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Ruth 2016 - Lesson 4B

Chapter 4:7-22

814 Arion Parkway, #410
San Antonio, Texas 78216
210.319.5055

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- Today we're finishing our study of Ruth, by returning to our "first" story: Boaz pursuing rest for Ruth and Naomi
 - Last week we studied Boaz's brilliant strategy to compel the kinsman redeemer-in-waiting to either commit or relinquish his role
 - This man stood between Boaz and Naomi's family
 - This man was a closer relative, so he had to decline to redeem Naomi before Boaz was permitted to step into the gap
 - Boaz knew that it wouldn't be easy to get this guy on record
 - The relative had good reasons to delay a decision as we learned last week
 - But Boaz had a plan to gain a decision one way or another, just as he promised Ruth
 - He dangled the prospect of receiving Naomi's land in front of the man
 - This man was allowed first right to purchase this land should Naomi need to sell
 - Obtaining land was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity in that day
 - All the land of Israel had been divided up and assigned to tribes and families
 - There was literally no land available in Israel, and the Law set limits on how long land could be possessed outside the family
 - Land sold outside the family had to be returned to the family within 50 years or less
- The opportunity to acquire land permanently seemed too good to be true to this relative, so he jumped at the opportunity
 - He said he would gladly redeem the land
 - The man assumed Naomi's family was on the verge of disappearing
 - Therefore he assumed the land would remain in his hands forever and become part of his own inheritance
 - But it was too good to be true
 - After the relative said he would redeem the land, Boaz added that Naomi had a daughter-in-law who required redeeming also
 - Suddenly, the man's hopes faded as did his commitment
 - He was willing to pay the price of redemption so long as it profited him
 - But when there was a real, personal cost involved, well then he was no longer able to pay such a steep price
 - So he said I cannot redeem Naomi's land, or Ruth, lest he risk his inheritance
 - The relative spoke his words in front of ten witnesses, who Boaz assembled to ensure the matter was official
 - These elders stood by silently, but their impact was felt
 - Their watchful eyes ensured what was done was binding on all concerned, so now the matter was finished
- So from there, let's proceed forward in the story

Ruth 4:7 Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange of land to confirm any matter: a man removed his sandal and gave it to another; and this was the manner of attestation in Israel.

Ruth 4:8 So the closest relative said to Boaz, “Buy it for yourself.” And he removed his sandal.

Ruth 4:9 Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses today that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon.

Ruth 4:10 “Moreover, I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, to be my wife in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance, so that the name of the deceased will not be cut off from his brothers or from the court of his birth place; you are witnesses today.”

- As Samuel explains, there was a custom in the days of the judges for how matters of this kind were officially concluded
 - Since there was no king nor judge on every corner, local tribal leaders generally enforced the rule of law in their towns
 - In this day the people adopted a custom for how a man refused his right as redeemer
 - The custom was for a man to remove a sandal and give it to the one who would act as redeemer in his place
 - This custom finds its origins in the Law

Deut. 25:8 “Then the elders of his city shall summon him and speak to him. And if he persists and says, ‘I do not desire to take her,’

Deut. 25:9 then his brother’s wife shall come to him in the sight of the elders, and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face; and she shall declare, ‘Thus it is done to the man who does not build up his brother’s house.’

Deut. 25:10 “In Israel his name shall be called, ‘The house of him whose sandal is removed.’

- The Law required that the woman who wasn’t redeemed should be the one to pull off the sandal
 - Furthermore, she spit in the man’s face for refusing to redeem her
 - Spitting at another was a sign of disgust
 - And having a woman take these actions was particularly humiliating for a man in that day
 - So the Law intended that the one who wouldn’t keep the law of redemption would be publicly shamed
- But Samuel says in this day, a time when people did what was right in their own eyes, the custom was practiced differently than the law expected
 - Instead of the woman shaming the man, the tradition had become that the

discredited redeemer simply removed his own sandal and gave it up to the new redeemer

