

The Book of Ruth

(& Naomi & Boaz & David & God)

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Reading Old Testament Narrative

- OT points to Jesus and was written to teach, warn and encourage us as believers e.g. John 5:39, Luke 24:27, 44, 1 Corinthians 10:11, Romans 15:4
- One unfolding story, one unchanging God
 - God graciously reversing the curses of Genesis 3 into the blessings of Revelation 21-22 through Jesus

Genesis 2 Blessings	Genesis 3 Curses	Revelation 21-22 Amazing Blessings
Close with God v7-18 cf 3:8	Broken relationship with God v10-13	God will be with His people 21:3-4
Peaceful relationships with people v22-24	Broken relationship v6-7, 12, 16	No crying 21:4, healed nations 22:2
In God's land v8-15	Out of the land v23-24	In God's city 21:1-3, 22-27
Pleasant work under God v15	Pain and suffering v16-19	No suffering, serve God perfectly 21:4, 22:3
Eternal life cf 3:22	Death v19, 22	Receive life, no curse or death 21:6, 22:3

- Jesus' death and resurrection:
 - Breaks down barriers to God (Luke 23:44-45)

- Breaks down barriers between people (Ephesians 2:11-22)
 - Guarantees access to new land (Luke 23:42-43)
 - Brings rest and liberated work (Matthew 11:25-30)
 - Conquers death and guarantees resurrection life (1 Corinthians 15:20-26)
 - Through faith & grace (Ephesians 2) e.g. thief on the cross (Luke 23:42-43)
- Each “little story” fits into this “big story”
 - God has a plan and is consistent in working it out and relating to people – he is kind and in control
 - See how the Book of Ruth fits into the story so far – looking for rest and a leader
 - Can see Naomi as micro-picture of Israel’s need
 - Can see Ruth as micro-example of God’s grace being extended to all people groups
 - Can see Boaz as micro-shadow of the redeemer we long for
 - It is not unbiased history, it is written with specific purpose
 - Goethe “the loveliest complete work on a small scale” – just a love story?

What Themes Are There?

Generally, We Should Look Out For:

- What is God teaching us about God in this story?

- In the Book of Ruth “LORD” mentioned as:
 - Visited and gave food 1:5
 - May he be kind 1:8
 - Gone against Naomi 1:13
 - Brought emptiness 1:21
 - May he repay and reward Ruth 2:12
 - Kind not forsaken people 2:20
 - Gave son 4:13
 - Provided redeemer 4:14
 - In control behind scenes (providence), but also focus on his kindness

- But what about me?!?
 - “No Bible narrative was written specifically about you...You can always learn a great deal from these narratives, but you can never assume that God expects you to do exactly the same things that Bible characters did;

nor have the same things happen to you that happened to them” (Fee & Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for all its Worth*, p85)

- So, we should avoid: “Be a Boaz not a Bozo”

In Particular, Look Out For:

- Repetition, e.g.:
 - Bethlehem = 6 times...1:2, 19x2, 22; 2:4; 4:11
 - Moab = 11 times...1:1, 6, 22x2; 2:2, 6x2, 21; 4:3, 5, 10
 - Kindness = 4 times...1:8; 2:13, 20; 3:10
 - Rest = 2 times...1:9; 3:1
 - Wings = 2 times...2:12; 3:9
 - Redeemer = 18 times...2:20; 3:9, 12x2, 13x3; 4:3, 4x4, 6x4, 7, 14
- Parallels and contrasts, e.g.:
 - 1:1-5 and 4:13-17 have same number of words
 - Naomi before and after
 - Ruth and Orpah
 - Boaz and un-named relative
- Unusual things, e.g. not much comment from narrator (50 of 85 verses of Ruth are dialogue), so:

- The author likes to tell the story through conversation
- Watch out for narrator e.g. 2:3 “she happened”, 4:1 “and behold”, 4:18-22 “now these are the generations”

