

Embracing Responsibilities
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Ruth 3 and 4

Before we get into today's lesson in Ruth 3 and 4; let's make sure we understand the story of Ruth and Naomi so far from chapters 1 and 2. (Open your Bibles to chapter 1 and let's skim through the facts)

- Elimelech took his family and fled to Moab. Question: Why? Famine.
 - Question: What happened to Naomi's husband? Several years later, What happened to her sons?
 - Now we have not one widow, but THREE. and no one to support them.
 - What was significant about Boaz? (2:1)
 - When Boaz spotted this unfamiliar young woman what happened?
 - What was a KINSMAN or GUARDIAN REDEEMER in that culture?
 - What were the obligations of a KINSMAN REDEEMER?
- So, Naomi get's busy as with a plan to help Ruth. Let's begin in Chapter 3 verse 1:

3 One day Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not try to find a home[a] 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.

7 When 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. 11 And 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. 12 Although it is true that I am near of kin, there is a kinsman-redeemer nearer than I. 13 Stay 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."

- Verse 1: According to this verse what was Naomi feeling?

- Verse 2: Question - What Naomi simply a MATCHMAKING MOTHER-IN-LAW, or was there more at work here?
- Question: Why do you think Naomi wasn't just HATCHING HER OWN PLAN?
- Naomi told Ruth to sneak in while Boaz was sleeping; uncover his feet; and lie down at his feet. How weird is that?
- Question: Anyone have any idea what that was all about?
- Question: Do you think there was any "hanky panky" going on here?
- But Boaz was a man of integrity. Verse 12 - What was the GLITCH in the plan?

Chapter 4 beginning in verse 1:

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.

2 Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said, "Sit here," and they did so. 3 Then 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. 4 I 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[a] 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.

5 Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the land from Naomi and from Ruth the Moabitess, you acquire[b] the dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property."

6 At 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."

- Boaz wanted to marry Ruth. But he was a man of integrity so he went to the closer kinsman.
- When it was just a "land deal" how did the other KINSMAN respond?
- Verse 5: What changed his mind?

9 Then 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. 10 I have also acquired Ruth the Moabitess, 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! "

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.

17 The women living there said, "Naomi has a son." (Actually Ruth and Boaz had him) And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. (The ancestor of Jesus!).

- In this story we see a PATTERN among the key players. A PATTERN of taking RESPONSIBILITY for others.
- How did Naomi take RESPONSIBILITY for others?
- How did Ruth take RESPONSIBILITY for others?
- How did Boaz take RESPONSIBILITY for others?

So, What's the Takeaway?

- What LESSON is there for YOU and ME from the story of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz?