

Being Redeemed

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Date: 29 April 2018

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[0 : 00] Let's pray together as we look at God's Word this morning. Father, we come before you and we are thankful for your Word, your Word which gives life, your Word which tells us about you, and your Word which reveals the wonder of salvation and the wonder of the God that so many of us have come to know and love.

Father, this morning we pray that as we look at your Word, you will speak to us. And we pray, Holy Spirit, that you'll take the words on these pages and you'll apply it to our hearts. God, won't you cause us to love you more and to trust you more, to obey you more and to fear you more because of your Word this morning.

Bring this time before you in your wonderful name. Amen. Amen. Okay. So this morning we come to the end of our study of the book of Ruth, the Old Testament book.

And for me personally, it has been such a wonderful journey. And I hope it has for you too. It's been challenging studying the book of Ruth, trying to get my head around some things.

As Leah was saying, I'm sure there have been some fiery discussions in the CG. But over the last few weeks as we've been going through the book of Ruth, two lines have stood out to me.

[1 : 18] The one is found in Ruth chapter 2 where Boaz says to Ruth, And then in chapter 3, Ruth almost demonstrates what that means when she goes to Boaz and she says, Boaz, spread the wings of your garment over me.

And I found myself over the last few weeks saying, God, won't you make me a person that comes to take refuge and safety and security under the shadow of your wings. Won't you spread your arms over me.

God, make me someone that comes to find my identity and my rest in you. And I hope it's been encouraging for us as a church as well. Now let's just recap the story for those of us that maybe have missed parts of it or some of it.

The story goes like this. In Ruth chapter 1, we meet this family. Elimelech and his wife Naomi and their two sons, Marlon and Chilian. And they leave Israel because there's famine in the land of Israel.

They go up north to the country of Moab. And this all takes place in what we are told is the time of the judges, which was a very ungodly time in the nation of Israel. It's a time when everybody did what was right in their own eyes, which meant that nobody did what was right.

[2 : 28] And so they leave Israel. They go to Moab. And Moab is an even more ungodly place. And in Moab, tragedy strikes. First, Elimelech dies. And then Naomi's two sons marry a local Moabite woman.

And then the two sons die. And so Naomi, an Israelite, is in a foreign land, foreign country, with no land of her own, no sons, no husband, no one to farm the land or to go and work in the fields.

And she's left with no security, just her two foreign daughter-in-laws. And so Naomi, the one day, hears that the famine in Israel has broken. And so she decides to go back to Judah, to Bethlehem.

And Ruth, the one daughter-in-law, decides to come with her. The other decides to stay. When Ruth and Naomi come back to Bethlehem in Israel, they've got land which belongs to the family, but the land hasn't been worked for decades.

And so it's lying fallow. And so Ruth says, I better go out and find some work. And so Ruth goes and works in the field of a man called Boaz, who unbeknownst to her is a very godly man, but he's also a relative of her late husband, Marlon.

[3 : 37] And she just so happens to work in the field of this relative, Boaz. And Boaz is incredibly kind to her. He says to her, stay close to me. I will look after you.

Don't go wandering away. I will do you good. And Boaz is incredibly kind. He's generous to her. He lavishly blesses her. And so at the end of chapter one, Naomi, when they come back, say, I've come back empty.

God has been bitter to me. God has dealt unfairly with me. I've got nothing left. And just one day later at the end of chapter two, because of Boaz's kindness, Ruth and Naomi are now overflowing with provisions, with food.

And so they come to a place where they say, God has been kind to us because of this man, Boaz. Now, key to understanding the book of Ruth is to understand the ancient Hebrew practice of redemption, of redeeming a widow.

And the way it worked was like this. If somebody in Israel fell on hard times, maybe your husband died or you got into excessive debt, the closest male relative, called the kinsman redeemer, it is his obligation to buy you out of your tragic situation, even at great personal cost to himself, and to look after you.

[4 : 48] So for instance, if a man dies, his wife is left a widow, maybe with children or no children, this kinsman redeemer, this family relative, would buy the family land, but marry this widow to do three things.

One, to look after her and provide for her. Two, to look after the family land. Land, remember, was a family safety and security. In those days, you didn't have RAs and pension funds.

Your land was your provision. But three, the redeemer would marry this widow and then have children with her in order to continue the name. The children would be in the late husband's name so that his family line wouldn't die out but would continue.

