

Redeemed and Secure
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Ruth 3 & 4

“Who would have imagined?” **Have you ever said that to yourself or a loved one as you reflected on a twist or turn in your life?**

What is the difference between being shocked versus being surprised? “Surprised”...is generally a positive or neutral situation. “Shocked is extremely unexpected and usually negative.¹ Who wants a “shock party” for your birthday?

Last week we learned about two widows in a state of shock because of a triple tragedy. They were headed for a life of poverty and loneliness, but God had bigger plans. This week we see how God surprised them using the circumstances of their distress in unexpected ways for their good, His purpose, and His glory.

Big Idea: God can surprise us with whom He uses, and how He chooses to bring about His purposes. He can and will turn tragedy into triumph if we'll trust Him.

- Last week we met two women, Naomi and her daughter-in-law, Ruth.
- Naomi was a native of Bethlehem who fled to the land of Moab with her husband and two sons during a famine. (Perhaps in disobedience)
- Moab was a nation east of Israel (modern day Jordan) that was cursed by God; a pagan nation worshiping false gods and practicing child sacrifice.
- Naomi's husband died. Then her two sons took Moabite wives.
- Then the sons died leaving Naomi and her two widowed daughters-in-law.
- Since God had ended the famine in Bethlehem, Naomi headed home.
- At her urging, one of the daughters-in-law, Orpah, went home to family.

- The other daughter-in-law Ruth insisted on making the trip with Naomi, caring for her for life, and trusting the God of Israel for their future.
- When they arrived in Bethlehem everyone welcomed them with joy!
- Naomi said, *“Don’t call me Naomi. Instead, call me Mara (meaning bitter) for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me.”*²
- Ruth was both loyal and industrious so she went seeking food for them.
- It was the barley harvest and she went to glean in the fields of a man named Boaz. **What was “gleaning?” Why was it practiced?**
- Boaz was a prominent, godly, and successful farmer. A good man!
- He noticed this foreign woman Ruth and her loyalty to Naomi, and made sure she was protected and given as much grain as she could carry.
- When Ruth got home and told Naomi about her good fortune in the fields, Naomi said, *“Boaz is family! In fact, he is a “kinsman redeemer” from our husbands’ relatives.”* You can just see the light bulb over Naomi’s head!
- Naomi knew the shortest route to security for Ruth was a good husband. Though he was older by a generation, Boaz was great husband material.
- The harvest had been successful for Boaz and he and his workers would be celebrating after they threshed their grain. Naomi said to Ruth:

Ruth 3:3–4 (NLT)

³ Now do as I tell you—take a bath and put on perfume and dress in your nicest clothes. Then go to the threshing floor, but don’t let Boaz see you until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴ Be sure to notice where he lies down; then go and uncover his feet and lie down there. He will tell you what to do.”

- Okay, this is getting a little strange! But Ruth did as Naomi instructed.

Ruth 3:8–13 (NLT)

⁸ Around midnight Boaz suddenly woke up and turned over. He was surprised to find a woman lying at his feet! ⁹ “Who are you?” he asked.

“I am your servant Ruth,” she replied. “Spread the corner of your covering over me, for you are my family redeemer.”

¹⁰ “The Lord bless you, my daughter!” Boaz exclaimed. “You are showing even more family loyalty now than you did before, for you have not gone after a younger man, whether rich or poor. ¹¹ Now don’t worry about a thing, my daughter. I will do what is necessary, for everyone in town knows you are a virtuous woman. ¹² But while it’s true that I am one of your family redeemers, there is another man who is more closely related to you than I am. ¹³ Stay here tonight, and in the morning I will talk to him. If he is willing to redeem you, very well. Let him marry you. But if he is not willing, then as surely as the Lord lives, I will redeem you myself! Now lie down here until morning.”

- Ruth said, “spread the corner of your covering over me...my family redeemer.” In the ESV: “Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer.”³ **What was Ruth asking Boaz to do?**
- John MacArthur says because Boaz was a generation older than Ruth it would not have been proper for him to ask HER to marry. She had to initiate the proposal.⁴
- **Is this an “R-rated” passage? What do you think? Why? What kind of risk was this for Ruth?**
- Last week we talked about levirate marriage. **How did that law work?**
- This week we see the Kinsman Redeemer law. A **kinsman-redeemer** is the relative who restores or preserves the full community rights of disadvantaged family members.⁵ There were several obligations:
 - o Obligation to redeem the land Lev 25:25-28; Jer 32:6-9
 - o Obligation to redeem the enslaved Lev 25:47-55
 - o Obligation to provide an heir Ge 38:8-10; Dt 25:5-10; Mt 22:23-28 pp Mk 12:18-23 pp Lk 20:27-33
 - o Obligation to avenge death Nu 35:16-21⁶
- Boaz, a man of integrity, approached the other redeemer. The other redeemer would/could not marry Ruth and buy their

property back. The way was clear for this May/December marriage.

