

Boaz is Willing to be the Kinsman Redeemer

Ruth 3:10-18

Ruth 3:10-18 - *“Then he said, “Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. ¹¹ And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman. ¹² Now it is true that I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. ¹³ Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be that if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you—good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the LORD lives! Lie down until morning.”*

¹⁴ So she lay at his feet until morning, and she arose before one could recognize another. Then he said, “Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.” ¹⁵ Also he said, “Bring the shawl that is on you and hold it.” And when she held it, he measured six ephahs of barley, and laid it on her. Then she went into the city. ¹⁶ When she came to her mother-in-law, she said, “Is that you, my daughter?” Then she told her all that the man had done for her. ¹⁷ And she said, “These six ephahs of barley he gave me; for he said to me, ‘Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.’” ¹⁸ Then she said, “Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day.”

Background Notes

In the first half of Ruth 3 we saw “Naomi the matchmaker”! During the gleaning season this wise older woman, knowing that she was too old to remarry herself and have children, decided that Boaz could marry Ruth and fulfill his responsibilities as kinsman redeemer. Naomi knew that Ruth was willing to marry Boaz, and she was quite sure that Boaz was willing to marry Ruth, so she came up with a plan for Ruth to give Boaz the opportunity to say yes or no.

At first glance the plan seemed somewhat risqué or indiscreet, with Ruth presenting herself at night and asking him to spread out his blanket over her! However, we learned that this was a cultural way for Ruth to let Boaz know that she was willing to marry him, if he was willing to fulfill his responsibilities to her as kinsman redeemer. Notice what Ruth said there in verse 9: *“Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a near kinsman.”*

Some misguided people have inferred that Ruth was “crawling into bed” with Boaz! No -- Ruth was lying at his feet (v8). She asked him to put the corner of his covering over her as a cultural way of asking if he was willing to marry her. Notice that Boaz said to Ruth: *“And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman” (v11).* I don’t think Boaz could have said that to Ruth if Ruth was trying to seduce him. And notice that Ruth lay down at his feet until morning, but got up and left the threshing floor before it was light enough for people to awaken and see her. There was no pre-marital sex between Boaz and Ruth.

The good news here is that Boaz said that he was willing to marry Ruth -- in fact, he was very happy about it! Look at verse 10: *“Then he said, “Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than*

at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich." The fact that Boaz referred to Ruth as "my daughter," and that she did not choose a to marry a younger man is a good indication that Boaz was a number of years older than Ruth.

What did Boaz mean by the statement, *"you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning"*? Ruth's "kindness at the beginning" was leaving her homeland to come with Naomi to Israel, and being willing to care for Naomi. Ruth's "kindness at the end" was in giving up the chance to marry a younger man, so that Naomi would be secure in her old age, the property kept in the family and an heir raised up for Elimelech.

The six ephahs of barley that Boaz gave Ruth (v15) was not only an indication Boaz's happiness, but an assurance to Naomi that Boaz would take care of her when he married Ruth. Notice what Ruth said to Naomi, *"...she told her all that the man had done for her. And she said, "These six ephahs of barley he gave me; for he said to me, 'Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'" (v16-17)*. The gift of grain was an indication that Boaz would continue to care for Naomi as well as marry Ruth.

There was just one problem to overcome before Boaz could marry Ruth and redeem the family property. There was a kinsman who was a closer relative, and under the law he was the kinsman redeemer who was first in line to marry Ruth and redeem Elimelech's property. Boaz could perform the duty of kinsman redeemer only if the closer relative declined the responsibility.

Doctrinal Points

1. Waiting on God involves a time of testing.

After Boaz told Ruth that he was willing to marry her, but that there was a closer relative, he said to Ruth: *"Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be that if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you—good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the LORD lives! Lie down until morning" (v13)*.

Do you think Ruth got much sleep the rest of that night? Do you think Boaz got any sleep the rest of that night? Probably not! What if the closer relative were to say yes, he would be the kinsman redeemer? Here was a couple that loved each other. They wanted to be married, and they were hoping that everything would work out -- but they had to wait on God.

This was a time of testing for both of them. It was a time of testing for Boaz because he knew the proper course of action under the Law -- but the right course of action meant that he might lose Ruth! Would he do the right thing and trust God to work it out, even if it meant that Ruth was not to be his wife?

