

Redeeming Love

- *Ruth*

- This weekend has been a special weekend for many of you as we have celebrated Valentine's Day & the love that we share for those special people in our lives. Well, today we are going to be discussing a love that is greater than any love we can give or experience from anyone else ... it is the Redeeming Love of God.
- The Word of God is the greatest love story that has ever been written. As we read about the love of God, we see the love for His creation, the love for those that obey Him, the love for those in need, but most of all for the love of sinners that would send His Son to die for us.
- In the Old Testament, we have another special love story that is tucked away, and it's found in the Book of Ruth.
 - Now this is sort of a romance story, but the focus this morning won't be so much on the participants in this story as much as it will be on the illustration we see of Christ, and the Church, and God's redeeming love.
- Read Ruth 1:1-5
- For the sake of time, I will give you the story of Ruth & Boaz & then we will discuss the facets of Redeeming Love.
 - As we begin reading, a famine drove a family out of Bethlehem & they settled in a place that was common to their enemies. This place was called Moab.
 - Roughly 10 years later, the lady's husband died along with all of her sons leaving only herself & her daughter-in-laws. Their names were Orpah & Ruth.
 - When this tragedy struck, Naomi encouraged the women to go back to their hometown in Moab & she sent her blessings along with them.
 - You see in this day, women relied completely on their husbands to provide for them & meet their very basic of needs.
 - Now that these 2 women had absolutely nothing, they would be lucky just to find a place to lay their heads at night.
- There are some things I want you to see about Ruth, because Ruth is a picture of you, the Church; and, Boaz is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Let's look at a few things:
 - I. The Problems That Hindered Ruth (vv.1-5)
 - a. She was Cursed
 - i. Number one: She was under a curse; she lived a cursed life. Now, why was she under a curse? Well, look, in verse 4: "*And they took them wives of the women of Moab*" (Ruth 1:4).
 - ii. The Moabites were not a great group of people to say the very least. They had consistently sought to hinder & destroy the people of Israel, and God had cursed the Moabite people.
 - 1. Deuteronomy 23:3 – "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever."
 - iii. Because Ruth was a Moabite, she was under a curse, just like you & me. The Bible tells us that we are under a similar curse, the curse of sin.
 - 1. Ephesians 2:11-12 – "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers

from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”

- iv. That’s the way every one of us are this morning if we are without Jesus Christ ... aliens, hopeless strangers under a curse.

b. She was Crushed (v.5)

- i. Not only did she have a cursed life, she was broken & devastated from the tragedies that had taken place in her life.
 - 1. Death had invaded her home & took her husband.
 - 2. Poverty had come upon her due to this loss in her life & in her income.
 - 3. Her life was marked by tragedy and sorrow & in a sense they were hopeless.
- ii. As tragic as this scene is, the truth is that there are many in our churches today, even here in Inman, who are devastated with life and circumstances, and perhaps even this morning you feel a little bit of hopelessness.

c. She was Condemned

- i. It is bad enough to be cursed & crushed, but we see that she was also condemned b/c without a change in her life, Ruth was just like you & I, she would die in her sin and go to Hell.
- ii. You see, besides the fact that she was a Moabite, Ruth was a sinner. Because of the sin of Adam, sin had been passed not only upon her, but upon all mankind, which of course includes you & I as well.
 - 1. Romans 5:12 – “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”
- iii. I want to point out this significance this morning b/c as we start this story out, I want you to understand that Ruth & you & I are facing similar situations. As you look at Ruth and the problems she was faced with, remember, she is a picture of the church. The problems she faced is the same problems you & I face today.

II. The Purpose That Held Ruth (vv.6-18)

a. A Covenant Was Made (vv.15-16)

- i. Ruth had a lot of things going against her, but one thing she had going for her was she refused to continue following others & instead she chose to stick with Naomi, stay where she stayed, mingle with her people, but the greatest choice was to turn from the god of the Moabites & instead choose to serve Jehovah God.
- ii. Orpah decided against staying with her mother-in-law & chose to carry on with her life & stay in Moab. The Bible tells us in v.15 that she went back with her own people & began following her own gods. But Ruth was committed to Naomi as she exclaimed, “I want the God of Israel, I want your God to be my God.”
- iii. The sad thing is, many do the same thing, week after week. As we come to the altar call & I will plead with folks to get right with God, to confess their sins, to turn to God, and thankfully many choose to come & honor God. But unfortunately some people will make the choice Orpah made & choose just to go on their way.
 - 1. “What will people say?”
 - 2. “I don’t want to leave my sin.”
 - 3. “God will never hear me.”
 - 4. Revelation 22:17 – “And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”
- iv. It’s yours for the taking this morning. God has removed all the barriers. The ball is in your court. No one else can come for you & we shouldn’t let anyone stand in our way either. The most important decision you ever make will be the decision to accept Jesus Christ.

