



Advent Devotions

Book of Ruth

Series: Under the Bethlehem Star

Message: Joy

Scripture: Ruth 4:1-12

Promise of Redemption, Joy of the Redeemed, A Child is Born

Does Boaz take you by surprise as he sits with the potential kinsman redeemer in the presence of the elders of Bethlehem? (3) For what reason?

Why does the potential kinsman redeemer decline to redeem the land? (6)

Does anything make you uncomfortable in chapter 4:1-10? What are your thoughts about marriage, property, estates and inheritance?

Read the Mosaic laws of redemption:

Redemption of land = Leviticus 25: 23-34

Preservation of family line = Deuteronomy 25: 5-10

As the people at the city gate begin to bless Boaz are you at all uncomfortable or shocked by their historical examples? (11-12)

Read the stories of Leah and Rachel in Genesis 29-31

Read the story of Tamar and Judah (perhaps the story that is most related to the story of Ruth and Boaz) in Genesis 38.

"Boaz fully knew the order of kinship applicable in this case. Normally the preposition 'except' indicates the only exception to the case in question. Thus, Boaz apparently means that, besides the two of them (note: 'I' am next in line after you), there were no other redeemers. If so, that sounded an ominous note: if both men waived their rights, Naomi was left without a redeemer at all, and, sadly, the land would pass into less related (perhaps even unrelated) hands. One wonders also if the remark aimed subtly to pressure the kinsman into a positive reply by implying Boaz's eagerness to get the property. If so, psychologically it appealed to the fellow's competitive spirit." Robert Hubbard Jr.

"Mr. So-and-So backed away from the deal faster than a man faced with a coiled rattlesnake. What a moment before had seemed to be a 'can't miss' real estate deal – taking care of an old lady in return for the long-term payoff of a field – had suddenly become an investment nightmare. If there were to be a child from the relationship with Ruth, the redeemer would lose the field and there would be no benefit to his own

children and estate to compensate for the costs involved in taking care of Naomi and Ruth. In other words, Mr. So-and-So was interested in ministry to the poor only if there was a payoff for himself and his family. Costly ministry without any personal payoff? Forget it!" Iain M. Duguid

"In his retraction, this anonymous man fits wonderfully into the conclusion of the book. In chapter 1, two young women are faced with a decision – a costly decision of faith. One turns back, and is heard of no more. Now in chapter 4, two men are presented with a costly commitment. One turns back, and his name remains undisclosed for the rest of world history. In this way, the closer relative appears as a kind of foil to Boaz, who, by contrasts, displays 'hesed' – the loyal love that pours itself out in fulfilling covenantal obligations, no matter what the material expense. Therein lies his godliness, his likeness to the great covenant God, who at great expense redeemed his people from Egypt and at infinitely great expense will redeem sinners through the gift of his Son on the cross." Sinclair Ferguson

Turn Toward Christmas

The marriage between Boaz and Ruth occurs against some odds. There was a nearer kinsman redeemer, and Ruth was a foreigner. The marriage of Joseph and Mary occur against some odds. What was the resistance to Joseph's and Mary's marriage? Read Matthew 1: 18-25. How did God counter the resistance?

Joseph and Boaz resemble each other. Both care deeply about being righteous (doing the right thing according to the laws of God). Both go beyond righteousness. What did Boaz do for Ruth and Naomi that was beyond the minimum set by the law of God? (hint: think back to Ruth gleaning in the field: Ruth 2:9, 2: 14-16) What does Joseph do that is graciously beyond what the law of God would allow him to do? (Matthew 1: 19)

At the end of the announcement that Boaz will redeem, the elders and those at the gate rejoice. When Jesus is born, there is great rejoicing as well. Who rejoices, and what do they say? (hint: Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, the angels, the wisemen---See Luke 1-2 and Matthew 2: 1-12)

