

All that most people know about the book of Ruth is what Ruth said to Naomi in *Ruth 1:16-17*, and they usually come away from that with high thoughts of Ruth and no thoughts of Christ. The real key to the book of Ruth is in the term kinsman-redeemer found in *Ruth 2:20; 3:9, 12, and 4:14*. The “kinsman” was the nearest relative who had the right to redeem back lands that belonged to one who had lost it (*Lev. 25:25*). The story of Ruth is a true story that took place in Israel during the time of the Judges which ends with another statement of Israel’s sin and depravity - “*In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes*” (*Judges 21:25*). The book of Ruth opens with Israel under God’s judgment (*1:1*). A man called Elimelech of Bethlehem-Judah, because of a famine in the land, sold all that he had and took his family out of the land of Israel and moved to pagan Moab. Elimelech died in Moab. His two sons married Moabite women, lived with them ten years, and then they both died. Naomi, now a very poor widow, determined to return to Judah and told her two daughters-in-law to remain in Moab with their people and their gods. Orpah departed, but Ruth clave unto Naomi and uttered those blessed words found in *Ruth 1:16-17*. Consider the following spiritual pictures found in this beautiful story of grace and love.

1. Here is a picture of man’s ruin by the fall (*Ruth 1:19-21*). Elimelech took his family from Bethlehem-Judah (house of bread and praise) to Moab (place of idolatry). When Naomi, now old, poor, and weary, came back to Bethlehem, the people gathered about her and asked, “*Is this Naomi?*” Is this the same Naomi who left Bethlehem a few years ago rich and prosperous with her family about her? She replied, “*Don’t call me Naomi (sweet and pleasant); call me Mara (bitter), for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.*” She went out full and came back empty, rich and came back poor, sweet and came back bitter. This is a great picture of our fall by Adam into sin, depravity, and death (*Rom. 5:12; Rom. 3:10-19*). We look at Adam after the fall, when he sinned, sold out, and left the presence of God for his own way, and we say, “*Is this Adam?*”. The Lord said, “*Adam, where art thou*” (*Gen. 3:9*). He was not looking for information. This was a rhetorical question designed to make Adam realize the awfulness of his state now in sin, depravity, and death. Adam was created in the image of God and placed in a lush garden of plenty where he had perfect fellowship with God. His sin brought him into a state spiritual poverty, idolatry, and death. He was now under the curse of the law, and nothing he could do would be considered good or righteous in God’s sight.

2. Here is the unmerited, unsought love of Christ for His people, sinners given to Him by God the Father before the foundation of the world (*Ruth 2:1-5, 16*). Naomi and Ruth came to Bethlehem in the beginning of the barley harvest season. It was the custom to allow poor people and those without support to follow the reapers in the field and pick up what they had left. Ruth went out to glean in the fields; and by God’s providence she gleaned in the field of Boaz, Naomi’s near kinsman (*2:1*). Boaz took notice of Ruth and had compassion on her. He instructed her to glean in his field, and told the reapers to let fall some “*handfuls of purpose*” (*2:16*) specifically for her. What a great picture of God’s sovereign electing love and grace for His people. This world belongs to the Lord Jesus. It is His by design, by decree, and by death (*Col. 1:16-17; John 3:35; Rom. 14:9; John 17:2*). We live and glean in His field. The Lord Jesus in grace and love has taken notice of some of Adam’s race. He knew us though we knew Him not; He loved us though we did not love Him; and by His handfuls of purpose, we have lived and prospered to this day. God takes care of His own even in our days of unbelief.

3. Here is the kinsman redeemer (*Ruth 2:18-20*). Ruth returned home with a generous supply of grain. Naomi took note of the abundance and asked Ruth where she gleaned and who was so generous with her. When Naomi heard that Ruth's benefactor was Boaz, she said, "*Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead*" (*2:20*). Boaz was one who had the right to redeem, a kinsman-redeemer. If one had sold his inheritance and had a near kinsman, who was able and willing to stand for him and buy back all that he had lost, it would be done (*Lev. 25:25*). Christ Jesus, by God's covenant of mercy and divine grace, is the kinsman of all the elect who were given to Him by the Father. He was made Surety for His brethren (*Heb. 2:10-18*). As the Surety of God's people, He was made flesh, numbered with the transgressors, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh (*John 1:14; Gal. 4:4-5*). He willingly took upon Himself to redeem all that we lost in Adam, and He is able to do so because, though a man, He is the strong and mighty God (*Heb. 7:25; 2 Tim. 1:12; Jude 24-25*). All the sin-debt of His people was imputed to Him, and by His perfect obedience unto death, He has given us righteousness before the law. By his death He has satisfied divine justice, enabling God to be both just and justifier of all who believe (*Rom. 3:25-26*).

4. Here is the power, love, and grace of God working in the lives of His people (*Ruth 3:1-7*). Because of Boaz's kindness to her and Naomi, Ruth humbled herself at his feet, seeking his mercy. This is where the Lord, in His appointed time, brings all His people to lie at the feet of Christ and beg for mercy and grace (*Psa. 6:2; Luke 18:13*). Boaz accepted Ruth whom he already loved (*3:10-11*). The Lord God accepted us in Christ and loves us with an everlasting love even when we were enemies and alienated from God in our minds by wicked works (*Rom. 5:6-11; Col. 1:19-22*). Ruth began to love Boaz when she saw his kindness towards her. We who are saved by grace love Christ because He first loved us (*1 John 4:10*).

5. Here is the law that must be satisfied to make God's people free to marry another, the Lord Jesus Christ (*Ruth 3:12-13; 4:1-12*). Boaz recognized that there was another kinsman nearer than he. Under the law, this other kinsman had the first right if redemption. Here we see the law that has a legal hold upon us because of our sins. The other kinsman said, "*I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance*" (*4:6*). Whether he was unwilling or unable, we are not told, but this is same as God's law for sinners like us. The law cannot save or redeem us because we do not have the full redemption price which is perfect righteousness. Therefore Christ, our near-Kinsman, took it upon Himself to redeem us and marry us unto Himself (*Rom. 8:3-4; 7:4*). Christ paid the full redemption price for His bride, the church, and cleared the way for Him to marry her in strict accordance with the law. God justifies His people based on the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and He draws them unto Himself with the power of the Spirit Who gives life and with cords of love.

*Ruth 4:13-22* records the marriage of Boaz and Ruth, the conception of their son, "Obed," and the generations following unto to David. The significance of this is that Christ, our Kinsman-Redeemer, "*was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead*" (*Rom. 1:3-4*). All who are brought by God to faith in Christ are married to Christ and are joint-heirs with Him because we are His and wear His name. The pagan girl became the wife of Boaz, the great-grandmother of King David, and stood in the lineage of Christ—all by God's power and grace! Boas had all the wealth and Ruth received all the blessings and benefits of that wealth. Christ has all the wealth of our salvation, and we are the recipients of that wealth through righteousness He has provided by His death on the cross (*Eph. 1:3*).