contacts, I could get a ring there for wholesale, which basically meant half price.

So I began to research for twice what I could afford for rings. I began to do several weeks of looking at, you know, I learned all about diamonds and the cut and the quality and all that stuff and the color and such and such.

And so I figured out what I wanted. I figured out, okay, this is, here's twice what I could afford. So I knew exactly what I wanted. And set up a date to have dinner with my wife on a Saturday evening. And Delinda was going to cook dinner for me in her apartment. But there was a complication. The Armenian jeweler was in L.A. And Delinda's apartment was in San Francisco.

[3 : 38] So in the same day, I had to get down to L.A. in seven hours, get back in another seven hours by time for dinner.

Now, I had figured it all out. I had it all figured out. We left at 3 a.m. in the morning, get there by 10, get back by 5 p.m. at night, hour to spare, no problem.

You know what happened. Time to drive. Distance, traffic, I got back late.

She was worried and upset. By the time I arrived, there was tension. There was drama. There was suspense.

I had moments to figure out, am I going through with this or shall I wait? She's not happy right now because I didn't call ahead, didn't have cell phones back then, all that kind of thing.

[4 : 43] But in the midst of dinner, all was relieved when I pulled out a little black box. And the rest is history and now you know the rest of the story.

The story of Ruth's proposal to Boaz was much more suspenseful, much more dramatic, with a very daring and unusual midnight encounter.

This was not the Jewish way. Typically, marriages were arranged and set up. But this is Ruth who is now a foreigner, kind of adopted into Naomi's family.

Naomi's going to take care of this, set it all up. But this is Boaz who's an older man who doesn't have, you know, making up the family arrangements. Got to go about it different. But the story of Ruth and Boaz is bigger than Ruth and Boaz.

[5 : 58] Ruth and Boaz that points us ahead to the great sacred romance between Jesus, the groom, and Christians who are the bride of Christ.

It is a picture bigger than that. Ruth chapter 3 follows upon Naomi's revival from ruin. Remember what happened. And each chapter of Ruth is an act.

And each act has three scenes. And so we see in chapter 1, act 1, the opening scene is very stark and just kind of laid out there.

Here's the dark side of providence. Here is what God has allowed to happen or has caused to happen. How do you view your God? And so we see several things happening all at once.

There's a famine. They're forced to move out of the country to get food and jobs. They move away to Moab. Then Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, dies.

[7 : 04] After he dies, the sons find Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah, marry her sons. Ten years go by. There are no grandchildren.

There is no change. And suddenly the sons die. The sons die. It's one thing to be a widow. It's another thing to be a widow and then lose your only two sons.

And so Naomi goes through these dark times and she finally hears that God has sent bread back into the house of bread. The house of Bethlehem, or Bethlehem means house of bread, has got bread back in it.

So they're going back to Bethlehem. And on the way, on the journey, in the second scene of Act 1, Naomi tries to persuade her two daughter-in-laws, who are now both widows themselves, to go back home in Moab, to go back to their mother's house, find husbands, have a good life, see you later.

Not so much like that, but she says, don't go with me, don't go with me, don't go with me. Go back. And she persuades Orpah to go back to Moab, but Ruth clings to her.

[8 : 18] And then Ruth says the most extraordinary words, where you go, I will go. Where you live, I will live. Your people, my people.

Your God, my God. Where you die, I will die. Not just as long as you live, but where you die, I will die. Where you're buried, I will be buried. This is to death.

Do us part. Extraordinary, extraordinary commitment. And then the third final scene in chapter one, in act one, as they get back to Bethlehem, the women say, oh, it's Naomi, it's Naomi, it's Naomi, pleasant one.

And Naomi says, don't call me Naomi. Call me Marah, call me bitter. For God has dealt bitterly with me. I went away full. God brought me back empty. I have nothing.

She is very bitter. She is very discouraged. She's in despair. She's very real and raw. And what she can't see at the time, and we who are readers of the book and hearers of the story, she can't see that she's not really empty because with her is Ruth.

[9 : 24] And she comes back at the time when there's bread back in the house. At the, just happens to be the time of the harvest when widows can get free food following the reapers.