Structure of Ruth

- Scenes roughly by chapter: emptiness, seeking, finding & fullness
- Ch 1-3 have movement and return, but chapter 4 doesn't

1:1-5 Naomi emptied

1:6-22 Naomi returns from Moab

Ch 2 Ruth meets Boaz In the harvest fields

Ch3 Ruth goes to Boaz on threshing floor

4:1-12 Naomi redeemed in Israel

4:13-17 Naomi filled

4:18-22 The future

- 2:12 as key theme
- 2:20a as turning point
 - Answer to 1:8
 - Awakens hope in Naomi 2:20b and 3:1

Purpose

- Rejoice in the kind control of the LORD

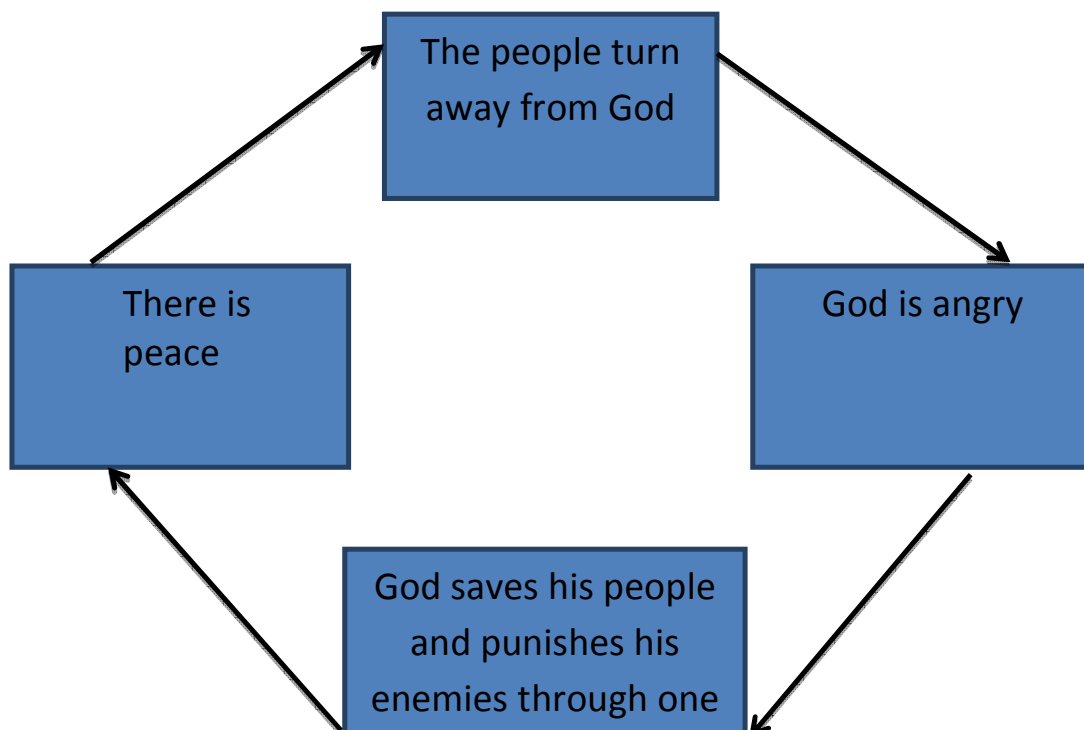
- Who is at work in the details (ch2, 4), even in hard times (ch1)
- Who restores his people (ch2, 4), even those who are bitter (ch1, 4)
- Who provides a redeemer and rest (ch2, 3, 4), even for those who are far from him (ch1, 4)

Chapter 1 Death, Despair, Emptiness and Bitterness – God is in Control

1:1-5 Is God King Amidst Death and Despair?