Okay? And so this was the obligation of the closest male relative, the kinsman redeemer. So at the end of chapter two, Ruth, after working in Boaz's field, comes back to her mother-in-law, Naomi, and Naomi says, where did you work today?

And she says, I worked in the field of Boaz. And Naomi says, Boaz, that man's a close relative of ours. And her mind starts to think, I wonder if this man can redeem us.

[5 : 55] And so then in chapter three, we saw that last week, Boaz takes notice of Ruth. She's a good-looking young lady. And he spots her out, but he doesn't make any moves on her because Ruth is still wearing the mourning gear.

She's mourning her late husband. And Naomi says to Ruth, it's time to put away your mourning clothes. It's time to prepare yourself for marriage. And Naomi realizes that Ruth needs not just Boaz's kindness, she needs his love.

What Ruth needs is not just Boaz's provision, she needs his loving protection. And so Naomi prepares her daughter-in-law and then at great risk to herself, Ruth, in the middle of night, goes to Boaz and she says, marry me.

In this great act of vulnerability and surrender and submission, she goes to Boaz and says, you are my Redeemer. You are my rescuer. Marry me. Redeem me with your love.

And we saw that in many ways, this is what it means to be a Christian. A Christian is someone who has recognized their emptiness, recognized their need for a Savior, recognized their need for redemption, and come to the great Redeemer, Christ, and says, God, marry me.

[7 : 09] Rescue me. Redeem me with your love. And so at the end of chapter three, Ruth comes to Boaz in the middle of the night and says, rescue me. Redeem me with your great love.

And Boaz says, absolutely. He's noticed Ruth, right? He says, sure thing. Tomorrow I'm going to make it happen. Except there's a problem. And the problem is, there's another guy.

I know that feeling. When I first noticed Claire, there was another guy. And I had to get rid of him. He's still alive. I didn't get rid of him like that.

He's still alive. So Ruth and Boaz kind of make this arrangement. Okay. We want to get married. But there's another guy. There's another family relative, a closer relative that has first rights on redeeming Ruth.

And so Boaz says, tomorrow I'll go and talk to him and let's see if we can arrange it. And that's where chapter three ends. And so today we get to Ruth chapter four. Now today's passage, there's three things I think we're going to see.

[8 : 14] Three things to learn. We're going to learn that God's ways are counterintuitive. God's ways are grounded in grace. And God's ways are all inclusive. Okay. Counterintuitive, grounded in grace, and all inclusive.

So first thing, God's ways are counterintuitive. Now chapter four starts off with Boaz going down to the city gates. This is where business and civil affairs and transactions take place.

And so Boaz goes down to the city gates to meet this redeemer, this family relative, right? And look at verse one with me. What does verse one say? It says, Boaz went to the gates and he sat down. And behold, the redeemer of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said to him, turn aside, my friend. Sit down here. And he turned aside and he sat down.

Now quick question. This other redeemer, what is his name? Anyone know? You shouldn't know because nobody knows his name.

[9 : 15] In fact, the man that wrote the book of Ruth a couple of decades later doesn't even know his name. His name is lost for all eternity. In fact, in the original Hebrew, it actually says, such a person.

It's kind of like, it says, Boaz says to him, turn aside, such a person. It's kind of like this catch-out phrase. They don't know what to call him. It's like Mr. So-and-so.

Or I guess you'd say like, sit down, Guilo. You know, it's like, it's just this, I don't know if that's offensive, but it's like this kind of phrase that we don't know what to call him. He's just this Mr. So-and-so, right?

And so Mr. So-and-so comes along and Boaz explains to him that Naomi, who's returned from Moab, is selling her land that belonged to her husband, Elimelech, and that he, Mr. So-and-so, is the nearest relative and has the first rights to buy it and to redeem it.

Now, Boaz doesn't mention Ruth, right? He just talks about the land. And so this relative, Mr. So-and-so, says, sure, sounds great. I would like to buy the land. Count me in.

[10 : 17] And at that point, Boaz's heart drops, right? He loves Ruth. Ruth loves him. Ruth doesn't want to marry Mr. So-and-so. Ruth wants to marry Boaz.

And so at that point, he's like, ah, I was hoping it wasn't going to work out. And here's this guy that's messed up their whole plans.

And so then Boaz very gently reminds him and says, well, the day that you buy the land, you also get to inherit, you also get to marry Ruth, the Moabite.