So act two starts out in chapter two with, now Naomi's just discouraged. She's wrapped up in herself. She's just going to sit at home, but Ruth will take action.

She says, I'll go out and glean, see if I can find favor. And just by chance, it just so happened that she comes to the field of Boaz, who she does not know.

She did not go there intentionally. She wasn't looking for it, didn't know anything about it, just happens to go to his field. And the second act of chapter two, humility meets grace. Ruth, a woman of true, genuine humility, finds this man who has truly become a man of generous grace.

He does not only not treat her as an outsider, especially as a Moabite, which is kind of a scandalous past, but treats her like a daughter.

[10 : 42] And then pours out the grace. And so humility meets grace. And Ruth, full of humility, says, why would you even consider me?

Why would you notice me, the unnoticeable? I'm a Moabite. I'm an outsider. Why would you even notice me, let alone be so generous? And Boaz says, oh, I've already heard about you.

You are a woman who is extraordinary. All that you've done for your mother-in-law, you think I haven't heard? How you left everything and you clung to her?

And then he revealed, I know what it's really about. It's not just, oh yeah, you love your mother-in-law, but what you're really doing is you're seeking refuge under the wings of Yahweh. That's what you're really doing.

And so Ruth's love for Naomi is really a conversion to Yahweh, who she had heard about for 10 years from this godly family.

[11:49] And even though he brings bitterness into people's lives for a time, he is a God who keeps his promises. He is a God who can overcome any other God.

And so she's committed. And so then we see at the end of Act 2, what we looked at last week is here comes Naomi who goes from ruin to refuge by Ruth to now revival.

Because when Ruth comes home with 29 pounds of barley that she had reaped that day and the leftovers from lunch that he invited her to, Naomi's eyes get real big and says, where did you glean today?

Oh, the guy's name was, no, what was his name? Boaz. Boaz. Naomi had perhaps forgotten, given up hope.

Boaz, he's our relative. He's our relative. And she sees how much grain she has brought back. She begins to see God's kindness. And she even says, he has not left me.

[12:59] He has not forsaken his love. I'm not empty. He's not against me. He is providing. And then she sees there's hope.

Boaz. Boaz, you know who he is. He's not just a great man of integrity. He's our relative. In fact, he's a kind of relative that can be a redeemer who can rescue young widows and old widows.

So there's a hope. So she's revived because she sees God's kindness and she sees hope of the prospect of redemption. That's what snaps us out.

Well, not snaps us out. That's what begins to bring us back out of despair. When we're in despair and all we can see is our pain, what will bring us back is to begin to see the kindness of God.

To begin to see the glimpses that God has not really left us. That God is still concerned about us. It's just seeing the kindness that maybe He's brought a Ruth type person into our life.

[14:06] See the kindness where He's provided just at the right time for us. Seeing those things begins to revive you. And then the hope that that brings.

It's not just that He's done things that He's still alive, but that there's a hope, a prospect, a future redemption. Brings revival. So now we come to Act 3 where now that Naomi is revived, now she reverses roles with Ruth who was the initiator, the goer, the getter.

Now Naomi becomes the initiator, the actor, then the pusher. Let's make things happen for you. Now remember at the end of Act 2, verse 23, the author wraps up kind of now, you know, you got all this good stuff.

He wraps up the scene by saying, so Ruth kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvest, and she lived with her mother-in-law.

So in other words, you know, Ruth comes in at the beginning of barley harvest, takes weeks to do that harvest, and then following that is the grain harvest, more weeks for that.

[15:22] And so apparently they do all the gleaning for both harvests at the same time later. They do it at night when the winds are not as rough, when the winds are more gentle, and they're beating.

You get the stalks. You get all the stalks of the wheat and the grain. They've got them in different piles. But then they beat them out to knock the fruit, to knock the grain and the barley out of the stalks.

And then they're separating that, and one of the ways they separate it too is by tossing it up into the air and the wind blowing the light chaff away, and then what lands is what you want. And so there's a whole process going on.

They do it at night, so that's why they're down there. It's going to take a while to process all of that that they've gleaned. And so now about seven weeks have gone by from the time Ruth began to glean to now the end of this harvest season and the reaping here.