1:¹In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. ²The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. ³But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, ⁵and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

- Sets the scene, introduces us to main characters and their location
- Full of despair:
 - V1 Judges and the circle of doom (12x, e.g. Judges 2:11-23):



- V1 Famine in Bethlehem – this is not supposed to happen! BUT it does when God's people disobey him (Deuteronomy 28:1-24)
- V1 Leave for Moab (enemies in Deuteronomy 23:3-6)



- V3,5 Death of Elimelech, Mahlon and Chilion – death is part of God’s punishment on a fallen world (Genesis 2:17, 3:22-23)
- Elimelech means “God is King” – is God the King amidst curse and despair?

1:6-22 The LORD Almighty Fills and Empties

⁶Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food. ⁷So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. ⁸But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother’s house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. ¹⁰And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." ¹¹But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? ¹²Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, ¹³would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me." ¹⁴Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

- Repetition – “return” in v6, 7, 8, 10, 15, 16 and 22
- V6 LORD had given food, so Naomi, Ruth and Orpah decide to return
- V7-14 Naomi urges Ruth and Orpah to leave:
 - Prays for LORD to be kind and give them rest v8-9 (cf Joshua 21:43-22:8)
 - Says LORD has gone against her v13
 - Orpah leaves, but Ruth clings

¹⁵And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." ¹⁶But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. ¹⁷Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." ¹⁸ And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

- V15-18 Ruth commits herself to Naomi and the LORD:
 - Naomi has no husband or son, so Orpah leaves to find one and so Ruth stays to be with her
 - Ruth prefers bitter Naomi and the LORD who gives and takes away
 - Echo of promises to Abraham in Genesis?

¹⁹So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, "Is this Naomi?" ²⁰She said to them, "Don't call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. ²¹I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?"

²²So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

- V19-21 Naomi testifies to the women of Bethlehem:
 - Greeted by "Bitter" not "Pleasant"
 - "Bitter" has had her fullness taken from her by the LORD
 - How will Bitter become Pleasant again? How will the LORD fill the emptied?
- V22 Naomi and Ruth return as the harvest begins...

Thinking it Through Some More

- The LORD God Almighty brought:
 - famine and food nationally
 - fullness and emptiness personally
- So, He is in control of the big picture and our little lives:
 - Trust in the LORD's control, even in awful times
 - BUT is God kind??? The rest of Ruth (and the Bible!) helps us answer this
- As we return home or stay here, will we trust the LORD or give up on him?

Some Questions

- a) What does Naomi rightly understand about God? What is she wrong about?
- b) Think of a time when you have found life hard. How did you react? Did you doubt God's power, or His goodness or something else?
- c) How does this chapter and the book of Ruth help us to react rightly to despair? How will this view of God help you to live for Him this week and over coming years?

Chapters 2-3 Hope and Action – God is Kindly in Control

Introduction

- Ch 1: Trust in the LORD’s control, even in hard times
 - Is his control kind?
 - How should we live if God is in control of everything?
- Ch 1-3: Rejoice in the kind control of the LORD
 - Who is at work in the details (ch2), even in hard times (ch 1)
 - ?Who restores his people (ch2), even those who are bitter (ch 1)
 - ?Who provides a redeemer and rest (ch2, 3)
- Ch2-3 go together:

Ch2 Turning a corner & receiving kindness	Ch 3 Hope of redemption
Ruth asks Naomi if she can go and tells her what she will do v2	Naomi bids Ruth go and tells her what to do v1-4
Ruth goes v3	Ruth goes v5-6
Boaz asks who Ruth is and is told v4-7	Boaz asks who Ruth is and is told v8-9
Boaz asks Ruth to stay, says she is worthy of blessing, gives food v8-16	Boaz says Ruth is worthy of blessing, asks her to stay, gives food v10-15
Ruth speaks to Naomi, tells her what has happened, receives advice v19-22	Ruth speaks to Naomi, tells her what has happened, receives advice v16-18

2:1-3 God sets the Scene

¹Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. ²And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favour." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter." ³So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech.