Now, you see what's going on here? Mr. So-and-so, when he redeems Naomi's land and property, he also gets to marry the widow in order to protect her, but in order to perpetuate the name of the late husband so that his line will continue.

Now, Naomi is too old to be married and to have children, and so Ruth will now become this man's wife in order to continue the family line. And so Boaz reminds this Mr. So-and-so about Ruth and suddenly he starts to back off.

[11 : 24] He says, ah, actually, I just forgot. I ran out of money and I would love to, but it's not going to work out, right? He starts to backtrack a bit and he says, but you marry him. And Boaz jumps to it and says, I would love to.

Now, why does Mr. So-and-so back off? Why does he not want to marry Ruth? Well, he tells us. He tells us what happens. He says, I don't want to impair my own inheritance.

And the way it worked was like this. Remember in the nation of Israel, there's this law called the law of Jubilee, right? So every 50 years, all the land that was sold, any transactions had to be returned to the family of origin every 50 years.

And the reason this happened was so that to stop the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. So if you fall in difficult times, you can sell some land, but rather than people taking advantage of that, every 50 years, all the land is returned to the family of origin.

So when this man buys Naomi's land, he knows that, hey, in a couple of years' time, maybe 20 years or 30 years or 40 years, the land is going to be returned to the family.

[12 : 32] If I take the land and I marry Ruth and we have children, these children belong to Elimelech, that family line, this land will be returned to them. So he buys the land, but not forever, just for a time period.

But he takes on two women, Ruth and Naomi, forever. And so in a sense, his estate, his wealth, now needs to support these extra people, but he doesn't get the land forever.

And so when he has children with Ruth, now his inheritance is no longer split, let's say, three ways with his children and now might be split five ways or six ways or seven ways.

And so he realizes my inheritance is going to be diluted. But furthermore, he realizes that he's going to create children not in his own name, but in the name of Ruth's late husband, Elimelech and

Marlon, right?

And so he starts to back off. He says, no thanks, you marry her. Now in the nation of Israel at the time, there was a law, well actually not at the time, in the Bible there's this law that if a lady was widowed, she goes to her kinsman redeemer, this relative, and says, marry me, protect me, cover me with your wings, put your redeeming love around me.

[13:43] And he says, no. Then she takes him down to the city gates and once again in front of all the elders and the leaders, she says, this man is my redeemer, I'm asking him to marry me.

And if he still refused, she takes off his sandal, she slaps him and then she spits in his face, okay? That was the law. And the reason was because it was considered extremely offensive.

It was extremely selfish not to care for your family member, not to look after your family member. So Mr. So-and-so says no and he says no because he wants to protect his own inheritance and he wants to protect his own family and he wants to protect his own name.

Now look what happens here. Three and a half thousand years later, whose name do we remember? whose name is recorded under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for all time in the Bible? Not Mr. So-and-so, nobody knows his name. And yet, Boaz, this man who does the exact opposite, the man who marries Ruth, what does he say?

[14:48] In order to perpetuate the name of the dead, Boaz who marries Ruth knowing that her children will technically not carry his name but carry the name of her late husband, Boaz who gives up his own reputation and marries Ruth to protect her and care for her and make children in the line of Marlon and Elimlich's family, his name is recorded for all time in the scriptures.

Now friends, this is the way that God's, this is the way of God's ways. This is the way that God works. This is the upside down nature of God's ways in the world. That those who try to save their lives end up losing them.

Those who try to save their name end up losing them. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said it like this, the gospel tells us that the infinite worth of that which seems so worthless and the infinite worthlessness of everything that is seemingly so valuable.

And this is the way of God. This is the way of the Bible. Throughout the whole story of the Bible, those who try to save themselves end up losing themselves. And those who say, God it's not about me, have your way, actually end up saving themselves.

We see this in the book of Genesis, right? Right in the beginning, Adam and Eve are in the garden with God's presence and the devil comes to them and says, you want to be like God, don't you? I know God said, don't do this, but God doesn't really want you to be powerful and majestic.

[16:11] Listen to me. You eat that fruit, you will be made like God. What do they want to do? They want to be like God. And so they eat the fruit and they listen. And what happens? They end up being expelled from God's presence, expelled from God's paradise.

And the end is death and destruction. They sought to be like God and they ended up losing God entirely. A couple of chapters later, the people of God decide to build this massive tower to heaven. They're going to build this tower to the praise of their name and to their own glory. And what happens? The result is tribalism, racism, death, and destruction.