It was a time of testing for Ruth because she was placing her marriage in God's hands, waiting for God's choice for her husband. Can you imagine her thoughts as she lay on the threshing floor that night? What if God's choice is not Boaz, but the other relative? What if I can't bear children? After all, Mahlon and I did not have any children. And if I do have children, how will the people of Bethlehem regard them? Will my children carry the stigma of a mother who is from a

pagan background and the foreign land of Moab? Will people discriminate against my children because they're not 100% Jewish? All of these thoughts must have flooded Ruth's mind as she waited on God. It was a test of her faith in the way the God of Israel would care for her.

Waiting on God involves a time of testing. Have you ever had to wait for God? It's not easy, is it? Sometimes it's waiting for the results of a job interview. You want the job, you need the job, you've prayed about this job -- but you must wait. Waiting on God is not easy. It's a test of your faith.

Maybe it's waiting on God for his will about how and where to serve him. Some of our friends have had to wait on God about serving Him in the ministry of Trans World Radio. Everything finally worked out, but they will tell you that it was definitely a time of testing as they waited!

A time of testing may come as you're waiting for the results of a medical test. You wonder if you will be given a clean bill of health, or will there be problems? This is a big test of faith -- especially if you learn that the test results are not good. Some friends of ours are waiting on God for the results of medical treatment. The wife was diagnosed with cancer a few years ago; she had surgery and chemotherapy, but there's still a question as to whether any cancer remains. But they are not afraid or discouraged during this time of testing -- they're waiting on God for his will. Waiting on God involves a time of testing.

2. Waiting on God assumes that God is working.

As believers, we can sit tight and not be upset or worried when we're waiting on God, because we know that God is at work behind the scenes to accomplish His good purposes. We certainly see this principle at work in the book of Ruth. Nothing would stop God's good plans for taking care of Naomi, for providing a good husband for Ruth and for preparing the lineage of the coming Messiah.

In the same way we can assume that God is working for us as we wait on him. Some friends of ours recently shared with us that finally their son was once again beginning to give evidence of his faith. These parents have been praying and waiting on God for a long time, waiting to see evidence that their son is truly a believer. But while they waited, they were confident that God was at work. Waiting on God assumes that God is working.

Notice what Naomi said about Boaz in verse 18:

"Then she said, 'Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day.'" Here is another aspect of this doctrinal point about God being at work. Throughout the book of Ruth, we have seen that Boaz is a spiritual picture or type of the Lord Jesus, our Kinsman Redeemer. Now if Boaz would "not rest until the matter was concluded" so he could marry Ruth, is this not a picture of our present relationship with "our Boaz," the Lord himself?

As believers, we are the bride of Christ, and we are awaiting the wonderful celebration of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. This event will take place when our Lord returns. While we wait, the Lord Jesus is working on our behalf. Right now, He's working on our home in Heaven! In John 14:2-3 the Lord told us that He was going to prepare a place for us. He is working and he will not rest until "the matter is concluded," and He returns for us, His bride. And I don't think this is over spiritualization!

Remember, waiting on God assumes that God is working.

Practical Applications

1. Don't give people who gossip an opportunity!

In verse 14 Boaz said: *"Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor"* because he didn't want to give the village people who liked to gossip an opportunity to gossip. You can imagine what the town gossipers would have said if they knew Ruth had spent the night at the threshing floor with Boaz! There were gossipers in that day, just there are gossipers today.

Do you know the best way to handle gossipers? Don't give them anything to gossip about! Don't give those who gossip an opportunity!

2. You will never lose out on "the best deal" if you wait on God!

I've had to learn this lesson, because I often tend to make decisions too quickly! Boaz and Ruth did not lose out because they waited on God. In fact, if we were writing up the story of Ruth, we would probably have ended it right after Boaz put his blanket over Ruth, finishing it off with the line, "and they were married and lived happily ever after" -- right? But Boaz and Ruth did the right thing. They didn't rush ahead! They waited on God to work out for the situation for them.

Psalm 84:11 says: *"No good thing will He [God] withhold from those who walk uprightly."* You will never lose out on the best deal if you wait on God!

Whether it be a job that you're applying for, or a home that you're buying, or a sale that you think you'll miss if you wait, or the right husband or wife that you're looking to marry -- if you wait on God you'll never miss out on God's choice for you!

You'll never lose out on the best deal if you wait on God!