

## Ruth 3 - Magdalen Road Church: June 2012

Intro - Where is God in troubled times?

Judges 21v 25 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.

Q- Today - in the hum-drum of life, in this chaotic world - are you trusting in Him and are you being obedient to him?

Ruth 1 - God's great faithfulness to a people who reject Him - **Covenant Curses: death to Elimilech & sons. Naomi is like Israel: Bitter with no heir/future**

**Covenant promises: the barley season has arrived**

Ruth 2 - God's great kindness reflected in the obedience of His people

Ruth 3 - God's great purpose worked out through the obedience of His people

Ruth 4 - God's great rescue for His people

Structure:

Scene 1 - v1-5: Ruth's Bedroom - Plan in obedience

Scene 2 - v6-13: Boaz Bedroom - Take risks in obedience

Scene 3 - v14-18: Naomi's Bedroom - Trust in obedience

- God's kindness shown in his people's obedience - in the harvest field letting the widow's glean. Ruth gleans in the field of Boaz.
- ch 2v20 - **And 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.**
- "Boaz is the Kinsman redeemer - the one who can buy back land, hope and a future for Ruth and Naomi. Most probably Elimilech sold his land as he took off to Moab.
- widow's without a child were vulnerable. every family had a plot of land. law - if a man died childless, the relative takes the land and looks after widow.
- A redeemer is someone who buys back the land so that the land stays within the family.
- The Lord is the redeemer for his people in Egypt.
- The family was to reflect the ways of God in buying back land so that it would remain in the family.

But Boaz hasn't made a move

**read v23 So 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.**

**Ruth 3 - God's great purpose worked out through the obedience of His people**

**Level 1 - So. Level 2 - So what. Level 3 - so what for me?**

**Level 1 - So**

**Scene 1 - v1-5: Ruth's Bedroom a tale of 3 bedrooms - 'Plan in obedience?'**

The Plan:

- Get yourself ready Ruth - wash,anoint,get ready to go out
- Boaz is winnowing Barley at the threshing floor-big barns: sorting out the wheat from the chaff
- Will be working late - so wait till he has finished, eaten and drank & lie at His feet
- Ruth's response - "All that you say -I will do"

- 2 ways we could read this plan - I'm not sure we know exactly what Naomi has in mind.
- Is Naomi trusting in God's promises to provide but it means taking risks - The law says that God's people should reflect God's character in looking after His people. Boaz up to now has shone like a star in a dark world at a dark time. Is this is a plan based upon God's bigger plan?
- Or Has Naomi gone mad? This seems very wrong? The original Hebrew (so I'm told) makes even more emphasis that this plan is of a sexual nature. Is Naomi now taking the way of Elimilech and not trusting in God? Is she hatching a selfish plan that only looks after her own interests - a way to trap Boaz into buying their family back?

This is a contentious point - people will and do disagree here. I'm just not certain we can have total confidence to go either way.

Work it through in life:

- Some choices and decisions I make are sinful/selfish and I know it.
- Some choices and decisions are more borderline: I really want to go to the gym tonight. It will be good for me physically and I know will put me in better frame of mind for the evening...but this will be the 3rd evening that I haven't been around for Kerri to help her out with Cora - to bath, feed her and put her to bed.
- is my decision selfish? Only I know that - you can't call that for me and I can't call it for Naomi.

### Level 2 -so what

- God's providential plan reigns supreme over the plans of the people he has created
- However - God's providential plan never undermines the human responsibility of making plans

### Level 3 -so what for me?

- I have choices and plans to make every day - some small, some big. And they all matter. Keep watch on your plan making - sinful/selfish? Keep asking questions.
- Will you plan in light of God's words - big plans (house move, career path, who to marry) / small every day plans (what will I do with me leisure time today-watch footy, spend time with a friend
- Will you plan in light of God's promises
- Will I trust in God's providential plan over all - as the story unfolds in the story of Ruth - these small decisions are multiplied to in time bring about the greatest story on earth - will it be we'll with my soul.