So seven weeks have gone by. Remember, it had ended. Boaz. Oh, Boaz, Boaz. Boaz. Week goes by. Boaz.

[16:37] Another week goes by. Boaz. He's still letting her glean. She's still gleaning lots of stuff. She's still working hard, but nothing else has changed.

Boaz. Is Boaz going to make a move? Has Boaz noticed what a wonderful... He has noticed what a wonderful person Ruth is. He is...

single. Is he going to make a move? Week after week go by, nothing. Week after week go by, nothing. Same kindness, though.

Same letter we're even. Probably he's pulling out the extra stuff for Ruth and all of that, but... nothing. So... Naomi, being a good Jewish mom, says, okay.

I'm not the head, but I'm the neck that turns the head, so I'm going to make things happen. And so, Naomi Revive now initiates, at the end of the season here, initiates a daring plan that leads to a proposal, that leads to a promise.

[17 : 45] And all the symbolic language we have here, we have language talking about uncovering feet, uncovering feet, wing, put me under your wing, name again this word of Redeemer.

We have all the symbolic language in this chapter, which point us ahead to something that's bigger here. There is a foreshadowing.

Boaz is a kind of Christ, a bigger Redeemer. Ruth is a kind of seeker, a believer who's seeking and asking for redemption from the Redeemer.

And so we see this bigger picture. Two pictures here. So we see a picture of Ruth, who's showing us the church, who is seeking cover under wings of a Redeemer.

And then we have a picture of Boaz, who is the one who has the ability to redeem, has the willingness to redeem, and makes a promise that He will redeem.

[18 : 52] A picture of Jesus. And so I want to show you those pictures that the author is really showing us. And this is what Jesus meant when He said in the upper room, the Scriptures talk of me all the time.

Not by name, but they show me. They show pictures of me. We saw pictures of Jesus in Abraham and in Joseph and in Judah. We saw pictures of Jesus in Moses the Redeemer and in Joshua the King and in David.

We see pictures of Jesus all the way through the Old Testament. Boaz is another picture of Him. Not a perfect picture, but remember an outline. Not all the color and all the detail, but the outline is there.

So let's look at that. So picture number one, Ruth, is a picture of the church. Of all those believers who are seeking refuge under the wings of a Redeemer.

And of course, the church seeks refuge under the wings of Jesus. So let's look at this in three parts here. First, there's Naomi's plan. She has a strategy.

[20 : 00] In verse one, she's suddenly changed. Remember at the beginning of chapter two, she had three words. Ruth wants to go glean.

Naomi simply says, okay, go my daughter. No warning. No fields are dangerous. She's going to say that later, but at the beginning, she just can't see. She's just hurting.

Then Ruth comes home and Naomi wakes up. So now Naomi's totally different. Look, she's now the initiator. She's now the one with a plan. She's now the actor.

She's been revived. And now not only is she not just thinking of herself, now look who she's thinking of. What does she say in verse one? Naomi, her mother-in-law said, to Ruth, my daughter, should I not seek rest for you?

Now she's concerned about Ruth. She's finally been able to kind of shed the blinders on her eyes and get out of her despair and be able to think, oh yeah, Ruth, I have a responsibility to care for her and her future.

[21 : 09] And what specifically should I not seek rest for you that it may be well with you? Well, this idea of rest is shelter. The idea of security, a home.

Second question, verse two. Boaz. Why bring up Boaz? What does Boaz have to do with Ruth's rest and security and a home?

Is not Boaz our relative? Boaz. Boaz might be the answer. He's relative.

He's single. Okay, granted, he's older. Okay, he's older. But if you're going to measure a man, here's a man of integrity. Here's a man of grace.

Here's a man that's going to show, also show humility after he gets proposed to by this young woman. Boaz could be the answer.

[22 : 10] And by the way, Ruth doesn't question any of that. You don't hear Ruth going, Boaz, come on, he's an old fogey. Just interesting.