- This engagement would be enough to point the way to a “happily-ever-after” ending for Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz, but there’s more in this passage.
- Ruth, was from Moab thus a born enemy of God. In the eyes of the Jews she had no status, no rights, and no way to provide for her future. She needed someone to come to her rescue. She needed to be redeemed.
- The word *redeem* means “to set free by paying a price.” In the case of Ruth and Naomi, Elimelech’s property had either been sold or was under some kind of mortgage⁷ **How does this point to the New Testament?**

Mark 10:45 (ESV) tells us,

⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Galatians 4:4–7 (ESV) says,

⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Warren Wiersbe writes:

“When you see this as a type of Jesus Christ, it reminds you that He had to become related to us before He could redeem us. He became flesh and blood so He could die for us on the cross (Heb. 2:14–15). When He was born into this world in human flesh, He became our “near kinsman”; and He will remain our “kinsman” for all eternity. What matchless love!”⁸

Ruth 4:13–17 (NLT)

The Descendants of Boaz

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth into his home, and she became his wife. When he slept with her, the Lord enabled her to become pregnant, and she gave birth to a son. ¹⁴ Then the women of the town said to Naomi, “Praise the Lord, who has now provided a redeemer for your family!

May this child be famous in Israel. ¹⁵ May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been better to you than seven sons!”

¹⁶ Naomi took the baby and cuddled him to her breast. And she cared for him as if he were her own. ¹⁷ The neighbor women said, “Now at last Naomi has a son again!” And they named him Obed. He became the father of Jesse and the grandfather of David.

- **What does this lesson teach us about how God can bring triumph from tragedy in our lives today? What can we learn about how God works versus how we THINK things will go? When we're faced with hardship or tragedy, how should we respond?**
- **Any other thoughts?**

So, What's the Takeaway?

- We said, God can surprise us with whom He uses and how He chooses to bring about His purposes.
- That was certainly true for Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz!
- Their transformation from tragedy to triumph brought to mind two verses:

In Isaiah 61:3 (NLT) the prophet wrote to “all who mourn in Israel,” he will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair. In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks that the Lord has planted for his own glory.

Psalm 30:11 (NLT)

¹¹ You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing. You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy,

- Who would have ever imagined how the story turned out?
- Naomi and Ruth expected to live long, happy lives with their husbands in Moab. Three sudden deaths changed their expectations dramatically.

- Naomi reconciled herself to life as a bitter, lonely widow, and Ruth had committed her life to being a widowed caregiver for Naomi.
- Boaz was probably expecting to be a wealthy but single gentleman farmer.
- God had a different plan.
- Boaz would be their “family redeemer,” their “knight in shining armor.”
- Ruth would be a mom. And, in a sense, Naomi would be a grandmother.
- All of them would enjoy happiness in ways they never expected; but this wasn’t just about a happy ending for them. It was about eternity for us.
- None of them expected that God would allow them to play key roles in His plan to bring a king to Israel (David,) and the King of Kings to mankind (Jesus.) There’s no better example of Paul’s words in Romans 8:28 (NLT):

²⁸ And we know that God causes everything to work together* for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

- Tragedy should lead to trusting for God’s people. When life brings tragedy, we need to trust that God is working in the background for our good.
- If we love God and submit to whatever He has planned for our lives, He will surprise us with the people and circumstances He will use to bring beauty from the ashes of our distress, and turn our mourning into dancing.
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¹ <https://englishhelponline.me/2011/05/16/the-difference-between-words-surprised-and-shocked/>

² Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ru 1:20). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Ru 3:9). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

⁴ <https://www.gty.org/resources/pdf/sermons/80-238>

⁵ Manser, M. H. (2009). *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies*. London: Martin Manser.

⁶ Manser, M. H. (2009). *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies*. London: Martin Manser.

⁷ Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Be Committed* (p. 52). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁸ Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Be Committed* (pp. 52–53). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.