Redemption

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[0:00] Open with me to the book of Ruth. We'll be covering most of Ruth chapter 4 tonight.! We'll save the last few verses for next week.

! We'll be brought to a beautiful conclusion.
We've seen in the previous chapters that Boaz has solved the problem of Ruth and Naomi's hunger. And he's in the process of solving their marriagelessness, which isn't a word, but their lack of being married.
And so he solves both of those problems in this chapter. He's going to set out. Ruth is going to be married at the end of this day. But the question is, to whom is she going to be married? And in the process of this chapter, a bigger problem is going to be solved.
Not just the hunger of these widows. Not just their lack of having a man to provide for them in their family. But even a problem that is affecting the entire nation of Israel will be solved by this chapter.
[1:21] We know, according to Boaz's word, that Ruth will have a husband at the end of this day. It'll either be the other redeemer that's nearer than Boaz or Boaz himself.

We want it to be Boaz, but Ruth has a really good reputation. She's a hard worker. And we know that Boaz will follow the law. And so we want it to be Boaz. But there's a possibility that it will be this other guy.
But we see in this chapter that Boaz has some craftiness of his own that he puts into play to get things done. And our theme for tonight is redemption.
The word redeem shows up in some form like 12 times in these 17 verses. And so firstly, we see redemption in the gates. Redemption in the gates.
And so if you remember at the end of chapter 3, Ruth comes back home to Naomi, gives her an update. And Naomi tells her to wait here because Boaz will settle this matter today.
[2:25] And chapter 4 verse 1 begins, Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. This same morning, he's going to get this done. He got right to work.

And when it says gate, don't think about like a gate in your fence, something that just kind of swings open and shut. This would have been a gate of a walled city. So this would have been the entrance beyond the wall to a city itself.
This would have been a very public place. Everyone would have had to pass through here to get in or out of the city. And so anyone going to work in the fields would have gone out this gate. Anyone coming back into the city would have gone back through this gate.
And so everyone would pass through here almost on a daily basis. And this gate complex would have had some little alcoves in it for people to sit down and take a break or have a meeting or catch up with friends or whatever.
And so we've got a picture, I think, of one of these alcoves. Is that right? There it is. So this isn't in Bethlehem. This is in Beersheba further south.
[3:26] But you can see this is part of the gate to get into that city. So you've got, you know, the U sectional there to sit on and have a public meeting to discuss things. This is where legal matters would have been decided.

This is where anything that needed to happen in public would have taken place. And so this is likely what we should picture when we think of Boaz going to the gate. All right. Thank you, Molly, for the picture. Round of applause for Molly.
So this would have been a public place, would have had easy access to it, would have been easy to grab witnesses that needed to testify or listen to a legal matter going on.
Would have been very public. And so it's interesting because in chapter three, the main action of the story took place at night outside of the public eye with Ruth and Boaz all alone.

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Here in chapter four, the main action is very public. It's in broad daylight in the town square, really. And behold, the redeemer of whom Boaz had spoken came by.
[4:30] And so this very guy that Boaz had said is closer to Naomi or to a limelight than he is walks by. And Boaz says, turn aside, friend, sit down here.

And he turned aside and sat down. And now the word friend here, as the ESV translates, it isn't actually in the original text. If you've got like a new American standard or LSB, it says, my fellow, turn aside, my fellow.
And the word here is actually just Mr. So-and-so. It just kind of leaves this dude anonymous. It's like some guy from somewhere. And so it leaves his name out of the text.
It leaves him anonymous. Now, Boaz likely would have called this guy by name. He knew who he was. He probably said, hey, Jonathan, come over here. But the author of this text leaves it out.
And our question is, why? Well, so often when there's a character in the story that remains unnamed, it's usually a sign of judgment on their actions, a sign of their lack of reputation.
[5:36] And so this guy remains unnamed. The Hebrew text says, Poloni almoni, which is kind of funny. It's just like Mr. So-and-so, sit down here. And so he turned aside and sat down. And then he, that's Boaz, took ten men of the elders of the city and said, sit down here.