And then she gives a plan, a daring plan. Verse three. Several orders. Wash. Anoint. A little perfume. Get cleaned up. You've been working for seven weeks. You've been working hard. You're all sweaty. You know, so wash, clean up. So you don't smell. Put on some perfume. So you really don't smell. So you actually have a positive smell. And then put on your cloak. Now, some translations say put on your best clothes because we want to Americanize it and romanticize it a little bit more like we would. You know, put on your pretty dress. That's not what she says. She actually says put on your cloak, which is more of an outer garment that you would wear because she's going down at night and she's going to be cold at night.

[23 : 13] So bring, you know, basically your blanket. And remember, it's night and it's not in the city where there's lights and you can still see people. At night in the field, it's dark.

He will not see you. So it doesn't matter what you wear, but it doesn't matter how you smell because he'll smell you. He's going to see a figure, but he's not going to be able to make it out in details.

Who are you? That's why he asked you. Who are you? Smell good. No, he doesn't say that. But I'm sure he noticed. And then, oh, by the way, this garment might mean also, remember, Ruth has been a widow.

Her mother-in-law may be saying, okay, change your garments. You're no longer a widow. And I want you to announce to him that you're done mourning.

And that could also explain why he hasn't made a move because she's still mourning. Doesn't say that. It's a possibility. Could be.

[24 : 20] But again, he can't notice what kind of garment she's wearing, so I don't know that that's really the issue. But then, then notice what she says in verse. You should put on your cloak, go down to the threshing floor, do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.

Make sure he's feeling good before you go. And when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and... What? Here's where the story, and Hollywood would take this story and mess it up.

Oh, late night encounter. He's laying down. Okay, go and cover, and lie down with him. No, it's not what she did. Naomi's very specific, and Ruth was very obedient to do what Naomi had said.

Uncover his feet. What's that? Uncover his feet. Well, think about it. It's going to be late.

It's going to be cold. What happens when your covers are not on your feet? You get cold. You wake up.

[25 : 36] Thus producing an encounter. Very subtle. Don't touch him. Don't do anything inappropriate. Just take the cover off his feet.

He'll wake up. And then he'll know what to do. That's interesting, isn't it? He will know what that means. And by the way, she doesn't say lie with him.

She says lie at his feet. Very appropriate. Nothing wrong with that. He's concerned later that someone notices that a woman is there, but he's concerned, oh, they'll get the wrong idea.

You have been taught, you know, you've been a woman of integrity. There's no problem here, but let's, you know, we don't need to spread it around and start a rumor. That's not true. So she does all of that.

We're told in verses five and six, so she replies, all that you say I will do. So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her, instructed her. And then Boaz, we see, does something else.

[26 : 42] Now notice in verses seven to nine, here's Ruth's proposal, her supplication. It's really a prayer. It's really a request. Some, some people see it, some scholars see it as she's making a demand.

She's just telling him what he needs to do. Cover your, I don't think so, because later he's going to say, don't be afraid. Which, why does he have to say that? Because he noticed she's afraid.

She's worried. You can probably see it in her eyes. I don't know. You can hear it in her voice. She's asking this, but this is a huge risk because she can be rejected. She's, we know from the previous chapter, she's very conscious of being an outsider and being a nobody.

And to ask this, this man who is high in this society, who's a respected man in that culture, who is a man that sits at the gate and makes things get done, to ask him to quote unquote marry below him.

it's a huge risk. What kind of man is he going to be? We don't know. We know he's a good man. We know he's a good man. We know he's a generous man.

[27 : 53] We know he's gracious. But this is getting personal, so we don't know. This is a daring plan. And it's a bit suspicious to come at night and uncover somebody's feet because it was typically, remember, this is the time of the judges when everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

and it was a kind of thing that prostitutes would do. It's an opportunity for a man that doesn't have integrity. This would be a temptation. Young woman, we're not told what she looks like.

I'm sure she's a pretty woman. But it's dark. It doesn't matter. I keep going to the physical.

That's my, you know, it's like, oh, what does he see? Actually, he's not seeing anything. So, so, notice what happens. So, so, verse seven. So, Boaz had Aiden drunk.

He was, his heart was merry. In other words, he was feeling good. He's not drunk. He's just feeling at ease. He went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. He's done work all day. He's tired. He's going to go lay down. He's outside on the, out floor and he covers himself up and goes down to sleep.