And all throughout the Bible, throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament, whenever the people of God try to save their lives, try to pursue their own glory, try to live for themselves, the result is always death and destruction.

And whenever the people of God in humility would come and say, God, not my way, would come and die to themselves, say, Father, have your way. In that place, they found life.

[17:14] And we see this in our own lives, don't we? We see this in our marriages. We see this in our parenting. You want a happy marriage? The secret is, not my will, but your will. Love, right? Anyone that tries in their marriage to say, hey, fight for their own will, fight for their way, ends up losing it.

But when you come and say, not about me, about you, let's have your way, that's the way to find a happy marriage. And friends, this is the way of God. This is the counterintuitive nature of God, that those who try and hold on and find their life actually end up losing it.

And of course, the greatest expression of this is found in the carpenter. The man who came from Bethlehem. The man who was born to a teenage mom, born in the back waters of Israel, born in an animal feeding trough in a stable.

The man who was born to die. The man who came to lay down his life so that we could live. Jesus said, all who try to hang on to their lives, their reputation and their pride will end up losing it. But if you come to me, if you trust me, if you come open-handed, you'll find, you'll find life. You'll gain your life. And friends, what is true for us was equally true for Jesus.

[18:26] That Jesus who came to lay down his life ended up getting life. But the difference is where we lay down our lives, we find our lives. Jesus died not so that he could find life, but that we could find life.

This is the ways of God. Friends, this is the good news of Jesus. And this is what the Bible is all about. That though we have fallen short of God's standards, though we've fallen short of the wonder of Jesus and who he is, though our loves are distorted and we follow other gods, Jesus came to lay down his life for creation.

And he tells us to do the same. He tells us not to live for ourselves, but to say, not to us, oh God, but to your name give the glory. And in that place we find life.

And this is what we see with Boaz and Mr. So-and-so. Mr. So-and-so, this man, tried to protect his own reputation and in the end lost it. And Boaz, who gives it up, his name is preserved for all time. First point, the counterintuitive ways of God. Second thing is this. The thing that we see is that God's ways are grounded in grace. Grounded in grace.

[19:34] Now, when we listen to the first point, you might be tempted to think, okay, I get it. I understand the way it works. Those who deny themselves, those who punish themselves, those who make themselves lowly, earn God's love and acceptance, right?

So you might be tempted to think, I know how to get God's love and acceptance. I've got to deny myself. I've got to punish myself. I've got to fast and I've got to go through hardship. And if I do that, God will reward me with good life.

But look at what happens next. Mr. So-and-so says, sorry, I don't want, you know, Ruth anymore. You take it. Boaz says, I would love her. And so they get married.

And they get married and they live happily ever after. Okay? And the Lord blesses them with a son. Now look what happens in verse 13 to 17. Naomi, not Ruth, is called blessed by the Lord.

And Naomi is the one that the townsfolk say is redeemed. And in verse 17, it said of Naomi, she has a son. Now remember, this son, called Obed, has none of Naomi's blood in it.

[20:48] Right? Remember, it's the son of Ruth and Boaz. Ruth is not Naomi's descendant. She's her daughter-in-law. Boaz is not Naomi's descendant. This is a relative of her late husband.

So their son has zero of Naomi's blood in it. And yet, the townsfolk say, a son has been born to Naomi. And later on, in verse 15, this grandson, which is actually a step-grandson, is said to Naomi, he says, he will be a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age.

So Naomi, who came back in chapter 1 saying, God has been unfair to me. God has dealt bitterly with me. God has given me nothing. I went away full and I've come back empty.

Now, this Naomi is given a grandson who is told that this son, this grandson, will nourish you in your old age, will restore your life to you. And remember, she comes back and Ruth is standing next to her and she says, I've got nothing.

God has taken everything from me. And as Chris reminded us three weeks ago, Ruth is standing right next to her as if to say, Ruth is nothing to me. And now look at how the townsfolk speak of Ruth.

[21:57] They say, Ruth, your daughter-in-law who loves you, who has become more to you than seven sons. That's quite a statement in a culture that prides the birth of sons, right? And so here is God's amazing blessing to Naomi.

Now, in the book of Ruth, Naomi is quite a tricky character, right? If you've been following the last few weeks, it's like, it's hard to get your hands on Naomi. Is Naomi good or is she bad?