- 1:22 and 2:1 a glimmer of hope after no food and no family...
- 2:2 gleaning shows God's care for the poor (Leviticus 19:9, 23:22, Deuteronomy 24:19)
- 2:3 "she happened to come" – shows God's providence

2:4-16 Kindness from Ruth, Boaz and the LORD

⁴And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they answered, "The LORD bless you." ⁵Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?" ⁶And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, "She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab." ⁷She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.' So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest."

⁸Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women. ⁹Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn."

¹⁰Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favour in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?" ¹¹But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. ¹²The LORD repay you for what you have

done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!" ¹³Then she said, "I have found favour in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants."

¹⁴And at mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over. ¹⁵When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. ¹⁶And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her."

- 2:4-7 Boaz and his boys: who is this woman?
- 2:8-9 protection from Boaz
- 2:10-13 "favour" repeated in v10 and v13 – all about kindness:
 - Ruth recognises Boaz's kindness to her v10 – a foreigner
 - Boaz recognises Ruth's kindness to Naomi v11 – left everything
 - Boaz prays for God's kindness for Ruth v12
 - Sheltered under mighty wings
 - Psalms 17:8, 36:7, 63:7 – of David, about protection, love and help
 - Matthew 23:37-39 – Jesus as mother hen, rejecting his wings leads to destruction
 - Key verse for Ruth and whole Bible – the LORD is kind to those who seek refuge in him cf Psalm 2:12, Romans 8:28-39
 - Ruth thanks Boaz for his kindness to her v13
- 2:14-17 protection and provision from Boaz

2:18-23 The LORD is Bringing Hope

¹⁷So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. ¹⁸And she took it up and went into the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied. ¹⁹And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz." ²⁰And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!" Naomi also said to her, "The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers." ²¹And Ruth the Moabite said, "Besides, he said to me, 'You shall keep close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'" ²²And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, lest in another field you be assaulted." ²³So she kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

- 2:18-20 Naomi recognises God's kindness in Boaz's kindness:
 - LORD has not forsaken living (Naomi & Ruth) and dead (husband & sons)
 - LORD has provided a redeemer cf Leviticus 25:25 (land), 25:47-49 (slaves), Deuteronomy 25:5-10 (family name/children)
 - Big turning point in Naomi's emotions and story
- 2:21-23 real protection amidst danger – even for a Moabite

3:1-5 A Plan for Redemption

¹Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? ²Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. ³Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴But when he lies down, observe the place where

he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do." ⁵And she replied, "All that you say I will do."

- 2:23 and 3:1 harvest is ending...time for threshing and a plan
- 3:1 Naomi is now is active and seeks rest for Ruth
- 3:3-5 Ruth is going on a date

3:6-15 Hopes Dashed?

⁶So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her. ⁷And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. ⁸At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! ⁹He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer." ¹⁰And he said, "May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. ¹¹And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. ¹²And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. ¹³Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the LORD lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning."

¹⁴So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." ¹⁵And he said, "Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city.

- 3:6-8 and 10-11 Boaz gets cold feet but has a warm heart for Ruth – Boaz sees more of Ruth's kindness
- 3:9 Ruth echoes Boaz's prayer of 2:12
- 3:12a all will end happily...3:12b but not with Boaz?

- 3:14-15 Ruth experiences more of Boaz's kindness – righteous action in view of God's providence

3:16-18 It Will be Settled

¹⁶And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did you fare, my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her, ¹⁷saying, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, 'You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'" ¹⁸She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."

- V18 This will be settled...
- So, don't be a Bozo, be a Boaz???
- Righteous Boaz points forward to even-more-righteous-Jesus (e.g. Matthew 5:17)
 - Jesus' kindness brings life (e.g. Ephesians 2:7, Titus 3:4)

Thinking it Through Some More

- The LORD God Almighty brought:
 - Ruth to Boaz's field
 - Kindness to the living and dead
 - Hope of redemption
 - So, He is in control of the big picture and our little lives:
 - Rejoice in the LORD's kind control
 - Live with your eyes open – be a Ruth, Naomi and Boaz
 - BUT is this just for Ruth & Co, not us???
- Ch4 and Jesus answers this

- As we return home or stay here, will we rejoice in the LORD's care over us or give up on him?

