

“Redemption in a Baby” (Ruth 3–4)(2.6.22)

Ruth 3–4 (NIV84)

3 One day Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, should I not try to find a home for you, where you will be well provided for?² Is not Boaz, with whose servant girls you have been, a kinsman of ours? Tonight he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor.³ Wash and perfume yourself, and put on your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don’t let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking.⁴ When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do.”

⁵“I will do whatever you say,” Ruth answered.⁶ So she went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law told her to do.

⁷When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down.⁸ In the middle of the night something startled the man, and he turned and discovered a woman lying at his feet.

⁹“Who are you?” he asked.

“I am your servant Ruth,” she said. “Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer.”

¹⁰“The Lord bless you, my daughter,” he replied. “This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. ¹¹And now, my daughter, don’t be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character. ¹²Although it is true that I am near of kin, there is a kinsman-redeemer nearer than I. ¹³Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to redeem, good; let him redeem. But if he is not willing, as surely as the Lord lives I will do it. Lie here until morning.”

¹⁴So she lay at his feet until morning, but got up before anyone could be recognized; and he said, “Don’t let it be known that a woman came to the threshing floor.”

¹⁵He also said, “Bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it out.” When she did so, he poured into it six measures of barley and put it on her. Then he went back to town.

¹⁶When Ruth came to her mother-in-law, Naomi asked, “How did it go, my daughter?”

Then she told her everything Boaz had done for her¹⁷ and added, "He gave me these six measures of barley, saying, 'Don't go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.' "

¹⁸Then Naomi said, "Wait, my daughter, until you find out what happens. For the man will not rest until the matter is settled today."

4 Meanwhile Boaz went up to the town gate and sat there. When the kinsman-redeemer he had mentioned came along, Boaz said, "Come over here, my friend, and sit down." So he went over and sat down.

²Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said, "Sit here," and they did so.³Then he said to the kinsman-redeemer, "Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our brother Elimelech.⁴I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of these seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you will not, tell me, so I will know. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line."

"I will redeem it," he said.

⁵Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the land from Naomi and from Ruth the Moabitess, you

acquire the dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property."

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

⁷(Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel.)

⁸So the kinsman-redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it yourself." And he removed his sandal.

⁹Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, "Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Kilion and Mahlon. ¹⁰I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from the town records. Today you are witnesses!"

¹¹Then the elders and all those at the gate said, "We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you have standing in Ephrathah and be

famous in Bethlehem.¹² Through the offspring the Lord gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.”

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. Then he went to her, and the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.¹⁴ The women said to Naomi: “Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a kinsman-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel!¹⁵ He 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.”

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

¹⁸ This, then, is the family line of Perez: Perez was the father of Hezron,¹⁹ Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab,²⁰ Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon,²¹ Salmon the father of Boaz, Boaz the father of Obed,²² Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David.

The word of God for the people of God.

LET US PRAY.

Title: **“Redemption in a Baby”**

INTRODUCTION:

Holding a baby. There is something about holding a baby. You feel them grasp your finger and somehow they squeeze out some joy. Maybe it is in their sweet cooing. Maybe it is the smell of their scalps. There is something about holding a baby.

When there is a baby in church, the dynamics change. There is a different vibe in the air. Smiles come more easily. Somehow, this new life infuses more life into the gathering. There is a connectedness. The sense of community is enhanced.

When you hold a baby, their fragility and vulnerability is very evident. Just think about the need to support the baby’s head. There is something about their needing you that sparks a deeper connection. If the child is a relative, the feelings are amplified. If children are the rainbow, grandchildren are the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

¹⁴The women said to Naomi: “Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a kinsman-redeemer. May he become famous

throughout Israel!¹⁵ He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. ¹⁶Then Naomi took the child, laid him in her lap and cared for him.

BODY:

When we first meet Naomi, she is empty and bitter. Her husband and both sons have died and she is in a foreign land. Now, her situation, her life, and her outlook are completely different. And why? Because of this child who is here called her kinsman-redeemer. This is somewhat of a surprise, or at least a twist.

Much is made of Boaz being the kinsman-redeemer, which he certainly was. Over and over again, Boaz is identified as the kinsman-redeemer. And, not only was he faithful to his role and responsibilities, he was very effective. Over the centuries, Christian commentators and preachers have commended Boaz AND have demonstrated that he is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, **our** kinsman redeemer.

The community understands that this child, Obed, is a gift from God. The scripture specifically credits our Creator with the conception of this child. We should not be surprised as this is consistent with all of scripture.

In the very next book of our Bibles, 1 Samuel, we meet the tormented Hannah who was childless. She pleads to the LORD for a son. When God answers her with the birth of Samuel, she dedicates him to God.

1 Samuel 2:21 (NIV84) And the Lord was gracious to Hannah; she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the Lord.

Samuel becomes the last Judge of Israel and anoints David to be king.

Of course we all know, that the mother and father of God's Chosen People were a very unlikely couple. Abram and Sarai were old and she was barren. The LORD miraculously enables them to conceive their long awaited son, Isaac. From their dead loins, The people Israel would become more numerous than the stars of heaven.

John the Baptist was a miraculous conception also. His mother, Elizabeth, was old and barren, well past the age to produce children. Nevertheless, the Lord did the impossible. And when Mary went to visit her aunt Elizabeth, baby John leapt in his mother's womb! Why? Somehow the presence of the newly conceived Jesus was perceived. The Redeemer of the world had taken on human flesh and would soon be born in Bethlehem.

Have you ever known a situation when the birth of a child impacted those around them? Even in the most ordinary situation, there is joy and celebration. The families rally together. They grow closer. There is hope and promise about the future infused through that new life with those around them.

Yes, this child, Obed, would become famous throughout Israel, just like the blessing bestowed by Naomi's friends. This child would be a blessing that surpassed the blessing of seven sons. This was considered a hyperbolic accolade. But, the truth was far greater than they could possibly know. Through this child, not only would Israel be blessed, but the whole world.

We say these things so often that they seem trite, "The Lord's ways are higher than our ways. The mind of God, who can know it? 1 Corinthians 2:9 (ESV)

⁹ But, as it is written,

 "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,

 what God has prepared for those who love
him"—

This love story of Ruth and Boaz is a great example and encouragement to us. Even in dark days when evil seems to have the upper hand and misery and suffering surround, there is a hope for the faithful. They built a foundation for a future. They trusted God. They followed the law of God as laid out in the scriptures. They worked hard. They found redemption in the birth of a Baby.

CONCLUSION:

While I was sick for a couple weeks, I watched more news than usual. But soon, I started limiting my news watching – it was just too depressing. The number of shootings and the violence in Philadelphia; the killing of law enforcement officers in New York.

Then of course: COVID, COVID, COVID and all the stories of burnout. First responders, medical personnel, and all the staffing shortages in so many areas.

The finance markets have been in a tizzy as people worry about interest rates. And, interest rates are expected to go up because of inflation and the need to control it.

Russian troops are massing along the Ukraine Border. There are a lot of political accusations cast

about and some concerning alliances have been made.

The Beijing Olympics in China seem to be a good example of the state of this world. There is a lot of beauty and celebration of human accomplishment. At the same time, reporters debate how much to say about human rights abuses by the Chinese government.

So, what are Christian men and women to do? We are to keep living our daily lives, but not in some random or haphazard way. We are to constantly be aware that God is working in our circumstances; working in the generations before and after us; working in a myriad of ways in the world around us.

We should live according to the scriptures. Boaz lived out his role as kinsman-redeemer according to Leviticus and Deuteronomy. You can make a strong argument that he lived out the two Greatest Commandments that were given in the Law and exalted by the Lord Jesus: Matthew 22:37-40 *Jesus said unto him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On*

these two commandments hang ALL the law and the prophets."

We should live according to our knowledge that our redemption was fulfilled through Jesus. Our price was paid. There are still billions of beggars who need the bread of life – the baby born of Bethlehem. No matter what field God leads us to work, we can be faithful. The Lord of the Harvest will cover us. No matter our role, a prominent person or a gleaner, we are called to participate in the harvest.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.