

**Redemption**  
**Ruth 4**  
**Pastor John Miller**

Now, I'm not much of a movie guy. I don't go to many movies, I do occasionally. But when I watch a movie, I love a movie that has a happy ending, don't you? Don't you hate movies that are all sad and they end sad, and you feel bummed out for just weeks after you've seen the movie? I was watching a movie the other day. And it started sad and it kept going sad. And I'm thinking, "If this doesn't have a happy ending, I'm going to be really bummed out." Thank God for happy endings. Well, guess what? The Book of Ruth has a happy ending. Amen?

God redeems Ruth, Naomi, and God does a marvelous work in their family and in their nation and in the world. I believe that God who calls us will perfect or complete that which He's begun in us. I believe our lives, like Naomi's and Ruth's, will have a "happy ending," because of our surrender and obedience to Jesus Christ. So, we saw in the Book of Ruth in chapter one, sorrow and weeping, just to lead up to where we're at in chapter four. We saw that Elimelech and Naomi and with their two sons, Mahlon, Chilion, that they ran down to the land of Moab because there was a famine. And in the land of Moab, we saw that Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died. We saw that the two boys, Mahlon and Chilion, that they died sick and piney, died. And there was sorrow. And there was weeping. And we saw in chapter two that there then was service and working, as Ruth followed Naomi back to Bethlehem, the house of bread. "Where you go, I will go. Where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God. And where you're buried, I will be buried."

And so, Ruth made a commitment to follow the Lord and God of Israel and to go with Naomi by faith. And as a result of that, she went out into the fields, and she began to work and God blessed her. And then, in chapter three, we saw surrender and waiting. Naomi told Ruth to go down to the threshing floor and there Boaz would be gathering the wheat together, spending the night there, and to lay at his feet and uncover his feet. And when he woke up, startled who's there, that Ruth said, "I'm your handmaiden. Put your garment over me." And basically, she was saying, "Redeem my land and redeem me and redeem my family. And I want to marry you," is what she was saying. And Boaz blessed her and said, "God bless you for not following some of the younger fellows around here, but that you're a woman that is noble. All the people of Israel knows."

So, we go from sorrow and weeping, chapter one, to service and working, chapter two, to surrender and waiting. And when she went home, Naomi said to her, "Wait. Be still." The man will not rest until he's completed what he's going to do. As what is called the "goel" in the Hebrew, the kinsman redeemer. And we see that very clearly come together in chapter four, where we move into satisfaction and a wedding. It's interesting that the book of Ruth opens with death and sorrow and weeping and it ends with life, the birth of a new baby, and it ends with joy and blessing. How God is able to take our lives and the sorrow and the pain and the suffering, and He's able to turn it around and give us joy for the spirit of heaviness, to give us gladness for

a broken heart. God is able to do that, if we will surrender to Him, if we'll look to Him, and we'll wait upon Him.

Now, there are three movements in this fourth chapter that I want you to note if you were to outline it and follow with me. In verses 1 to 10, we see the bridegroom. We see the bridegroom. We're going to see Boaz redeeming the property of Naomi and taking the bride, who was Ruth. This bride groom pictures for us none other than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is our kinsman redeemer. Follow with me, beginning in verse one. "Then, when Boaz up to the gate and sat him down there, behold, the kinsman to whom Boaz spoke came by, unto whom he said, 'Ho, such a one, turn aside, sit down here.' And he turned aside and he sat down. And then, he took him 10 men of the elders of the city," verse two, "and said, 'Sit you down here.' And they sat down. And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that has come again out of the country of Moab, sells a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech."

Now, the word, "brother," there actually just means relative. In the Hebrew, and you see this all through the Old Testament, there aren't the distinguishing words for brother, brother-in-law, and things like that. So, they would just use one general word, which meant kinsman or family member. So, you have to, maybe, the context. And many times, we can't really tell what the relationship was. And with this fellow here, we really don't know if he was the second cousin, a cousin, a brother, or just what exactly he was from the Hebrew word translated, "brother," here.

And we don't really even have his name. It's interesting that he goes to the gate and he just says, "Ho, such a one." All the commentaries you read on this passage make note of that. It's interesting that he's the kind of a man with no name. And it's no big deal because he's of no significance. He doesn't redeem the land. He doesn't marry Ruth. He's not in the genealogy of our Lord. So, he's obviously not named there.

Now, just real quick before I forget, in verse one, Boaz went up to the gate and sat him down there. Now, why did he go to "the gate" and sat himself down there? Notice, by the way, all the references to setting down in the first two verses, about five times, you have the reference to sitting down. It's interesting. The gate of the city was what we would today call our courthouse. It was the place where all legal transactions took place. The center of the city, they had a wall around the city. One of the main entrances would have a big gate. And inside the big gate, there would be a giant courtyard. That courtyard would serve as the courthouse. It would be the central place for everyone to meet. And the elders, and the word, "elders," means that they were older men. The word, "elder," actually indicates older in age and maturity. It actually indicates they had beards. They were older, and that they were the leaders of the community. They were the judges. And they would decide civil issues. They would decide personal issues and marriage problems and family matters. And so, they would gather together, and they would gather witnesses, in this case, 10 of them. Ten men would be gathered together.