Some Questions

a) Do Ruth or Naomi deserve to receive Boaz's kindness? What does Naomi realise about God?

b) Can you look back on your life and see ways in which God caused things to happen for your good?

c) If the LORD God does not forsake the living or the dead (2:20, see also Hebrews 13:5-6), how should this give us confidence in this life (especially when we face hard times)?

d) God's providence helped Naomi to have hope-full action and Boaz to act righteously. How might you need to follow their example when thinking about God's kind providence?

e) How will this change the way you talk about God with other people?

Providential Poetry by John Ryland (1753- 1825)

Sovereign Ruler of the Skies
Ever gracious, ever wise;
All my times are in thy hand,
All events at thy command.

His decree who formed the earth
Fixed my first and second birth;
Parents, native place, and time,
All appointed were by him.

He that formed me in the womb,
He shall guide me to the tomb;
All my times shall ever be
Ordered by his wise decree.

Times the tempter's power to prove;
Times to taste the Saviour's love;
All must come, and last, and end,
As shall please my heavenly Friend.

Plagues and deaths around me fly;
Till He bids, I cannot die;
Not a single shaft can hit,
Till the God of love sees fit.

10. *Without certainty about God's providence life would be unbearable*

^bHence appears the immeasurable felicity of the godly mind.¹⁴ Innumerable are the evils that beset human life; innumerable, too, the deaths that threaten it. We need not go beyond ourselves; since our body is the receptacle of a thousand diseases—in fact holds within itself and fosters the causes of diseases—a man cannot go about unburdened by many forms of his own destruction, and without drawing out a life enveloped, as it were, with death. For what else would you call it, when he neither freezes nor sweats without danger? Now, wherever you turn, all things around you not only are hardly to be trusted but almost openly menace, and seem to threaten immediate death. Embark upon a ship, you are one step away from death. Mount a horse, if one foot slips, your life is imperiled. Go through the city streets, you are subject to as many dangers as there are tiles on the roofs. If there is a weapon in your hand or a friend's, harm awaits. All the fierce animals you see are armed for your destruction. But if you try to shut yourself up in a walled garden, seemingly delightful, there a serpent sometimes lies hidden. Your house, continually in danger of fire, threatens in the daytime to impoverish you, at night even to collapse upon you. Your field, since it is exposed to hail, frost, drought, and other calamities, threatens you with barrenness, and hence, famine. I pass over poisonings, ambushes, robberies, open violence, which in part besiege us at home, in part dog us abroad. Amid these tribulations must not man be most miserable, since, but half alive in life, he weakly draws his anxious and languid breath, as if he had a sword perpetually hanging over his neck?

You will say: these events rarely happen, or at least not all the time, nor to all men, and never all at once. I agree; but since we are warned by the examples of others that these can also happen to ourselves, and that our life ought not to be excepted any more than theirs, we cannot but be frightened and terrified as if such events were about to happen to us. What, therefore, more calamitous can you imagine than such trepidation? Besides that, if we say that God has exposed man, the noblest of creatures, to all sorts of blind and heedless blows of fortune, we are not guiltless of reproaching God. But here I propose to speak only of that misery which man will feel if he is brought under the sway of fortune.

¹⁴ *"Inaestimabilis piae mentis foelicitas."* Cf. I. v. 1, note 2.