[29 : 07] She came softly. She came quiet. So, so as not to disturb anybody else and uncovered his feet and lay down. So, she did just as her mother-in-law said. So, look at verse eight.

At midnight. So, here's the midnight in the middle of the night. The man was startled. Can be translated shivered.

He got cold. What happened to my blanket? And turned over and behold, surprise, surprise, surprise.

A woman. He did not expect it. Nothing had happened. She's just lying there at his feet. He's shocked.

He's surprised. Doesn't know who it is. He says, who are you? And then, she proposes. She says, I'm Ruth.

[30 : 09] By the way, it's interesting. Most scholars made a comment about this. How she identifies herself. I'm Ruth. You're your maidservant. In the previous chapter, she was just a maidservant.

Now she's in the family or at least in the clan. I'm your maidservant. I'm just Ruth. Just Ruth. And also, it's interesting that she doesn't say I'm the widow of Malan.

As if, you know, he's got a duty to do. Because we already realize that no, he doesn't have an obligation to do anything here. So, again, she's just kind of taking the risk and hoping that he'll be, he'll continue to be as gracious as he has been.

And then, she makes the request. Now notice, she's adding new words here. Naomi had not told her to say anything. She just said, go and cover his feet. He'll tell you what to do.

Ruth's filling it in. Maybe she's a little bit nervous. She startled him. She's, and he did ask, who are you? So, she's got to speak. You were supposed to just know what to do. So, now she's got to speak.

[31 : 23] Okay, I'm Ruth. I'm just, it's just me, just Ruth, just your maid. And then, she boldly says, spread your wings over your servant for you are a redeemer.

And she's using the words from the previous chapter. She's using the word that Boaz used about her. Oh, I know who you are. You're the one seeking refuge under the wings of Yahweh.

You're seeking protection, shelter, rest, refuge, safety. Now, she's taking the word that Boaz used and bringing it back to him.

That was your prayer for me? How about you be the answer to the prayer? How about you be the hands of God, the wings of God, the physical wings of God? How about you be the one who provides that shelter for me?

Spread your wings over me. Marry me. Give me security. Give me safety. Give me protection.

[32 : 30] That's the picture of marriage. Bring me under your wings. things. It's why God refers to his relationship with his people as a marriage.

That's why Jesus is called the bridegroom and the church is called the bride because she comes under his protection. He makes her safe.

He delivers her from all harm that's outside. He's protecting her. Remember, Jesus even said after Jerusalem had rejected him, remember he looked at Jerusalem and he cries and says, oh, that you would have repented.

I wanted to bring you under my wings. I wanted to protect you. I wanted to, but you did not want it.

So here, that's what she's asking. Marry me. Give me protection and security. So here's the moment of truth. How will this man respond?

[33 : 35] Will he be angry? Will he respond, why would you come out here like a common prostitute? Why would you come under such shady conditions?

Does he respond suspiciously? What kind of man will he be? Will he shoo her away? Will he think, oh, I could marry anyone.

Why would I marry you? I'm Boaz. What will other people think if I married you? He does actually think about that.

And he's not worried about it. Because what other people think of her, huh? He says to her, verse 10, first of all, a humble prayer.

May you be blessed. May you be blessed. Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

[34 : 41] thank you. I think, in the back of his mind somewhere, this may have been a far-off hope. Because when it's there, he takes it.

He takes it. Oh, may you be blessed. Oh, I'd never dreamed this could come true. Look at his gracious words.

He talks about her sacrifice. He prays a blessing. And then he says, may you be blessed of the Lord. Why? For you have made this last kindness greater than the first.

Well, what was the first kindness? The first kindness is what he talked about in the previous chapter, how she had left everything, clung to Naomi, and all that she had done for Naomi, that kindness, again, it's that word chesed, the loving kindness, faithfulness, gracious, merciful kind of action.

toward Naomi, how kind you had been to Naomi. You'd sacrificed and left all. This last kindness, what's the last kindness? Last kindness is what you're doing right now to me.