### Will you 'Plan in obedience?'

#### Level 1 Story - So

#### Scene 2 - v6-13: Boaz Bedroom - Take Risks in Obedience

- Ruth goes down to the threshing floor

But this plan of Naomi's is fraught with risk:

What if the workers find Ruth looking like she does - would they attack her?

What if they accuse Ruth of throwing herself at him like a prostitute?

What if Boaz takes advantage of her?

V5 - And she replied, "All that you say I will do."

Ruth is totally obedient - except in one way:

v4 - When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do."

Boaz wakes up around midnight. Turns over and finds a woman at his feet:

3v9 He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer."

Ruth does not wait for Boaz to tell her what to do - she tells Boaz what to do based upon 1 - God's word "If one of your fellow Israelites becomes poor and sells some of their property, their nearest relative is to come and redeem what they have sold" Lev25v25

2 - Boaz kindness 35 "If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and are unable to support themselves among you, help them as you would a foreigner and stranger

What is Ruth asking?

Ruth is saying to Boaz -

'you said that I have taken refuge underneath the wing of the Lord. You trust and follow the Lord, so I am asking you: will you be the wing in which I take refuge under.'

A huge thing: in effect she is denying all rights hands are up, I have nothing so I'm obediently taking a risk that you will do everything for me.

- protect me: I am yours!
- redeem us: by back the land!
- accept me into your people: marry me! - the covering of corner of garment is a Jewish symbol of marriage
- I have a mother in law too: take me you take her!

Boaz is not outraged - He is flattered.

Ruth could have gone after all the younger men - but she has been faithful to Naomi and to Him.

2v12 The 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

Read v14 - Boaz is willing to be Kinsman Redeemer but there is another

What is the big deal for Boaz?

This is great cost - take in Ruth and her mother in law - complete change in life.

Mother in Law Gag.

## Level 2 -so what

God's kindness is reflected in the kindness of Ruth- in her obedience in looking after Naomi and seeking out her kinsmen redeemer

God's generosity is reflected in Boaz - Boaz promises to take in the destitute, he enemy, at great cost. God takes back those who have rejected him, enemies of him

## Level 3 -so what for me?

Ruth: What does risky obedience look like in action for you?

- it must start with the idea of holding up my hands & saying I have nothing to give

- "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. Mark ch 8

- deny self, now use me - In the everyday - on the football pitch, in the classroom, walking to school, in the canteen at work, in the supermarket, with friends who don't know Jesus, with family members who don't trust in Jesus - making moment by moment decisions of obedience

- dare to be different, dare to speak of Him

- Following Jesus is a risk - only in as much as what the world thinks

- Do one thing everyday that scares you

Boaz: What does being risky in generosity look like for you? Financially/time commitment/activity commitment

### Scene 3 - v14-18: Naomi's Bedroom - Trust

#### Level 1 Story - So

- Sends her back with about 22litres of grain. 8 big bottles of Coke  
Leaves before it gets light so that no-one is disgraced

"v17 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.'"

Naomi said back in ch 1

V21 I 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?"

Now we see that Naomi is totally full - and Boaz hasn't even become the redeemer yet: she is now using in God.

V18 She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."

#### Level 2 -so what

- God is the provider

- God's great purpose is worked out through the obedience of His people

- God's people walked underneath Gods word:

Naomi (perhaps faltering) trusted God and walked underneath his word (sent Ruth out into field, claim that Boaz was a redeemer - levitical law)

Ruth trusted in Naomi's God and clung to her and her God - but today she went a step further-totally trusting God

Boaz walked by God's word - His kindness reflecting God's kindness

Jesus walked by God's word - This story points us to a greater redemption

Where it cost God his only son to buy us back - such huge cost to welcome us back to where he wants us.

#### Level 3 -so what for me?

- Will you walk by Gods word???

You will try and you will fail - read and trust

- Will you plan in obedience???

- Will you take risks in obedience???

- Will you trust in obedience???

- will you daily deny yourself, knowing that you cannot do it, but that Jesus has done it & will you trust as the great words of Handels messiah say (job 19v25)  
"I know that my redeemer liveth"