And so Boaz is gathering witnesses to testify to the legal nature of what's about to take place. We don't know if ten men were required to establish something or not.
But he gets ten of these guys who could rule in this matter. And whatever happens here, whatever's about to go down, whoever ends up marrying Ruth, it'll be legally valid and binding because of these witnesses.
This is happening in public. And so whatever happens here will be lasting in the case of Ruth. What is Boaz going to say? How is he going to settle this matter?
Is he going to come out and say, I want Ruth to be my wife? Is he going to say like, hey, Redeemer, get out of here, loser. Run off. How is he going to handle this? And he speaks in verse 3 to the Redeemer.
[6:45] And so he's not speaking to these elders. These elders are just playing witness to this family matter that's being settled. He says, Naomi, who's come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech.

So 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 beside you to redeem it. And I come after you. What's weird about this? He doesn't mention Ruth at all.
Isn't she the main purpose of him doing this? Isn't she the one that he's after through this process? Why? Her name doesn't even cross his lips when he speaks of this.
Why does he leave her out of the picture when he brings this up? Is he actually just after the land? Has he been using Ruth to try to get his hands on more land?
[7:49] Surely he doesn't just care about the land, does he? But either way, the Redeemer says, I will redeem it. And our hearts kind of sink here a little bit.

But they were so close to being together. But it makes sense for this Redeemer to redeem it. Because for just a little bit of money, he can add to his property.
He can gain more land under his control. He can increase the amount of property he has. Which will increase his profits in the long run. And the land in Bethlehem has been very fruitful lately.
Why wouldn't he do this? And so we can almost see him kind of chuckling to himself like, yeah, I'll take it. Sure. But Boaz kind of adds a little twist here in verse 5.
It says, then 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.
[8:56] Now Boaz inserts Ruth into this picture. Now he brings her up and says, she is tied to the property. And it's interesting that he doesn't just call her Ruth. He mentions her ethnicity here, calling her the Moabite.

And this doesn't seem like much of a twist to us yet. Because why wouldn't the Redeemer also want Ruth? She's got a good reputation. She is a hard worker. She would help him earn more profit from this land.

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Why wouldn't he take her as well? Well, Boaz mentions she's the widow of the dead, or literally the wife of the dead. So he says, you acquire her in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance.
And this word perpetuate is literally just raise up. And so he's saying you'll resurrect the name of the dead. And so your role in this would be to continue Elimelech's line in taking Ruth to be your wife.
Now this is an ancient Israelite practice. You can read about it in Deuteronomy 25, but it's called Leveret marriage. And so the idea is that if there's a married couple and the husband dies, the husband's brother has an obligation to marry that woman in order to preserve his brother's line.
[10:16] And so the first son born to that new marriage won't be the new husband's, but will actually be the dead brother's son. And so this was done in order to preserve the male line of each family.

And so Boaz is kind of appealing to this here. Elimelech has no more men in his family. His sons have died. Ruth's husband was one of those sons. And so by taking this property, you're taking Ruth.
And by taking Ruth, you have an obligation to raise up or resurrect the name of the one who has died. And so the firstborn male from whoever marries Ruth won't belong to Mr. So-and-so or won't belong to Boaz.
It'll actually belong to Elimelech's son. And so the purpose of redemption in the Old Testament isn't just to preserve property.
It's to continue a family legacy. And so now we can start to see maybe why Boaz chose to leave Ruth out of his initial statement.
[11:23] Is he bringing her in here now to scare him off? Is he mentioning her ethnicity here so that he kind of backs out of the deal? Either way, verse 6, the Redeemer says, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance.

Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it. And so with this new bit of information that whoever acquires this field also takes on Ruth, the Redeemer's like, I'm out, dog.
Can't do that. He says, lest I impair my own inheritance. And so he likely was already married. He likely had other kids that were waiting to inherit from him when he passed away.
And so if this Redeemer takes Ruth to be his wife and has a kid that would technically be the inheritor of Elimelech's land, this Redeemer would be putting up his own money to buy this land, ultimately one day just to give it back to Elimelech's family.
And so he was all in if he could just acquire some property. He was all in if he could just pay some money and increase his influence in Bethlehem. But this is going to cost him something. This is going to require some sacrifice on his part.
[12:37] So Mr. So-and-so was willing to redeem it for some change that he had, but he's not willing to sacrifice his own heritage for the sake of serving Naomi and Ruth.