[35 : 52] You're showing kindness to me. You're showing mercy, grace, faithfulness, sacrifice to me. Why? In that you have not gone after younger men, whether rich or poor.

In other words, he's saying, you know, Ruth, you could have the pick of anyone you want. You're such a virtuous woman who wouldn't want you.

You could find a rich young man. You could find a poor, maybe you just want to marry for love. You didn't have to be rich. You could just be poor. You just want to marry for love. You're not even doing that. you're not following your own hope of happiness in some kind of image.

But you are again willing to sacrifice for your family. You're willing to give mercy to an old man. We don't know how old he is.

We just know by his reference, you're not going after younger. he's older. But he's certainly not a feeble man because he works all day and he's an industrious man.

[37 : 06] So let's not think that. So Ruth asks to be covered. Cover me. Cover me. That's the very thing that believers ask of God.

That's the very thing the church asks of the Lord. And Ruth is here picturing the church. There are several places in the Psalms that speak about being under the wings of God.

I was surprised how many times that showed up. And sometimes it's just a statement like Psalm 91 how God will cover you with his pinions and under his wings you'll find refuge.

Beautiful picture there. But there are several Psalms where it's a request. Please cover me. So it's not just Ruth that makes that request. It's believers, seekers of God who ask, God cover me.

Let me be under your wings. Listen to these. Here's one in Psalm 61. Hear my cry O Lord. Listen to my prayer. From the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint.

[38 : 09] Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been my refuge. A strong tower against the enemy. Let me, hear the request, the asking, let me dwell in your tent forever.

Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings. Specifically praying that. Again, in Psalm 57. Be merciful to me, O God. Be merciful to me. Sounds like our Psalm this morning. Be merciful to me. Why? For in you, this is personal, in you my soul takes refuge.

That's relationship. In the shadow of your wings I take refuge. There it is again. Be merciful to me because I take refuge in your wings.

For you have been my refuge, a strong tower. Whoops, skipped to the wrong word. Where is it? In the shadow of your wings I will take refuge till the storms of destruction pass by.

[39 : 11] I cry out to God most high, to God who fulfills his purpose for me. He will send from heaven and save me. He will put to shame him who tramples on me.

God will send out his steadfast love. There's that word again. He will send out his chesed, his steadfast, faithful, merciful, gracious, kind love, and his faithfulness.

By the way, this is a song and there's a silah in there. And silah, when you read that in the Psalms, means stop. Think about this.

Don't read too fast. Silah. Easy. Think about this. So Ruth is a picture of all believers asking the Lord for deliverance, protection, safety under his wings.

Have you done that? Maybe not those words, but have you asked Jesus for refuge? Maybe you did a long time ago. Have you asked him lately?

[40 : 23] From a storm? From a difficulty? We're in hard times. Have you been asking him for refuge? How do we respond in this tragedy? How do we respond?

So many people are responding. So many people are not going to respond. how should we respond? Oh, Lord, put me under the safety of your wings and show me how I should respond for you.

That's the only way I'm going to know how to respond. I can't tell you how to respond. God must tell you how to respond. He must tell me because he may have each of us respond differently.

Some of us may speak. Some of us may just come alongside. I don't know. We haven't gone through this before. How do we do this? It's a little different than before.

How do we respond that honors him? I assume it takes a little form of how Boaz responds.

[41 : 24] Grace. Grace. So there's a second picture that we're shown here, not just of Ruth who pictures a church, but Boaz who pictures Christ.

We see from verses 10 through 18. He pictures Christ, Boaz pictures Christ who promises redemption to the humble seeker.

Boaz makes a promise right away in verse 11. She makes her proposal. He, verse 10, responds humbly, prays a prayer blessing, talks about how this kindness is greater than before, and then he says, and now my daughter, do not fear, I will do for you all that you ask.

So he makes a promise, I will do it. But before he does that, he says, do not fear. Why does he say that? Can he hear a little bit of trembling in her voice?

Can he hear a little bit of, you know, I can tell you're anxious. I can tell you're afraid. Don't fear.

[42 : 36] It's just me. It's kind of like, I picture, you know, when John, at an old age in the book of Revelation, sees Jesus in his present state, right?