"Yet, when the light of divine providence has once shone upon a godly man, he is then relieved and set free not only from the extreme anxiety and fear that were pressing him before, but from every care...Under his wings he will protect you." (Book I, chapter xvii, paragraph 11)

Chapter 4 A Happy Ending – God is Kindly in Control of All Things for All Kinds of People Through Jesus

- Will the hero get his girl?
 - Yes! The young widow Ruth is redeemed by Boaz v1-12 & the older widow Naomi is redeemed by a grandson v13-17
- What's the point?
 - God is kindly in control of all things, including history
 - Jesus is the focus of God's plans and God's in-control-kindness
 - God kindly redeems all kinds of people
- Rejoice in the kind control of the LORD
 - Who is at work in the details (ch2, 4), even in hard times (ch1)
 - Who restores his people (ch2, 4), even those who are bitter (ch1, 4)
 - Who provides a redeemer and rest (ch2, 3, 4), even for those who are far from him (ch1, 4)

4:1-12 Boaz Kindly Redeems Ruth – and so God expands his family

¹Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, "Turn aside, friend; sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down. ²And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down.

³Then he said to the redeemer, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech.

⁴So I thought I would tell you of it and say, 'Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people.' If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you." And he said, "I will redeem it."

⁵Then Boaz said, "The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the

name of the dead in his inheritance." ⁶Then the redeemer said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it."

- V1 "And behold" – providence, like 2:3
- V3-5 land and people go together (and always read the small print!?!?)
- V6 shows the Other Guy to think of own life and family

⁷Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel. ⁸So when the redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself," he drew off his sandal. ⁹Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon. ¹⁰Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day." ¹¹Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem, ¹²and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the LORD will give you by this young woman."

- V10 The hero does get his girl, to "perpetuate name of the dead"
- V5 and 10 "Ruth the Moabite"
- V11-12 big prayers for Ruth – expansion of God's family is in view
 - V11 Ruth is to be like Rachel & Leah –builders of Israel cf Genesis 29-30
 - V12 house to be like Perez – builders of God's king cf Genesis 38, 49:8-12

4V13-17 Obed Redeems Naomi – and so God kindly provides a king

¹³So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. ¹⁴Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel!" ¹⁵He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him." ¹⁶Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. ¹⁷ And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

- From wedding scene to maternity ward
- V13 "LORD gave her conception" – control and kindness (again!)
 - We are seeing the truth of Elimelech's name (means "God is King")
- V14 LORD gave Naomi a redeemer
 - A grandson for her family and old age v15
 - A King who brings peace to his people v17
 - An even greater king to come...
- The empty and bitter one is now full and joyful cf Mary's song in Luke 1:46-55
- V17 David is the end point of Ruth's story, but not the Bible's story...

V18-22 David Redeems Israel and Jesus Kindly Redeems All Kind of People

¹⁸Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez fathered Hezron, ¹⁹Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab, ²⁰Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, ²¹Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed, ²²Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David.

- More small print, easy to skip genealogies

- Why end here?
 - See God’s hand over all of history, even in the details
 - Look to future and God’s saving purposes of rest and refuge
- V18 “These are the generations of” echoes Genesis 2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:27
- 10 generations between Perez and David echoes Adam-Noah and Shem-Abraham – each of those previous genealogies had a “redeemer”
- Picked up again in Matthew 1 – which emphasises providence, redemption and inclusion of all kinds of people:

¹*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*

²*Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah **by Tamar**, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, ⁴and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵and Salmon the father of Boaz **by Rahab**, and Boaz the father of Obed **by Ruth**, and Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶and Jesse the father of David the king.*

*And David was the father of Solomon **by the wife of Uriah**, ⁷and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, ⁸and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, ⁹and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, ¹⁰and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, ¹¹and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.*

¹²*And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, ¹³and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, ¹⁴and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, ¹⁵and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, ¹⁶and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.*

¹⁷*So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.*

- 4 unlikely ladies: deceiving-Tamar (Genesis 38), prostitute -Canaanite-Rahab (Joshua 2), Moabite-Ruth & adulterous-Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11)
 - Included in God's plans and family
- Great David's Greatest Son is born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1 cf Ruth 1:1, 1:2, 4:11 and Micah 5:2)
 - To save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21)
 - Being "God with us" (Matthew 1:23)
 - For all kinds of people e.g. wise men from the east (Matthew 2:1-12) and across the world (Matthew 28:18-20)
 - Bringing fullness and rest (Matthew 11)

