

Ruth Ch 3

Since it's been a few weeks since we've peered into the book of Ruth together let me remind you of the fact that ch 2 brought about some radical transformations that would prove to be only the tip of the iceberg both for Naomi, and for Ruth. You remember that Ch 1 left off with Naomi singing, "I've got the bitter heart blues", but by the end of Ch 2 she was singing, "The sweet songs of blessing." Her future it would seem was turning from bad, to bright, from sad, to sweet, and from dreadful to delightful. She had come back to Bethlehem (having returned from the land of Moab) with nothing but the clothes on her back and a daughter in law that she had obtained through the marriage of her now deceased son (Mahlon or Chilion we're not told which) but both had died as well as her husband Elimelech. Orpah the other daughter in law had decided to turn back to Moab, but Ruth had purposed in her heart to forsake all others and come with Naomi back to Bethlehem and serve the true and living God, and take care of her mother in law. And so she went out one day to glean in the fields and even though she'd planned her own way we realize that the Lord directed her steps into the field of a man named Boaz. And upon learning of who she was and how diligently she'd been working and how virtuous she was and how she'd purposed to take care of her mother in law and seek refuge under the wings of the God of Israel, Boaz promised to protect her, and provide for her and bless her, all she had to do was simply stay and glean in his field (not looking elsewhere for provisions.) And he'd make sure she was taken care of. So he had the young guys that were working for her, just kind of do a careless and sloppy job that day and when the day was over she'd gleaned about week or so's worth of grain. Now that's obviously more than anyone would've been able to do by themselves by simply picking through the reapers leftovers and so when she returned home to Naomi, Naomi was topped out. And said, "Where in the world did you work today and who was it that took notice of you?" And Ruth said, well, the name of the man who owned the field was Boaz, and Naomi rejoiced because not only did Boaz show her favor, but he was a near kinsman as well, which is profoundly significant, why? Turn to Duet 25:5-10

If we don't understand this precept we won't get what's going on in the next 2 ch. This is what's referred to as the Law of the Kinsman Redeemer, and a kinsman redeemer could be of benefit to the family in several ways. But what this basically entails is that if there were a few brothers in a family and one of them got married but never raised up a son in the marriage before he died then it was the next oldest brothers responsibility to marry his brothers widow and raise up a son that would carry on his brothers name. Now in Naomi's case she didn't have any other sons so the next nearest kinsman could fulfill this right. But not only could the kinsman redeem the name of the deceased family member but also the land of a family member who maybe had sold it due to hard times or whatever. The "goel" or kinsman redeemer could buy it back, now we know that Elimelech sold his land before they moved to Moab, but after he died, Naomi was a poor widow woman who would never be able to buy back her property and it wouldn't revert back to her until the year of jubilee which for all we know was another 40yrs yet.

So there's much hope for them in this near kinsman by the name of Boaz, he can redeem their land, redeem their name, give them a future and a hope, the only question is, will he? Thus the story unfolds before us, and it's been about 6 weeks or so since ch 2 in that Ruth gleaned in his fields through both the barley and wheat harvest and so after some time we read in vs 1 of Ch 3.

Vs1-2

Now, back here in vs 1 we see this word "security" or literally "rest", she says, shall I not seek rest for you, this is her way of saying, "You need to remarry, you're still young, there's no reason that you should be out there gleaned as a poor widow the rest of your life." And again there's a profound truth that we should seek to allow to govern our marriages here, too many people feel that "marriage" is equivalent to "bondage", that marriage is an institution of stress, disagreements and turmoil. But that's not at all the way that God intends a marriage to be lived out. Your home should be a refuge and safe haven for you, there should be no secrets between you and your spouse, no points of contention in that arena, whether it be concerning your emotional stability, you're spiritual well being, things concerning your finances. You need to have in your spouse an individual that you can confide in, friends come and go, but your spouse will be there through thick and thin, friends will turn their back on you; your spouse is on your side. This word translated "security" here in vs 1 is the same word that was used back in vs 9 of ch 1 where Naomi said to her daughters in law, "*The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband.*" Our marriages are to be places of rest and refuge and security, but don't be deceived, it can only happen in it's fullest intention via the Lord and submitting to His word for our lives. "*The Lord grant that you find rest in the house of your husband.*"