Sees him in his glory, and all his shining, and all his power, and John is like, okay, I'm a dead man. And Jesus comes up to him and touches him and says, it's me.

It's me. Oh, it's Jesus. You don't look like you used to. No, I'm, yeah, I'm a little, yeah. It's Boaz, you're okay.

Don't ease your mind. By the way, I'm very grateful. Notice he will not, he does not want to turn her down. So he makes a promise, I will do all that you ask.

Why will he do that? Well, he explains the universe 11. I will do all that you ask. Why? For all my fellow townsmen, everybody knows you.

[43 : 38] They all know that you are a worthy woman. You are an excellent woman. You are a woman of strength, of character, of integrity.

It's the same word he uses toward her that was used to describe him at the beginning of chapter 2. That Naomi had a relative whose name was Boaz and he was an excellent man.

He was a worthy man. He was a man of strength, a man of character. And so here we have a match. Two people of character.

Two people of strength, of integrity. I'm not worried about what anybody's going to say about you because they can't say anything bad about you. You have shown by your grace and your humility and your kindness to everyone's talking about you.

You're extraordinary. Who wouldn't want to marry you? But, ah, twist in the story, more suspense, it's not over, ah, ah, yeah, I'll redeem you, but, you know what?

[44 : 59] There's another guy. There's another guy. And as readers, we're hopeful in the story, we're rooting for Boaz, you know, yeah, this is great.

And then, wait a minute, it might not be Boaz. Oh, what if it, what's, who's the other guy? What if he's not like Boaz? What if he's a jerk?

What if he's not so kind toward nobodies? What if he doesn't adopt her into family like Boaz? What if he treats?

Oh, I don't know, I don't know, I don't think I want another guy coming into this. There's a problem, there's a complication, there's somebody else, he's actually in the lineage, he's actually closer to Naomi's husband than Boaz is, so he has the first right.

What do we do? Well, Boaz says in verse 13, I'll handle it. Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good, let him do it, if he is not willing to redeem you, then as the Lord lives, I will.

[46 : 10] You will get redeemed, so settle your mind about that. If he's not willing, I am, I'm willing, I'll go there.

And then he does an extraordinary thing, just like last time when he first met her, you know, it's like he pulls out more grain, and then he offers her to lunch, and then he's pouring, you know, he's always like giving gifts to her, he's giving, and now he's some more gifts, before you go, by the way, so verse 14, she laid his feet until the morning, she arose when no one can recognize her, he had said, let it not be known that a woman came to the threshing floor, so by the way, he's concerned about her reputation, she is a woman of integrity, but let's be above her approach here, let's not have any questions asked, let it not be known, this is between you and I, but first, before she goes home, he gives her a gift, hold out that cloak, you know, the cloak you brought, and six measures, we're not told what the measure was, not told if it's six ephas, which would be impossible for her to carry, because one epha was 29 pounds, right, we're not told, just six measures, just probably had some kind of scoop and scooped it into her, whatever she could carry in her cloak there, put it over her back and go home, it was generous, whatever that was, six of them, so what's the gift?

Was that for Ruth? Oh, let me get, I don't have a ring, but I can give you some grain, I'm going to give you a symbol of a pledge, I'm going to get, you know, so what is it, well, let's read on, that's actually not for Ruth at all, verse 15, he said, bring the garment you are wearing, hold it out, so she held it out, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her, she went into the city, she went home, and when she came home, her mother-in-law said to her, it's the news, how did it go, I've been pacing all night, I've been fretting, I've worried, please tell me it went well, you know, she's just hope, she's, heart's beating, and Ruth told her all that the man had done for her, saying, these six measures of barley gave to me, why, why the gift, for he said to me, you must not go back empty handed to your mother-in-law, the gift was for

Naomi, was it a down payment, I think it was a pledge, and by the way, he uses a word that Naomi had used in chapter one, must not go back empty, we hear that word before, she came to Bethlehem and said, I went out full and I came back, empty, give this to Naomi and let her know you're not empty, see, Boaz knows everything that's going on, he would have known, he knew all about Ruth, he would have known everything that Naomi had said, and as a gracious man, he didn't go, he gives her a gift, oh, I hear she's feeling better, tell her she's not empty, tell her I will make things happen,