- By giving up just one sandal, the discredited redeemer would have been unable to walk properly as he left the proceedings
- His lopsided stride would have drawn attention to his missing sandal and would communicate his shameful refusal to redeem
- Moreover, the new redeemer possessed physical proof that he had gained the redemption right from the other man
- Giving up his footwear to the new redeemer created two powerful symbolic messages
 - First, standing on land was a way of expressing ownership over it
 - We remember how God told Abraham to walk throughout Canaan to survey the land that the Lord had given to him
 - Therefore, removing a sandal was a symbolic way of relinquishing the right to land
 - And in this case, that's what's happened – the relative gave up his claim to redeem Naomi's land as he says in v.6
- Even more powerfully, taking possession of another's sandal symbolized “walking in the footsteps” of the other
 - Boaz was taking the place of the other man, walking the path that the other relative should have walked had he been able to keep the Law
 - Since the relative couldn't meet the terms of the Law, he gave up his footwear to Boaz who would keep the law in his place
 - So Boaz stepped into the man's place, as if wearing his shoes, to marry Ruth
- Next, Boaz declares to the witnesses that he has rightfully assumed the place of the other
 - The elders and the crowd gathered for this meeting formed the witnesses
 - If called upon, they could truthfully testify that the matter was settled according to Law
 - They could report that the closer relative was disqualified from redeeming and failed to meet the Law
 - And they could attest that Boaz met all qualifications to assume the redeemer role, having performed the Law in the relative's place
 - These witnesses respond with much more than merely an affirmation
 - They heap praise upon Boaz for his actions

Ruth 4:11 All the people who were in the court, and the elders, said, “We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel; and may you achieve wealth in Ephrathah and become famous in Bethlehem.

Ruth 4:12 “Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring which the Lord will give you by this

young woman.”

- First, the people declare they are witnesses, and then they ask that the Lord would bless this woman like Rachel and Leah
 - Rachel and Leah were Jacob’s wives, and each wife produced many children, including a total of 12 sons
 - These twelve sons eventually gave rise to the tribes of Israel
 - And in like manner, the people ask the Lord to bless Boaz with a host of descendants
 - Boaz was obligated to raise up the first born son as if it belonged to Naomi’s family
 - So what if this were the only son Boaz and Ruth ever produced?
 - It could mean that Boaz would be without an heir.
 - So the people ask the Lord to bless Boaz well beyond this first son by giving him many sons
 - Furthermore, they ask that Boaz might possess great wealth for having placed his personal inheritance at risk in this way
 - They say “in Ephrathah,” which is just another name for Bethlehem
 - Like the closer relative, Boaz will have to pay a price to obtain the land and the woman, and that wealth will leave his estate and may not return
 - So the people ask the Lord to compensate Boaz for his mercy and kindness
 - Finally, they ask that Boaz’s name would be made great for this sacrifice
 - Specifically, they declare may he be a famous son of Bethlehem
 - Throughout future generations, people will associate Boaz’s name with the town of Bethlehem
 - They declare that the name of their son will be “famous”
 - The Hebrew word in v.11 is *qara* which means called upon or declared
 - So the name “Boaz” will be declared in Bethlehem
- Then the crowd proclaims in v.12 that Boaz’s offspring for Ruth should be like Perez, who Tamar bore to Judah
 - The crowd must have recognized the many parallels between this story and the story in Genesis 38:
 - Ruth and Tamar were both Gentiles who married into Israel
 - Both were widows without children and both were redeemed
 - Both married considerably older husbands
 - But both had to resort to creative methods to obtain what they rightfully deserved under law
 - Tamar eventually bore a son, Perez, who inherited the seed line of Judah
 - Perez became the leading family within the tribe of Judah
 - And so now the crowd requests may the son of Boaz and Ruth have the

blessing of continuing the seed promise line also

- This suggests that the crowd knew that Boaz carried the seed promise in his family line having descended from Perez
- What we're learning is that the first born son to Boaz is destined to carry the seed promise, that is, be in the family line to Messiah
 - He would legally be Naomi's son and inherit the wealth of Elimelech, Naomi's husband
 - But the seed promise came through Boaz and would remain on his first born regardless of how the law viewed custody
 - So Naomi will be the mother of a child that came by one father but raised as if from another father
 - And ultimately, that son will lead to a Savior for her nation
- Then as promised, Boaz takes Ruth as a wife and soon by the grace of God the couple bears a son

Ruth 4:13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went in to her. And the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.