Thinking it Through Some More

- The LORD God Almighty brought:
 - The relative to Boaz quickly
 - Kindness to Ruth and Boaz
 - Redemption for Israel and all kinds of people
- God orders history e.g. Acts 2:23-24 – and small things are part of bigger things e.g. Genesis 50:20-21
- Jesus Christ is the focus of history e.g. Ephesians 1
- God is providentially kind to us in Christ e.g. Matthew 6:25-34, Romans 8:28-30

- So, God is in control of the big picture and our little lives:
 - Rejoice in the LORD's providence
 - Trust in Jesus as the centre of history and God's kindness
- As we return home or stay here, will we rejoice in the LORD's kindness for us and not move from Jesus?

Some Questions

a) How were we like Ruth according to Ephesians 2:11-12? What has happened to outsiders like us (if we are trusting in Jesus' death and resurrection) in Ephesians 2:13-17?

b) What are the benefits of Jesus' redemption in Ephesians 2:18-22?

c) How can we be sure of God's kindness and control even in the worst of times?

d) How will this help you to live for Jesus this week and beyond?

More Ways from Ruth to Jesus, the New Testament and Us

At the end of Luke's Gospel (in 24:25-27 and 44-47), Jesus tells His disciples that the OT points to Himself. We often recognise that this happens through prophecies about Jesus (such as that He would be born of a virgin in Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:22-23), but it also happens in ways which show OT people as "shadows" or pointers to Christ, such as Boaz being a shadow of the great Rescuer Jesus. Below are different ideas or characteristics which we see as "shadows" in Ruth and which point to the "real thing" in Jesus Christ.

a) Kindness – The idea or theme of "kindness" is seen throughout Ruth. For example, in 1:8 Naomi says that Ruth has been kind to her, in 2:13 Ruth says that Boaz has been kind to her, in 2:20 Naomi praises God for the kindness she has been shown through Boaz, in 3:10 Boaz says that Ruth has been kind to him. This type of kindness means a deep, steadfast, faithful love for other people.

Look up Ephesians 2:1-7. How has God shown people this type of kindness? How do examples of kindness in Ruth help us to understand more of Jesus' kindness to people (hint: think how they showed their kindness to others)? How does this help you to love God more?

b) Providence – “Providence” means God’s care or protection as He acts in control of events and carries out His plans. God’s sovereign care of people and events is seen in 2:3 as Ruth ends up in Boaz’s field and in 4:1 as the nearer relative immediately turns up. It is also clearly seen as God brings a husband (Boaz) to a widow (Ruth) so that His plans of providing Israel with a rescuing King (David) are fulfilled.

Look up Acts 2:22-24 and Romans 8:28-30. From Acts, how does God show that He is in control even of Jesus’ death? From Romans, how is this caring control seen in Christians’ lives? How does this help you to trust God more?

c) Redeemer – Boaz is a redeemer or rescuer for Ruth and Naomi. He rescues them from widowhood and despair. He rescues Ruth for her to become a full member of God’s family. Through his son Obed, he rescues Naomi to have hope and life.

Look up Colossians 1:13-14 and 1:21-23 and Galatians 3:13-14. What has Jesus Christ rescued people from? What has He rescued people for? How does Boaz’s redemption of Ruth and Naomi help us to see how much more wonderful Jesus’ redemption is? Why is this worth rejoicing in?

d) Great King – All of Ruth is leading up to the genealogy which shows her as an ancestor for King David. King David was Israel's greatest king, defeating Israel's enemies, winning her peace and land and following God obediently.

Look up Genesis 49:8-10, Psalm 2, Luke 4:14-21 and Revelation 19:11-16. How does the power and rule of the promised King develop through these different verses? What has Jesus done and what will He do as this promised King? How should we react to this mighty King?