Is she faithful or is she a schemer? Is she deceptive? What's going on with Naomi? It's kind of like, it's hard to get our hands on her, right? And I think the truth is that Naomi is conflicted.

There's a part of her that wants to trust God and there's a part of her that also wants what's good for her, right? There's a part of her that wants to be faithful and kind of wants to serve God but there's a part of her that also wants to organize things that work out well for her own life.

In a sense, Naomi is quite a conflicted human being. Friends, if we're honest with ourselves, though we more readily like to associate with Ruth, the beautiful, young, obedient, attractive young lady, if we're honest with ourselves, we're probably far closer to Naomi than we are to Ruth, right?

[23 : 16] If we're honest with ourselves, we're all a little conflicted. If you're a follower of Jesus this morning, there's enough goodness inside of you, there's enough of the Holy Spirit inside of you to want to please God and to want to honor Him but if we're honest with ourselves, there's also enough selfishness, there's enough self-love, there's enough self-glory in us that actually we often find ourselves conflicted, not too dissimilar to Naomi.

And remember the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 7, the great Apostle Paul, he says this, I do not understand myself. That which I do not want to do, I end up doing.

The very things I hate. And so I realize that it's no longer I who do these things merely, but there's this sin that dwells inside of me. I have the desire to do what's right but I somehow don't have the ability to carry it out.

For I do not do the things that I want to do and the evil things that I don't want to do, I find myself keep on doing. Even the great Apostle Paul finds himself conflicted.

And then what does he say? He says, Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from such a body of death? Friends, I find myself agreeing with Paul. Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this confliction of my soul?

[24 : 32] And then he says this, Thanks be to God through the Lord Jesus Christ. And friends, I want to say that if you're a human being, which chances are you are, every one of us are slightly conflicted.

Every one of us, there'll be times in our life where there's a pull and a heart to do the right thing but there's a self-love that wants to look after ourselves. And very often, even the good things that we do, our motives are mixed up and our motives are partly good but partly self-preserving.

Oh, wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from such a turmoil? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ, our great Redeemer. And friends, when you hear that the way to life is to deny ourselves, those of us that are more religious might think to ourselves, might be tempted to think, if I do the right things, if I deny myself, if I behave the right way, then I'll be sorted.

If I make the right decisions, God will look after me. Friends, don't believe the lie. Don't believe the lie that God is on the side of those who've got their religious credentials all in order.

Don't believe the lie that if you just do the right things and make the right choices and everything's going to work out fine. God rewards Boaz with the amazing girl, right? He gets the girl.

[25 : 50] And Boaz is faithful and righteous. And Boaz is blessed by God. And Ruth is blessed by God. But so is Naomi. The conflicted mother-in-law is also extremely, abundantly, extravagantly blessed by God.

Why? Not because of her faithfulness. Not because she's the perfect God-fearing woman. Not because she's got all her credentials in order. But because of the unprecedented grace and kindness and the mercy of God.

Robert Deffenboer, I think that's how you say his name, said this, The book of Ruth is not written so that we can glory in the goodness of man. It is written to reveal the glory of our righteous God.

Ruth shows us that the fulfillment of God's purposes and promises depends on the goodness and the greatness of our God, not on the goodness of man. God is able to cause all things to work together for our good, but primarily for his glory.

Friends, those of us that are followers of Jesus this morning, I hope you realize the profound, the gravity of the grace of God.

[27 : 01] That everything God does, the way that he, the way that he treats you and I is grounded on not our goodness or our righteousness, but of the grace and the mercy of God. And this should cause us to sing.

This should cause our hearts to rejoice. This should put a song in our hearts as we realize the great mercy and the kindness of our God. God's ways are counterintuitive.

God's ways are always grounded in grace. Third thing is this. God's ways are all inclusive. Now, look at how the story of Ruth ends.

If you've got your bulletin or your Bible, look at verse 17 with me. It says this, the woman of the neighborhood gave this boy a name saying, a son has been born to Naomi.

They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. And then the book ends with this seven generations talking about Perez through the family line of Boaz and ultimately it ends in David.

[28 : 06] Now, let's just zoom out a little book, a little bit. the book of Ruth is a hinge, it's a pivot in the history of Israel.

Remember chapter one, the first sentence of chapter one started like this, in the time of the judges, right? So, before the book of Ruth, it's an era or an epoch in Israel's history which is known as the time of the judges.

They didn't have kings, they had these rulers, these prophets, these men and women of God called these judges. And then the book of Ruth ends, the last verse of Ruth, talks about David.