But here in vs 2 where she says, "*is he not our relative?*" Your bible might say "kinsman" it's this Hebrew word "goel" she's in reference to this kinsman redeemer, one who can redeem and restore their lives should he be willing to do so. But he's down at the threshing floor winnowing the barley in the evening breeze because harvest time is over, and this was always a time of great feasting and celebration because it was their years income and so the timing is right, things are looking good for him to be in a good mood, the harvest is in, the income is flowing.

Vs3-5

5 things that Naomi mentioned for her to do in order to approach the lord of the harvest here (Boaz) in order to know him in a more intimate way and come into the fullness of who he can be in her life. And remember that in many, many ways the account of Ruth and Boaz reflect the romance of redemption in our relationship as a Gentile to the Lord of the harvest Jesus Christ, and so we want to take note of these things, what can we do to enter into a more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and enter into the fullness of who He's to be in our lives. 1st of all she says to her is "wash yourself." Now we know that the initial washing of regeneration takes place by the Lord, He said, "unless I wash you, you have no part of Me." There is no righteous work that we can do in and of ourselves in order to be made clean before God.

But there's also what we refer to as God's initiative and human responsibility. In other words when we confess our sin and ask for forgiveness God is faithful to wash us and cleanse us, but there are other times when (as in Isa 1:16) where the Lord says, "*Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes.*" 2 Cor 6:17 says, "*Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.*" So though the grace and forgiveness of God abounds, He won't violate your free will either, 2 Cor 7:1 says, "*let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*" What does that mean, it means that God's not going to make you clean up your life, you need to remove from yourself those things that are defiling you. And it may be a certain relationship; it may be your CD collection, or your books or magazines, your movie library or certain satellite or cable channels. God's not going to force you to cleanse yourself of those things, but if we want to draw nearer to Him, then we would do well to be obedient to whatever it may be that He reveals to us that's defiling us and cleanse ourselves of it.

It won't make you more holy or righteous, but it will open up a means for God to draw nearer to you and for you to commune more intimately with Him. Under the law if a priest entered the presence of God defiled, he was in danger of being killed by God. The NT teaches the priesthood of all believers, yet how often do we rush into God's presence with out cleansing ourselves of things that have defiled us and repenting of them.

The 2nd thing she was to do was to anoint herself, now we know that scripturally speaking; anointing speaks of the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the believers life. It speaks of being fresh and vibrant, the opposite of mourning and gloom, if we're to be intimate with Jesus then we need to allow the Holy Spirit to revitalize our lives, that we might take on the sweet fragrance of our Lord.

3^{rdly} she was to change her clothes, she was to get out of those widows rags and put on garments that were fit for a bride. And again the change of garments in the scriptures carries a spiritual meaning as well. You remember when Adam and eve sinned and they tried to cover themselves, but the Lord didn't recognize those garments. Instead He made a covering for them out of animal skins through the shedding of blood and gave them new garments that served as a covering to them. The OT priests were to wear special garments that no one else could wear, the bible pictures salvation as a change of garments, righteousness as a robe, fine white linen as holiness and purity, in our own righteousness we're dressed in filthy rags, but in Christ we're clothed in white.

4^{thly} She was to go down to the threshing floor, and this is where the rubber would meet the road, in the fields she was gleaning for herself, but at the threshing floor is where she would give of herself, there are those who never move from the fields and all they're interested in is getting all that they can for themselves.

But when the harvest matures you take it to the threshing floor, and throughout the scriptures the threshing floor speaks of separation, sacrifice, and service, you recall that David bought the threshing floor of Ornan for an altar of sacrifice (and he paid full price refusing to give to the Lord of that which cost him nothing). It was at the threshing floor where God commissioned Gideon for service. Ruth moved beyond simply gleaning for herself, and went to the threshing floor in order to give of herself.