And he ultimately walks away. I don't think we should dog him for walking away. This is a logical choice. He's saying, like, this doesn't benefit me in the end.
This isn't good for my bottom line. This isn't good for my budget. And so he walks away. And now Boaz has a chance to make good on the promise he made to these ladies.
And in verse 7, the narrator kind of steps in. He doesn't do this often, but he steps in to explain an ancient custom in Israel. Verse 7 says, Now 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. Now, this book was written for Israelites.
[13:42] Explaining an Israelite custom. Why was this necessary? Well, it shows that there's been a lot of time that's passed from these events happening to them being written down in the book of Ruth.

And so this is likely maybe 100 years later, possibly, after these events took place that they're being written down. And so the custom had changed. And so the author is explaining what's about to take place when this transaction goes down.
Because the original audience isn't familiar with it anymore. And we can thank God that he explained it because we would have no idea what this was talking about. Because verse 8 says, And so when the redeemer said to Boaz, buy it for yourself, he drew off his sandal.

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And so he is waiving his right of redemption of Ruth. And so he takes off his sandal and hands it to Boaz. And this is really weird. You'd be like, get your shoe out of my face.
Like, what are y'all doing? But they didn't write anything down. They wouldn't have had legal contracts or real estate contracts. And so the only form of testimony that could protect this transaction would be the 10 elders there saying, Yes, I was witness to this transaction.
[14:50] And if Mr. So-and-so's family came back and said, like, hey, no, he bought Naomi's land. Boaz can be like, I've got his sandal right here. So it, like, functions as a receipt for this transaction.

So if you make a big purchase, keep the receipt because it proves that you bought it and you can take it back if you don't want it. But this is like a receipt. And so we don't know if he gave him both sandals or just one. I like to think it was just one and he's just walking around with one sandal the rest of the day.
But we don't really know. But Mr. So-and-so just says, hey, here's my shoe. I'm out. And walks away. We never hear about him again. Don't know who he is even.
And he walks away. And in this story, Mr. So-and-so is almost identical to Orpah from the beginning. Right? There's some willingness to participate.
But then when the cost is too high, they make a, I mean, rational choice to just walk away. Orpah's like, Naomi, I want to stay with you. And Naomi says, you won't find a husband.
[15:50] And she says, okay, I'll just stay in Moab. And turns around and walks away. Mr. So-and-so here, the Redeemer's like, yeah, I'll take the field. And Boaz says, you also acquire Ruth in this transaction.

He's like, no, I'm out. And walks away. And so I don't think they made bad choices necessarily. But it just shows Ruth's commitment.
And it shows Boaz's commitment. And they show up in starker relief because of these two characters making pretty logical choices in this story. And in verses 9 and 10, Boaz gives a speech. Verse 9, then Boaz said to the elders and all the people. So there's the 10 elders. Other people have probably stopped by like, oh, what is Boaz up to today? And they're listening in on what's taking place. And so Boaz addresses the crowd and says, you are witnesses this day.
Again, the same day that he started this, the very next morning. You're witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech, all that belonged to Kilion, all that belonged to Malan.
[16:59] The first time all three family members have been mentioned since chapter 1. Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Malan. This is the first time we know which of these brothers that Ruth actually married.

Verse 10, also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Malan, I have bought to be my wife to perpetuate or to raise up, to resurrect 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. And we think Naomi's family might actually survive.
They were just two widows living in Moab to begin this story. And now they've got a real shot at survival. And verses 11 and 12, the people and the elders give a blessing to Boaz and to his new wife.
They said, we are witnesses. Verse 11, may Yahweh make the woman who's coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel.
[18:03] May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem. And may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah because of the offspring or the seed that Yahweh will give you by this young woman.