And David was the great king of Israel. And so, sandwiched in between these two epochs, these eras in Israel's history stands this little book, this hinge of a book, the book of Ruth, right?

Now, following on from the book of Ruth, we get to the time of the kings, okay? We've just spoken about that. Now, you might remember in 1 Samuel, 1 Samuel is the next book in the Bible, in 1 Samuel chapter 8, the people of Israel come to Samuel, the prophet, and they say, give us a king.

[29 : 11] We want a king like the other nations. And God answers them through Samuel saying, why do you want a king? I'll be your king. Everything you want from a king, I will be with you.

I will lead you. I will guide you. I will protect you. I'll go out before you in battle. I will be your great king. And the people of God say, no, we want a king that we can see, a king that we can touch, a king that we can revere, a king that we can worship, right?

And so God says, okay, I'll give you a king. And so he gives them the king Saul. And Saul starts off a right, but pretty quickly things get out of hand. Saul's own conflicted self gets in the way and things go wrong.

And so King Saul, the first king of Israel, he actually spends kind of the last 15 years, the last decade and a half of his life, his rule is marked by jealousy, by anger, murder, by murder.

And so King Saul spends the last kind of half of his rule trying to annihilate this young man in his temple, this military leader, this young man in his palace, who's also his chief of staff and his military general, this young man called David.

[30 : 22] And so Saul tries to take him out. He chases him down all over the country to try and kill this young man called David. Now ironically, the counterintuitive nature of God, Saul dies in battle and the man who takes the throne is this young man, David.

And David sits on the throne that Saul once occupied. And David becomes the greatest king that Israel ever had. In many ways, he's like Boaz. He's not perfect. He has his own issues.

He has to deal with sin. But in many ways, his heart is after God. He really does want the things of God. And he forgives his enemies. He forgives the people that try and make his life difficult.

David, like Boaz, really is a God-fearing man. And he's a righteous king. And under him, Israel flourishes. Israel grows and prospers. And who is this man, David?

Well, we read, he's the great-grandson of Naomi and Boaz, right? And so from this wrangled, kind of twisted family tree of Naomi and Elimelech, Boaz and Ruth, remember Boaz and Ruth, half Jewish, half Moabite, half God-fearing, half foreigner, half Jew, half Gentile.

[31 : 35] From this kind of twisted family tree of Naomi and Elimelech, Boaz and Ruth, comes Israel's greatest king. And during his time, Israel, prosperous, they flourish, it's a time of safety, it's a time of great blessing.

And because of David, for all his faults, because David is a God-fearing man, God makes him a promise. And God promises David this, he says, as long as you trust me, there will forever be one of your descendants on the throne.

For all time, one of your descendants will sit on the throne of the nation of Israel. Unfortunately, that doesn't solve things, because David eventually dies, and things in Israel start to unravel.

And things get really bad, and eventually, after 400 years, God says, enough is enough. He brings the Babylonians, and he attacks Israel. The Babylonians take Israel into exile for 70 years.

Eventually, they come back, but Israel is never the same. Civil war breaks out after David's life, the north attacks the south, they fight, and Israel is never the same again.

[32 : 44] And so, throughout Israel's history, the people of God are looking for this king, this great king that will rule them in righteousness, this great king who will rule them in truth. Forever, Israel's looking, longing, waiting for the king that will redeem them, the king who will buy them out of their tragic situation, even at great cost to themselves.

And they're waiting for this king, and when will this king arrive? And one king dies, and the next king arises, and suddenly you think, this will be the king. He will rescue us. And eventually, he dies, and

things go wrong again.

And then another king emerges, and then we think, this will be the one to save us. And things just get worse again. And forever, Israel's waiting, longing for the king who will rescue them and redeem them.

Until such time is one of David's great, great, great descendants, born in a town called the town of David, the town of Bethlehem. This descendant is true king of Israel, the king that Israel's always waited for.

This is the Lord Jesus Christ. And not only is the true and better David, being a descendant of Boaz, he's the true and better redeemer. He's the one who came to redeem not just Ruth and Naomi out of their tragic situation, not just Israel out of their tragic situation.

[33 : 59] He's the redeemer who came to redeem the whole world. And notice the scandal of this great redeemer. This great redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, the scandal is what?

That his ancestors aren't even fully Jewish. His great, great grandmother is what? A Moabite, a pagan Gentile, someone from the land of Moab that they were enemies of God's people.