And 5^{thly} She was to lie down at his feet and he would take it from there, and I think this one is fairly self-explanatory. If we want to be nearer to Jesus and have Him be the fullness of what He desires to be for us, then we need to present ourselves at His feet, now this wasn't an immoral act, it was an act of submission. It was an act of humility, you're aware of the fact that it was the job of the least esteemed servant in the households to wash the feet of the guests and those who lived there. When J.B. spoke of Jesus he said, I'm not even worthy to lose the strap of His sandal, to present yourself at someone's feet meant that you were humbling yourself before that person and submitting your self to their direction for your life. Even as throughout the gospels you find so many people coming to the feet of Jesus, the prostitute who washed His feet with her tears, the demoniac who was delivered and put in his right mind was found sitting at the feet of Jesus, Ruth was submitting herself to him, taking a subservient position. And notice vs 5 Ruth was a doer and not a hearer only of the word, she says all that you say to me I will do, oh that we were as eager to fulfill the word of God in our own lives.

Vs 6-7

Now why would he sleep out by the harvest? Well, remember that this took place during the time of the judges and quite frankly it wasn't safe to leave it unattended and so he's protecting his harvest from thieves.

Vs8-9

So around midnight his feet are getting cold and so he starts stirring and lo and behold he kicks something down there and it freaks him out, he's not sure if he's being robbed or what. And then he realizes it's a woman and he says hey, who's there and then we read here in vs 9 where she says (read last 1/2).

And the NKJV does about the best job translating this because she's not asking him to let her under his blanket so they can snuggle and get warm, though he needs to cover his feet, she's just maybe using that as a metaphorical platform. But she's not asking him to cover her with his garment or his skirt as some versions say, do you remember back in ch 2 vs 12 when Boaz commended Ruth for taking refuge under the shadow of the wings of the Lord God of Israel? This is the same exact language that Ruth is using here, so I'm not sure why so many translators used a different word, even as she sought God's covering for her life, now she's seeking Boaz to cover her, in other words she's asking him if he'll marry her, if he'll perform this duty of the kinsman redeemer. Now, understand that by law she could've demanded it, but she's submitting herself to him and asking humbly if he'll perform this duty, if he'll "redeem" her.

Vs 10

So this explains why he didn't initiate this process, he thought she'd be more interested in some young guy than an older fella like him. And even so the Lord loves it when we come to Him, there are so many other things in this world that we could attach ourselves to, but when we come to Him, the Ancient of Day, seeking Him as our redeemer, He loves it.

Vs11

Now this is always the Lord's response to the one who seeks Him for redemption, "*do not fear, I will do for you all that you request.*" Jesus said, "*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*" When we come to the Lord seeking redemption and restoration, He's eager to do that work for us. But notice how her reputation preceded her, everyone in town knew that she was a virtuous woman, Paul wrote to the Romans and said, "*your obedience has become known to all, therefore I am glad on your behalf.*" To the church in Thessalonica he said, "*Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.*" I wonder what's gone out about me? What has become known in town about me? What are people saying about Calvary Chapel, do people consider you a virtuous and faithful individual?

Vs12-13

Why? Well because as we'll see next time he didn't want it to get out that Ruth was apart of the redeeming of Elimelech's property, he was going to use her as a trump card if this other relative wanted to redeem it.

Vs 14-15

Now this word "ephahs" has been added and I would assume wrongly so because after working all day she had (even with the help of the reapers) about 1 ephah which was about 6 gallons or a little over a weeks worth of grain so I seriously doubt that she could carry 35 gallons of grain in her shawl (enough grain for over month). It was probably more like 6 handfuls.

Vs16

Now don't be confused it's not like Naomi didn't know who was walking in the house, this is equivalent to saying, "Well, how did it go" Are you Mrs. Boaz or what? Are you my daughter or his wife?" And so she told her how it went.

Vs18

So in our next gathering we'll see how this epic saga concludes.