Now I've mentioned several times throughout this story that there's been connections made to the patriarchs. And so Ruth, her faith is very similar to Abraham's in that she leaves her native homeland, travels to a distant place that she doesn't know so that she can serve the Lord.
And here are yet more connections to this patriarchal period. They say, may she be like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel.
Rachel and Leah were the wives of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. And it's from these two ladies that the 12 tribes of Israel were born.
You can read about this in Genesis 29 and 30. And so they're praying, one, that Ruth would be fruitful for Boaz, that she would have lots of kids, that she would raise up godly children.

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[19:14] But they're also praying that Ruth would play a foundational role within Israel. And so not just the number of the kids that she would have, but the significance of those kids is also what they're praying for.

And they pray that Boaz would act worthily in Ephrathah. That's how we were introduced to him in chapter 2, verse 1. He was a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech.
That's how Ruth is described in chapter 3, verse 11, that she is a worthy woman who's discussed in the gates of Bethlehem. And they said, may your name be renowned, or may your name be famous in Bethlehem.
And there's another connection to the ancient past. May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah. Now, we referenced this last week, but it's in Genesis 38.
And if you go there, there's some dark stuff. We'll come to it in Sunday school in a few weeks. But Tamar was the daughter-in-law of Judah. And she tricked him.
[20:19] She slept with him. She got pregnant with his kid. She gave birth to twins. One of them was Perez. And Perez had kind of become the most prominent line in Bethlehem in this day.

And so they're saying, may your house be like the house of Perez. May it be fruitful and abundant.
And I think the author wants us to call to mind that whole scenario because Judah and Tamar also had kind of a moonlight meetup at the threshing floor, except theirs was highly immoral.
But it produced this house of Perez that was fruitful and abundant in the land of Israel. And they say, because of the offspring or because of the seed that Yahweh will give you by this young woman.
And now there's still some doubt in our minds. Ruth might be barren. She might not be able to have kids. She was married for 10 years in Moab and doesn't have any kids.
And so they are praying that she would produce a lot of kids, but also produce significant kids in the life of Israel. They're praying that she would be very fruitful.
[21:32] Children were viewed as an immense blessing from the Lord. God views children as an immense blessing.

And children should still be viewed as a huge blessing in the life of a family, especially among Christians. And you may be like, how do I express that?
Or how do I show that? I'm not married. I don't have kids. Well, you can show this by, like you do, volunteering in child care on Sunday mornings during Sunday school, helping out with the VBS, babysitting, volunteering for parents' night out, loving your siblings.
And so you as a student who don't have kids can show the world that kids are a blessing by serving people in our church in the ways that you do. Our world does not see kids as a blessing.
They view them as a burden, as just more mouths to feed. They view them as these little tyrants who rob them or interrupt their dreams, who interrupt their success and productivity in life.
[22:37] And because the world views kids that way, that can even creep into the church if we're not careful. As Lacey and I have had more kids, people's response to us has changed.

So she's pregnant with number four right now, due in March. What, what? And when we were pregnant with our first, Amelia, everyone's like, oh my goodness, we're so excited for you. This is great.
And we're pregnant with our second. And it's a boy. It's like, oh, you got a boy and a girl that's a perfect family. Are you guys done? It's like, well, probably not. And they're like, oh, okay, that's great. Number three, it's like, oh, wow, you guys are going to have your hands full.
It's like, yep, we will, but full of good things. And we have number four. And people are like, how many are y'all going to have? Like, what are y'all doing? And so it's, they're viewed still even kind of as a burden or as kind of an interruption.
And if we're not careful, that idea can kind of creep into the church. But we need to stick with what God's word says, that children are a blessing from the Lord.
[23:41] And these elders and these people are praying that Ruth and Boaz would be fruitful in their home. And the manner of their speech and what they say is dripping with significance.

Maybe something more significant is happening here than just one child being born. This doesn't seem like a standard blessing to make so many connections to the patriarchs in Israel.
And notice it calls her at the end of verse 12, this young woman. That's how Boaz first identified her. In chapter two, he says, whose young woman is this?