And this great ancestor of Jesus and of David is not one of God's people. And yet God includes her in the bloodline of Israel's greatest king, King David, and ultimately in the bloodline of Jesus.

Friends, you see what God is saying here? God is saying no matter what your past, doesn't matter where you come from, it doesn't matter what your background is. You can be Jewish, you can be Gentile, you can be Buddhist, you can be Hindu, you can be, your background can be Taoist, you can be agnostic, it doesn't matter what your background is, heaven and earth's true king, heaven and earth's true redeemer has come for you.

If you'll come to him, if you'll bow down to him, if you'll come to him like Ruth did and said, let your people be my people, let your God be my God, if you'll come to him like Ruth came to Boaz and said, cover me with your wings, come and rescue me, redeem me with your redeeming love.

[35 : 20] And so what Boaz says to Ruth in chapter two, he says, don't go anywhere, stay close to me, I will make sure that you looked after, is what this redeemer says to all of us.

He invites us to his table, he invites us to come and eat with him, he gives us bread and wine, he gives us food, and when we accept it, when we come and we lie down at his feet, when we come and take shelter under the shadow of his wings, he comes and he rescues us, he comes and gives us rest.

Friends, the story of the gospel is not that God looks after those who look after themselves. The message of the gospel is not that the religious and the pious and that those that have got it all together win in the end.

The story of the gospel is not that the good guys always come out on top. The message of the gospel is that though all of us are like Ruth, foreigners and outcasts, though all of us are like Naomi, conflicted and broken, though all of us may be like David and Boaz, trying to serve God but conflicted with our own sin, though we are like these people conflicted and broken, the gospel tells us that though we have fallen short of God's standards, both Jew and Gentile, religious and secular, conservative and liberal, the Ruths of this world and the Naomis of this world and the Boaz's of this world are invited to come to the great Redeemer, invited to come to his table, invited to come and find shelter and safety under the shadow of his wings.

Friends, can we come to him this morning? Can we come to our great Redeemer? Can we come to the one who not just redeemed Naomi and Ruth, not just redeemed Israel, the one who's redeeming the whole world, Jew and Gentile alike, the one who came for sinners like you and me?

[37 : 13] Let's come to him this morning. Let's pray together. Can I invite you to stand with me? Let's come to Christ, our great Redeemer this morning.

Maybe let's close our eyes and if you're comfortable will, I encourage you to maybe take a posture that reflects it.

Maybe open your hands. It's a posture that communicates, God, I come to you. I'm open. I'm not close to you.

I'm not holding on to my pride and reputation. I come empty. I come vulnerable. I come in a posture of surrender. Friends, this morning let's come to our great Redeemer for his mercy and his kindness.

Let's acknowledge our need for his mercy and his kindness. Friends, this morning let's acknowledge that though we might be tempted to think of ourselves like Ruth.

[38 : 26] There's probably a lot more of Naomi in us than we like to acknowledge. Let's acknowledge that this morning. Friends, this morning let's revel in the unbelievable kindness and the mercy of God.

The fact that God's kindness to us is extravagantly more than we could ask or imagine. this morning let's revel in the fact that God's hand is all over history working out his purposes generation after generation after generation.

God, we come to you. We come to you this morning, God, and we acknowledge that we need you. God, this morning we don't come to you with our religious credentials.

We don't come with our accolades. We don't come deserving or earning your grace. We come as humble recipients of your grace.

And we say, Jesus, won't you rescue us? Won't you redeem us? Won't you cover us with your wings, God? We've come to take shelter and safety and refuge in the shadow of the almighty.

[39 : 55] Jesus, come and have your way. And Jesus, we pray that as you rescue us, won't you also change us to make us more like you?

Won't you settle our hearts, God? won't you give us great rest. Father, pray for those of us that are anxious, those of us that carry turmoil in our hearts, those of us that are scared and fearful.

I pray, Christ, that we come and find our refuge in you. I pray for us, God, those of us that feel conflicted. God, won't you open the eyes of our hearts to see you and to trust you?

God, I pray for those of us that maybe our hearts have grown cold towards you and worship has become hard. Oh, God, won't you ban the flame of worship in our hearts again?

Won't you cause us to rejoice? Won't you cause us to sing? God, won't you cause our hearts to overflow with worship for you, God, I pray. Oh, Holy Spirit, come, we pray.