III. The Person That Helped Her (2:1-9; 3:1-13)

a. She Needed Help (2:1-9)

- i. No doubt about it, Ruth needed some help just to put food on her table. And it just so happened that there was a field nearby where she could “glean” from the fields.
 - ii. Now let me explain this “gleaning” process.
 1. The workers that would harvest that crop would go over the entire field & collect their harvest for the owner.
 2. However, in Bible days, it was customary for them to leave the edges or the corners of the field for those who were poor & needy to get what they needed.
 - iii. So as Ruth is out gleaning in the fields, she happens to run into a very nice man who happened to be the owner of the field. His name was Boaz.
 1. He compels her to remain in his field only to glean.
 2. He gives her special permission to drink from his employee’s vessels. (v.9)
 3. He even asked her to join them when it came time to eat & refresh themselves. (vv.14-15,18)
 - iv. Ruth goes back to tell Naomi what has happened & Naomi puts a plan together for Ruth to meet Boaz on a personal level.
- b. She Approaches The Owner of The Field (3:7-4:10)**
- i. Boaz was actually a relative of Elimelech, Ruth’s father-in-law; but this was no coincidence, this was orchestrated by God, and what a picture it paints for you & I.
 1. If a Jew had lost his estate, if he had gone into bankruptcy, a relative could buy his estate back for him—just not anyone could do it, but it had to be a relative.
 - a. Lev. 25:25 – *“If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold.”*
 2. So to redeem a man's bankrupt possessions, you had to be his kinfolk. This is starting to get good right here.
 3. Not only could you, if you were a kinsman, redeem your brother's lost estate, but, you could also marry your brother's widow, or your relative's widow, if he died. (Deut. 25:5) That is, if a man dies, and he doesn't have a son to carry on the family name, then that responsibility was passed on to the man's brother or relative to marry the widow, so that the man's name might go on.
 - ii. You say, “Besides a good piece of history, what in the world does that have to do with me?” Ruth knows that Boaz stands in the place to be her redeemer, to buy back her lost estate, and to give her children. So she follows Naomi’s request and she goes and places herself at the feet of her redeemer. (3:7-13)
 - iii. Now, she has placed herself there at the feet of the only man she feels who ought to redeem her. But, there was a problem: There was a kinsman that was closer to her than Boaz was.
 1. As she lays there at the feet of her redeemer, Boaz replies “Ruth, I will certainly accept you, but there is a kinsmen nearer than I & by law he had to give him a chance first.”
 - iv. In chapter 4, we read of the encounter between Boaz & the lawful kinsmen.
 1. He offered to sell some land that Naomi & her deceased husband had owned.
 - a. The offer was very attractive & was immediately jumped at.
 2. There was one stipulation though, he had to take care of Ruth.
 3. Boaz was making sure to cover himself & also protect Ruth in this transaction & we read of the encounter in chapter 4:7-10.
 - a. Now, why would a man take off his shoe and give it to another man in a business contract? It just simply means, "I am standing in your shoes, and you're standing in mine"; that's what it means—"I'm taking your place."

- v. And so, Boaz takes off his shoe to say, "I am willing to stand in the place of this man, Elimelech. I am willing to take his place."
- vi. When Jesus went to the cross of Calvary, He in essence stood in our shoes, He stood in our place.
 - 1. II Corinthians 5:21 – "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."
- vii. Jesus became our Kinsman Redeemer, and in order for someone to become a Kinsman Redeemer,
 - 1. He had to be a near kinsman.
 - a. Have you ever wondered why Jesus became a man? Jesus could not have redeemed us without becoming our near kinsman.
 - b. He took upon Him human flesh. He became our kinsman in order to redeem us.
 - 2. He had to be wealthy; he had to have the ability to pay the price.
 - a. Boaz was rich; if he had been as poor as Ruth, there would have been no way for him to redeem her.
 - b. Jesus paid our debt at the cross, a debt we could never afford. Yet when He shed His blood, it was paid in full.
 - 3. He had to be willing.
 - a. You couldn't force him into doing it, you could pay him to do it, he had to be willing to be the Kinsman Redeemer.
 - b. Thank God, Jesus was willing. Thank God, He was able. Thank God, He became our Kinsman Redeemer.

IV. The Position Of Ruth

- Ruth was a cursed woman. She was a crushed woman. She was a condemned woman without any hope at all.
- But then she meets this man who was willing & able to redeem her from her position & take her as his wife.
 - o Ruth 4:13 – "So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife:"
 - o Ruth was a Moabitess, but her marriage to Boaz gave Ruth a privilege that was not normally given to one of her race. Furthermore, the privilege included bearing a child who was in the line of Christ.
- I have come all this way just to get to this point. This story is not just about some rich guy that extended mercy to a poor widow woman in her time of need. This is a miraculous story of a redeemer who has brought a poor undeserving widow into his family & elevated her to a position that she could never attain on her own & where she would be taken care of forever.
- This was far more than she could have ever hoped for. Now Boaz has done more than helped her out or given her a roof over her head. He has extended grace to her.
- Do you know what God has done for you?
 - o He has given you something that you did not deserve.
 - o He has willingly offered to be your Redeemer when He gave His greatest possession, His life, to pay for our sins & to take care of us for eternity.
 - o No one else could ever do for us what Jesus has done.
 - o Will you accept this Kinsman's offer today?