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And so this young woman that he had asked about, he's now taking home to be his wife. And these men clearly viewed Ruth as a worthy partner for Boaz.
So we've seen firstly, redemption in the gates. Secondly, we see redemption in Naomi's arms. Redemption in Naomi's arms. So the author kind of speeds us through the honeymoon.
[24:46] Verse 13. So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. And he went into her and Yahweh gave her conception. And she bore a son. Ruth has been called many things in this book.

A Moabite, a widow, a young woman, a foreigner, a sojourner. But now she's called a wife. She's married to Boaz.
And Yahweh gave her conception. This is only the second time in this book that it says that God acts directly. His name has been spoken several times.
But in chapter one, Naomi heard that the Lord had visited the fields of Bethlehem. And now here the Lord opens Ruth's womb and gives her conception.
The Lord is always sovereign over the womb, both to open it and to close it. And it's so significant. She bore a son. What is it that these women lacked when they came back from Moab?
[25:51] They lacked men in their family. And now they're holding a baby boy in their arms. Ruth has given birth to what they were lacking. And verse 14, then the women said.

Now the women haven't said anything since chapter one. So Ruth and Naomi come back into Jerusalem. And the women are saying, is this Naomi? And now they close out this book too.
And they say to Naomi, blessed be Yahweh who has not left you this day without a redeemer. And may his name be renowned in Israel.
The ladies who welcomed Naomi back to Bethlehem now welcome her grandson into the world. And the previous scene of chapter four has been dominated by men, but now it's the girl's turn. And Naomi is the focus. And this is really her story. Her tragedy is what launched the story. And it's her joy that brings it to a conclusion.
[26:48] Think about how much her life has turned around in the last year. She was just an empty widow who came back with a daughter-in-law. And now she's holding her own grandson in Israel.

And they say, blessed be Yahweh who's not left you without a redeemer. But then they go on and who they're talking about when they say redeemer is not Boaz.
They're actually talking about her grandson. This baby boy is now referred to as a redeemer. And it's the only time the Bible uses this word to refer to a baby.
Every other time it's used to refer to a grown man. And so redemption for this family has come through the birth of a baby boy. Redemption has come through this seed of the woman or this offspring of the woman.
And this is a foreshadowing of Christ, who is our redeemer, who has come to give his life for us. And he came to us born in a manger as a baby boy.
[27:51] And do you remember Naomi from chapter one? How was she doing? She was incredibly bitter. She said, I left full, but the Lord's brought me back empty.

His hand has been against me. He's testified against me. And I said when we covered chapter one, Naomi was right to deal with a sovereign God, but she was so wrong in her view of him.
And look at what he's done for her. He wasn't done with her. He wasn't done with her family. And the women give credit to the Lord for every detail of this story.
He hasn't left you without a redeemer. And that two-word phrase, left without, is borrowed from chapter one, where it says Naomi was left without her two sons.
And so she was empty, and now she's been filled. She was empty, and now she's been filled. The Lord has not left or forsaken Naomi.
[28:55] And they say, may his name be renowned in Israel. Again, speaking of this baby boy. And it's interesting because the elders pray that Boaz's name would be renowned in Bethlehem.

But now the scope has expanded to include the entire country. May his name be renowned in Israel. And they go on speaking in verse 15 of this baby boy.
He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who's more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.
So they describe Ruth as the one who loves you. And she is worth more to you than seven sons. This one Moabite girl is more valuable to Naomi than if Naomi had had seven sons.
And this is a big statement. This book has revolved around the need to have men in the family. And these women are saying, Ruth, the one who came back to you, the one who loves you, she's worth

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more to you than if you had seven men in your family to care for you.
[30:11] This is a huge statement from these women. And Naomi in verse 16 kind of becomes his daycare, his childcare. Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse.

And so they would have had a very tight bond, so much so that the women can say in verse 17, they gave him a name saying, a son has been born to Naomi. And they named him Obed.
And so it's interesting. This is the only time in the Bible that someone other than the parents gave a child a name. So these women give him a name and they call him Naomi's son.
The woman, Naomi, who said she would never have a child again, now holds a son in her arms.
And every time she saw that little boy, she would be reminded of God's faithfulness to her.
She would be reminded of God's redemption of her through the darkest times of her life. And maybe you've got a family member like that. Maybe you have friends like that.
[31:17] You see them and you just thank the Lord for their presence and their influence in your life. And they named him Obed. Again, it's weird that the parents didn't name him.