Ruth 4:14 Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed is the Lord who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel.

Ruth 4:15 "May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him."

Ruth 4:16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her lap, and became his nurse.

Ruth 4:17 The neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi!" So they named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

- Naomi's dreams have come true
 - She has come through a dark time, a time of hopelessness
 - And she returned to her land broken and bitter
 - Yet the prospect of a redeemer gave her hope
 - Now today her hope has been realized as she receives a son
 - After the child's birth, Naomi becomes the child's caretaker (not a wet nurse)
 - Why does Ruth give this child to Naomi?
 - Remember, under the Law the redeemer was responsible for providing an heir to the family who was missing an heir
 - Elimelech and his sons died, so his family needs the heir
 - Now that Ruth has married Boaz, she has become a part of Boaz's family
 - That leaves Naomi as the last living member of Elimelech's family
 - So when Boaz, who is Naomi's redeemer, brings a son into the world, that son is

raised as if he were the son of Elimelech

- Therefore, Naomi receives the son as if he is her son
 - She will raise him as a son of Elimelech
 - But as I said, this son still receives the seed promise from Boaz
 - He may be legally part of Naomi’s family but he carries the line of Messiah from Boaz
- The women of the town rejoice with Naomi
 - They declare that the name of this son will be “famous”
 - Again, this is the Hebrew word is *qara* meaning declared or called upon
 - So this son will be declared and called upon in Bethlehem
 - And they say this child will be a restorer of life and a sustainer for Naomi
 - Ironically, because of Naomi, Ruth came to know her Jewish redeemer and husband
 - And now the tables are turned, as Ruth becomes the one to make possible for Naomi to receive her own deliverer
 - Interestingly, the parents do not name their child. Instead, a neighbor woman gave the child a name, Obed
 - His name means servant or one who serves
 - The neighbor gave the child this name to recognize Naomi’s caring for Ruth’s child
 - But of course we see a greater parallel
 - In fact, I’m guessing you’ve been seeing many parallels throughout today’s lesson
 - Going back into last week, we have a lot of unpacking to do in explaining the second story of Chapter 4
 - And in this chapter, the second story isn’t one of End Times as much
 - It’s a story of history
 - Let’s start back with Boaz in the gate with his closest relative, at the beginning of the chapter
 - The easiest piece of this puzzle is Boaz himself
 - Everyone knows this man is a picture of Jesus Christ acting as our Redeemer
 - And we are like Ruth, the Gentile Bride of Christ, in need of redemption
 - In Ruth’s case, she needed redemption from widowhood, while we needed redemption from something far more serious and devastating
 - As sinners we incurred a life-threatening debt before God
 - The Bible says that all people come into the world as sinners

Rom. 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

- And our sin nature causes us to then live in ways that are contrary to God’s law

- Our contrary nature, and the behavior it produces, is called sin and sin is a debt before God
- Because we have this debt before God, we need to pay that debt
 - But this isn't an easy debt to pay
 - The payment must be equal to the debt
 - And the debt we owe is our life

Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- So we need someone to bail us out of our debt, to redeem us, to pay a ransom to free us from our sentence of eternal death
- Boaz pictures Christ, our Redeemer, Who willingly paid the price for our sin debt before God
 - Like Boaz going before the elders and the people in the gate, Christ entered into a legal transaction
 - He made a payment for our debt, which the Bible calls propitiation

1John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

- By our redeemer's payment, we were justified, which means we were acquitted of our guilt and obtained peace with God

Rom. 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

- Christ stepped into the gap to assume the Redeemer role in place of another who couldn't, just as Boaz did
 - Like Boaz, Christ first assembled ten witnesses
 - In Boaz's day, these men represented the authority of the people, who could testify concerning right and wrong
 - Notice the 10 elders didn't force anyone to do anything
 - They just stood by silently giving witness to what ought to happen in this situation
- Where do we find ten witnesses concerning right and wrong in our story with Christ?
 - We find them in the Law
 - Because before Jesus could redeem us, He had to meet the terms of the Law
 - And specifically, he had to satisfy the scrutiny of the Ten Commandments
 - The Law can't compel anyone to do good, as Paul says
 - Rather, it stands witness, silently condemning us as we fail to live according to its requirements