I will solve this one way or the other, and notice how Naomi responds, verse 18, Naomi responds, wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter, in other words, we can trust this guy, it's in his hands, he's going to take care of it, he's a man of his word, if he said he'll take care of it, he'll take care of it, in fact, she says, for the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today, it's done, he said he'll do it, he'll do it, in fact, he's going to get it done today, he's going to live up to his name, because the name Boaz means quickly, gets it done, not a, what's the person that put, not procrastination, it's not his name, it's get it done, is his name, Larry the get it done guy, is that what [50 : 48] Larry means? I call the dog Larry, I don't know why, sorry for all the Larry's out there, those are, Larry not Lawrence, my other brother Larry, where did we go, what happened?

Ruth had asked for a redeemer, you're a redeemer, redeem me, what does a redeemer do?

What a redeemer does is what God does in Jesus, what Boaz is a picture of, in Luke 1, the end of Luke 1, remember the birth stories, here comes the birth story of John the Baptist, he's going to be born to this woman who's an advanced age, beyond childbearing, this wonderful woman named Elizabeth, her husband was a priest in the temple, his name was Zechariah, good name by the way, isn't it?

Zechariah, means God remembers, and they hadn't had children, and they're old and advanced in age, and he didn't believe it, he didn't buy it, the angel came and said you're going to have a son, I'm too old, so he's stricken mute, right?

So then the son is born, this miraculous child is born, and then the first words he gets to speak, he's suddenly filled with the spirit, and he prophesies, and it's recorded in Luke 1, he said, blessed be the God, the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people, he's visited and redeemed his people, what do we mean by that?

[52 : 45] He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, in other words, the lineage of David will be Jesus, as he spoke by the mouth of the holy prophets from of old, what does it mean?

It means that we should be saved from our enemies, from the hand of all who hate us, to show mercy, promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, he's a promise keeper, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant, to give, to grace us, that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might now, what?

Serve him without fear, which reminds me of what Boaz said to Ruth, fear not. I'm going to redeem you, fear not.

Save from fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, child, now he is prophesying about his son, who will become John the baptizer. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord, who's coming six months later, which is Jesus.

You will go before him to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of what? Salvation to his people. How? In the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sun will rise and visit us upon us to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

[54 : 18] What does it mean to sit in darkness and in the shadow of death? There's no hope. No hope. And suddenly the light, the sun rises in the light to guide our feet into the way of peace.

What does a redeemer do? According to Zechariah, a redeemer saves, shows mercy, keeps his promise, delivers those in order that they might serve without fear, shows them how to find forgiveness in God's mercy.

He is a light to those in darkness. He is a guide to those to have peace. In other words, what a redeemer does is all that Jesus does, all that Jesus promises.

Do you know him as a merciful savior? do you know him as one who has set you free from fear? Have you found forgiveness in his mercy?

Have you found in him light in the dark times? Peace even through the trials? He promises all of that to those who look to him.

[55 : 35] Jesus sees your need just like Boaz saw the need. Jesus sees your need and he's willing to rescue you. He's willing to take you under his wings.

He's willing to cover your sin and your shame. He's willing to make you safe and to protect you and to bring you to rest and peace.

He's willing to take you to be his very own and he will give you a pledge too. The pledge that Jesus gives to those who come to him is the Holy Spirit. What a gift.

It's a gift that keeps giving. So, ask him like Ruth. Ask him to redeem you.

Ask him to cover you. Ask him to take you under his wings. Propose to him. Request of him.

[56 : 38] Enter into this sacred romance. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this beautiful picture in Ruth 3 of romance.

Two people of incredible integrity of humility and grace, kindness. Both picture you in your love. And thank you, Lord, that we see in Ruth this remarkable woman, this humility, and yet taking the risk to ask for the help that she needs. and she asks one who can give her redemption.

Help us to be like Ruth. Help us, Lord, to be willing to ask. Help us to believe that you will actually not only be able, but will fulfill your promise to us.

Lift up, Jesus, before our eyes. we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.