But the word Obed means servant. And from the context, it seems like they would have referred to him as a servant of Naomi. Or a servant of Yahweh for Naomi.
Is the story over now? Is this all that it was about? Was this just about two widows who now have full stomachs and a baby?
Is that it? Why is the story in the Bible? Is it just about marriage? Is it just about a child? Is it just about full stomachs? Well, the story has a shocking conclusion.
There have been many twists and turns along the way, but no one could have predicted this. The last sentence of verse 17, talking about Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.
[32:20] And so we see that this is a royal legacy. This is a royal line. Naomi's grandson would be the grandfather of King David, Israel's greatest king.

And so these little eyes that look up at Naomi would one day look down at King David. And so humanly speaking, nice timing.
Humanly speaking, I think he was just celebrating King David is what was happening. Humanly speaking, David wouldn't have existed unless God sent a famine in Bethlehem, causing this family to sojourn in Moab, allowing their sons to marry Moabite women.
Those sons losing their lives. Ruth and Naomi coming back to Bethlehem. Ruth just happening to go to the field of Boaz and meeting Boaz there that day.
Boaz just happening to take interest in Ruth and being willing to redeem Ruth and Naomi. The redemption actually taking place, even in light of the conflict between the redeemers.
[33:35] Marriage taking place. God giving Ruth a son. Humanly speaking, unless all of that happened, there would be no King David.

And if there wasn't a King David, there wouldn't have been peace or rest for Israel as a nation. And ultimately, without King David, there would be no King Jesus because Jesus comes from David's line according to the flesh.
And so why is this book in the Bible? This shows us David's righteous lineage that comes from God being gracious to a bitter widow. God being gracious to a Moabitess who doesn't deserve God's blessings.
God being gracious to a sinner.
An empty life. And for so many of us, that's how God's providence works in our own lives too. It's difficult to see what God is doing in our pain.
[34:54] It's difficult to see what God is doing in our suffering. We can maybe know he's working through it, but we can't always see what he's doing. And we may never see the full picture. What God was doing through Naomi's life took generations to bear its full fruit.

And we can't ever fully know what God's doing in our lives. We might be able to look back in a few years and connect some dots.
We might get some answers now, but God could be doing something in your life today that won't come to full fruition until generations from now. But what's stood out to us about this book?
We can see God working. We can see his providence. But everything in this book is so normal. Everyday decisions. Routine decisions that God is working through to bring about his will.
And so the decisions you make today shape you as a person. You are building character through decisions you make. Even little decisions. Who you're friends with. How you respond to your parents.

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[36:03] How you use your time. How you treat people. And these seemingly little decisions shape who you are as a person. And because they shape you, they will shape your family for generations to come.

They will have an impact beyond just your life on this earth. And that can be good or that can be bad. And so we want to be faithful like Boaz and Ruth were in this book.
To be faithful to the Lord even in little decisions throughout our life. And we don't always see how God is doing it. We don't always see how God is working through our difficulties or working through the details of our life.
But we can certainly know that he's working through those details. And so if you want to write down Romans 8, 28. Romans 8, 28. The Apostle Paul says, And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose.
All things work together for our good. If you're a believer, that's true in your life. That doesn't mean that everything in your life is good. That doesn't mean that everything that comes your way is pleasant or delightful.
[37:16] That doesn't mean that we'll see the answers to all of our problems in this life. But we can certainly say God is working in these details for my ultimate good and for his glory.

That's one of the things the book of Ruth teaches us very clearly. That God does extraordinary things through ordinary people's ordinary lives. And I'd mentioned earlier that this is the only place in the Bible where the word redeemer is applied to a child.
And this child, Obed, would eventually produce a king from his line. As we approach the Christmas season, when we read things like this, we need to think of Christ.
Our redeemer who has come to us in the flesh, born as a baby. To redeem us. Not from widowhood, not from destitution or poverty or difficult situations.
But to redeem us from sin and death. And he purchased us not with money, not with property. He purchased us not with silver or gold, these things that perish.
[38:29] He purchased us with his precious blood, as 1 Peter 1 says. And so it's on him that we set our hope. It's in him that we find our rest.