- Boaz withstood the scrutiny of his ten witnesses, having satisfied all that the law required concerning Naomi's family
 - Just as Christ also met all the requirements of the Law by living a perfect, sinless life
 - The Ten Commandments testified to Christ's righteousness, as scripture says

1John 3:5 You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

- Like Boaz, Christ was a man who fulfilled the Law
- But there was another man present who couldn't fulfill the law's requirements
 - This other man was a close relative of Boaz
 - But he was unable to redeem Naomi's family
 - He couldn't pay the price
 - And so under the scrutiny of the ten elders, he was forced to hand his shoe to Jesus
 - Thus Boaz could walk in his place, doing what he couldn't do
 - Who does this close relative picture?
 - He pictures Adam, and ultimately everyone who comes from Adam
 - In effect, that closer relative is you and me
- We are related to Christ at least in blood, because Jesus took on flesh to be our representative

Heb. 2:14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

- Though Jesus was God, He took on flesh so He could walk in our shoes, taking our place on the cross

Phil. 2:5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, Phil. 2:6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

Phil. 2:7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

Phil. 2:8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

- Boaz and his relative pictures Christ and mankind
- But like that relative, we're more closely related than Christ
- We share the sin nature of those Christ redeems, which makes us a closer relative

- So somehow we must move out of the way so Christ can redeem
 - We have to give Christ our shoe, so He can step into our place and walk where we can't go
 - He must redeem us since we can't redeem ourselves
- He could pay the price for our sins, a price we couldn't pay
 - The price was too great
 - We don't have the perfect life that the Law requires
 - Those ten witnesses, the Ten Commandments, stand by silently condemning us, testifying against us, exposing our sins
 - We have to give our shoe to Christ by faith, so He can walk in our place, paying our price
- As Boaz paid that debt, the man who couldn't pay was shamed as one unable to meet the law
 - And in a sense, that's what Christ did for us
 - He took our place, paying our price, and in the process relieved us of the debt which shamed us
 - He took our shame on the cross, scripture says

Col. 2:13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,

Col. 2:14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Heb. 12:2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

- Lastly, we remember that Boaz redeemed not only Ruth but also Naomi's land
 - Just as Christ is Redeemer of both mankind, and all Creation

Col. 1:19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,

Col. 1:20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

- Next, we see that once Boaz became the redeemer, he received great adoration and he inherited all that belonged to Elimelech, according to v.9
 - Remember that the name Elimelech means "God is King" and his character in the story represents God the Father

- Scripture calls God the Father “Husband” to Israel, just as Elimelech is the husband of Naomi
- And now Boaz has received everything that was Elimelech’s
- So here again we see a picture of Christ, as scripture teaches

Phil. 2:9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

Phil. 2:10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Phil. 2:11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- And Hebrews says that Jesus was the heir of all things

Heb. 1:1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,

Heb. 1:2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

- Jesus received the Father’s inheritance as a result of His service of redemption
- And He is prepared to share His inheritance with His Bride
- And Boaz’s act of mercy led to many descendants and a great name in Bethlehem
 - Just as Jesus’ work on the cross has resulted in many sons and daughters of faith in the family of God
 - Furthermore, the name of Jesus is likewise synonymous with Bethlehem itself
- Why did Boaz do all this? To give Ruth and Naomi rest, to give them the permanent security and peace they longed for...a Sabbath rest
 - For Ruth, the rest came in the form of a marriage
 - Just as our Sabbath rest is found in faith in Jesus Christ
 - We are the Bride Who has found our Groom in Christ
 - Never again will we work for our righteousness
 - For we have obtained it in a Redeemer Who covered us in His robe of righteousness
 - But Naomi, Israel, still needs a redeemer
 - Ironically, Israel is the one that brought us, the Gentile Church, to our Redeemer through the covenants and the scriptures
 - Israel brought the Messiah into the world
 - Yet today Israel stands in widowhood
- But in a day to come, the nation will receive that same child they rejected so long ago
 - The same Israel who made possible our opportunity to know the Messiah, will one

day receive that same Messiah

- Just as Naomi led Ruth to Boaz, and then one day Ruth gave Naomi the deliverer she needed
- Likewise, we have Christ because of Israel
- Scripture says in a future day the nation of Israel will receive the same child they rejected earlier

Zech. 12:9 “And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

Zech. 12:10 “I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

- Naomi’s receiving a child to redeem her is a picture of how Israel comes to understand that the Christ child was their Messiah
 - They will weep over this firstborn son upon recognizing the error of their forefathers
 - They will understand they pierced their Messiah on the cross but by that recognition, they come to find rest Rom. 11:12 Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!

Rom. 11:13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,

Rom. 11:14 if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.

Rom. 11:15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

Rom. 11:30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience,

Rom. 11:31 so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.

Rom. 11:32 For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.

- The story ends with a brief genealogy

Ruth 4:18 Now these are the generations of Perez: to Perez was born Hezron,

Ruth 4:19 and to Hezron was born Ram, and to Ram, Amminadab,

Ruth 4:20 and to Amminadab was born Nahshon, and to Nahshon, Salmon,

**Ruth 4:21 and to Salmon was born Boaz, and to Boaz, Obed,
Ruth 4:22 and to Obed was born Jesse, and to Jesse, David.**

- Samuel connects the descendant of Judah and Tamar to David
 - Remember, this was written by Samuel as the monarchy of Saul was fading and David was in waiting for the throne
 - So the genealogy stands to testify to the line of the seed promise and of the monarchy
- David, not Saul, was in the line of Judah, the tribe of kings
 - And the Messiah would come through David's line by way of Boaz and Ruth
 - In that way Samuel makes a scriptural case for the House of David having priority over the House of Saul
 - Clearly, this was God's plan
- But there is another reason we have this genealogy, one that testifies to God's grace to the Gentiles
 - Perez was the son of Judah and Tamar
 - Tamar was Judah's daughter-in-law, and she tricked him into impregnating her by posing as a prostitute on the side of the road
 - Though Tamar had right to be redeemed as a widow, Judah refused to let her wed his final son
 - So Tamar felt forced to take this step
 - The product of that union was Perez, who was a child of illegitimate birth (a "bastard" son)
 - There is a law regarding such children

Deut. 23:2 "No one of illegitimate birth shall enter the assembly of the Lord; none of his descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall enter the assembly of the Lord."

- The law says that such a person cannot enter the assembly nor can the next nine generations of descendants
- To not enter the assembly means to be barred from the religious life of Israel
- They cannot enter the temple nor participate in the feasts
- That is the curse of the Law
- We're not sure if this law was followed in the case of Perez's family
 - But we can be sure that the Lord didn't lose track
 - He would have counted out the ten generations
- Interestingly, the very next verse in Deuteronomy 23 is one we read at the beginning of our study

Deut. 23:3 “No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the Lord; none of their descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of the Lord,

- The Law placed the same restriction on a Moabite who joined to the people of Israel
 - That person was also barred from participating in the assembling of Israel for ten generations
 - Ruth was a Moabite, so she would have fallen under this restriction
- **Addendum:** *An alternative perspective of this verse, based in Rabbinical teachings (William Davidson Talmud, Yevamot 77b), interprets this law to apply only to Ammonite or Moabite males as unable to enter the assembly. Thus this clause would not apply to Ruth or Boaz.*
- But as our story ends, we find a list of exactly ten names ending in David
 - Ten being the number of testimony
 - And the curse of Perez’s line ending with David, another picture of Christ
- So we have Boaz, the man who pictures Christ on the cross, paying the price, taking the curse of a Moabite upon himself
 - And we see David, a picture of Christ risen and ruling, removing the curse
 - In one we see the first coming of Christ
 - In the other, we see the second coming of Christ
- I hope this study has opened your eyes to the power of the God we serve
 - Truly he has authored history, including the lives of those in our story
 - And every move He makes communicates His love for us in His word
 - When you see the puzzle coming together, you recognize this was written by God
 - And you come to understand the lengths He has gone to redeem us