Naomi was seeking rest for Ruth through finding a husband for her. And it certainly brought an amount of earthly rest. But Jesus says in Matthew 11, Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
And now I had mentioned that this chapter actually solves a national problem, not just a problem for these two widows. Chapter 4 doesn't just solve the problem of Ruth and Naomi's emptiness.
This chapter solves a national problem. During the period of the judges, there was no king. And this book gives us a king. The hope is that if Israel has a king, that maybe things won't be so bad in their nation.
And here is the lineage of a king. This book began with 10 years in Moab. And as we'll see next week, it ends with 10 generations of life in Jerusalem.
[39:40] 10 years of death in Moab. 10 generations of life in Israel. This book has high stakes. This book is about a guy and a girl, but it's about so much more than just a guy and a girl.

It's about what the Lord is doing through this guy and girl. And it's more than just a neat love story, even though it is that. This story is a golden thread woven into the tapestry of Israel's story of salvation.
And as we look back on the details of this story, we see them in a new light. These women who are praying that Obed's name would be renowned in Israel weren't just offering a prayer.
They were giving God's promises. The prayer that Boaz prays for Ruth, that she would find shelter under Yahweh's wings, was answered more fully than he could have ever asked or imagined.
A Moabite widow in the line of King David, in the line of King Jesus. What greater honor could be given to any woman in Israel, let alone a Moabite widow?
[40:54] Yahweh has taken her under his wings. And I want to read a quote to you from a guy named Mark Kedever about this book. He says, this story has gone from death to life, from barrenness to fruitfulness, from emptiness to fullness, from curse to blessing, from bitter to sweet, from exile in Moab to a king in Jerusalem.

And he's done it all. The Lord has done it all through his providence. And I want to close reading the lyrics of a hymn called, God Moves in a Mysterious Way, talking about his providence.

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It says, God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform. He plants his footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm. Deep in unfathomable minds of never failing skill, he treasures up his bright designs and works his sovereign will.
You fearful saints, fresh courage take. The clouds that you so much dread are big with mercy and shall break in blessings on your head.
Don't judge the Lord by feeble sense, but trust him for his grace. Behind a frowning providence, that means a difficult providence, he hides a smiling face.
[42:21] His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding every hour. The bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower. Blind unbelief is sure to err and scan his work in vain.

But God is his own interpreter and he will make it plain. And a common question we have when we suffer is why?
Why is this happening to me? What is God doing in this? And we don't always know the why. We don't always see the answer to that question, but what we can know is that God is behind the why. God is the one who's working in our lives and we can trust him because he's always good. And there's no better place to see his goodness than 2,000 years ago through the descendant of King David, that Christ was crucified publicly on a cross, receiving the wages of sin, which is death on behalf of his people.
This is the king of Israel. This is the true son of David, the true and better David who laid his life down on the cross to save us as enemies of God, as exiles who don't deserve to be in his presence, as his enemies, and to bring us to his table, to bring us into his family, even though we don't belong there.
[43:48] Do you know God? Do you trust Christ? There's no redemption in anyone else because he's the one who died for sinners. I would encourage you to look to him and receive his grace.

Let me pray for us and we'll go to small groups. Father, we thank you so much for this book of Ruth. We're not quite done with it, but we've seen the scheme you've had from the beginning that there was so much suffering in chapter one that we didn't have an answer for.
And it's not that what you're doing kind of makes up for the loss that Naomi experienced and suffered and the pain she felt, but at the end of her life, she could see I was wrong to say that the Lord was against me.
As Father, I pray for us that we would let the book of Ruth encourage our faith. Let it point us to Christ. Let it help us to see that even through the difficulties in our life, you were always at work and working for our good.
So Father, help us see that. Help us to trust you. Help us to know you through your word. I pray for the students as they go to small groups that they would help kind of process what we've learned from chapter four and to know you.
[45:01] And it's in Christ's name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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