And Boaz is on a mission. He's on a mission to redeem the land that belonged to Elimelech, who was a relative of his, only for one reason, he wanted to marry Ruth. Redeem the land or buy the land, and a bride comes with the land. He didn't want the land, he wanted the wife.

That's what he wanted. The other man wanted the land, but he didn't want the wife.

So, we're going to begin to see here that this is a beautiful picture of how Jesus is our redeemer, how he came to redeem the world. When we think of Jesus dying on the cross for the sins of the world, being buried, resurrecting, going back to heaven, He didn't come just to save us individually. He actually came to completely reverse the curse. He actually came to completely restate the whole earth to its original state and condition prior to the fall. So, not only is He going to redeem us, but He's going to do away with sin and He's going to reverse the curse. We know it as the millennium kingdom or the thousand-year reign of Christ, when they will have the peace upon earth. No more sickness, no more sorrow, and everything will be restored to its original state.

So, he goes to the gate to work out this transition, to work out this purchase. It's a legal matter. So, the kinsman just happens to come by. He figured sooner or later he is going to pass this way. He sees him and he says, "Ho, such a one. Turn aside. Sit down here." So, he sat down. In verse two, he took the 10 men, the elders of the city. He asked them to sit down. And he said to the kinsman, "Naomi has come out of the land of Moab and he sells a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's."

Now, Naomi, out of her poverty, had to sell. We can't tell from the Hebrew phrase *selleth* there, it's in the present tense, whether she's already sold it and they're going to buy it back from the person that sold it. But it seems to be that it's in the process of being sold probably because Naomi needed the money, and it would go to the nearest of kin to keep the land in the family so that they wouldn't lose their inheritance. So, the kinsman, Naomi, is come again out of the country. She sells her land.

Now, notice verse four, "And I thought to advise thee, Boaz says to this man who is near of kin than he is. Buy it before the inhabitants and before the elders of my people. If thou will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not redeem it, tell me that I may know, for there is none to redeem it besides you. And I am after you. And he said, 'I will redeem it.'" Now, I know that when he heard those words, Boaz's heart sunk. Now, notice that he starts first with the land, because you got to have the land to have the wife. He doesn't go running into the dude and say, "Look, there's a really hot chick that I want to marry. Her name is Ruth. She's a Moabitess. So, you're closer to doing this than me, but I really want it, so can you please just confer to me and let me have it?"

Most of us would've run in and just cut to the chase, "Hey, I want to marry this girl. Dude, don't get in the way or I'll beat you up." But he starts... he doesn't mention, he doesn't mention Ruth, and, "Hey, Naomi, she's come back. She's got this land." And the Old Testament stipulated that if you lost your land, that it should go to, first, the nearest of kin, and then, after come the year of Jubilee, that you could redeem it back. Every 50 years, you could buy your land back. Every seven years there was a sabbatic year. But every 50 years Jubilee, you could buy your land back and have it back in the family.

But the whole thing was to keep the land in the family, and that it wouldn't go to other rich

people, and that rich people couldn't buy up the land and the poor suffer. Actually, behind this whole thing is God's love and care and concern for the poor and for families. He didn't want them to lose their land. He wanted them to be able to have their land and give it to their children and all that kind of stuff. So, he says, "Hey, would you like to inherit this land?" Then he says, "Yeah, that sounds great. I'd like to do it."

Then he says, verse five, "Boaz said, 'But know this, what day thou buyest the field at the hand of Naomi that you also have to take Ruth,'" and he emphasizes, 'the Moabitess, the wife of the dead. And you have to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.'" So, he says, "Okay, you want to buy the land, that's great. But know this, if you're going to buy the land, you have to take the wife. Take the land, you take the wife. You take the wife, you got to have children with her, and those children aren't going to belong to you. Those children are going to be Elimelech's family, and the land is going to go to Elimelech's family."

Now, here's the theory. The Bible doesn't say, but the theory is that this guy didn't have enough money to buy the land then take Ruth to then have a child with Ruth, and for all the money and the time and the energy he put into the land to marry her. He wouldn't have anything to show for it, because it wouldn't be his. It would go to someone else. So, had he not had to take a wife and he could have had the land and it would've gone to his children, then he might've taken it. That's the theory, we don't know. But what he does say in verse six, "The kinsman said, 'I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar my own inheritance.'" And we're not sure in what way it would mar his own inheritance. That's why the theory is that it would sap his resources and possibly take away the money he needed to use for his property, for his family, and for his children, and that he couldn't raise up seed to this near of kin or this relative.

So, he says, "I can't do that." It's been assumed, but it doesn't say in the scripture, that he was married. And when he heard about Ruth, he said, "I can't do that. I don't think my wife would go along with that." Go home and say, "Honey, I'm going to buy a piece of property." "Oh, good." "And also, I'm going to marry another woman with it." Not good. But it doesn't really say that. He says, "I can't redeem it. It's going to mar my inheritance." So, he says, "You redeem the right to yourself," and I emphasize this, "for I cannot redeem it."

Now, Boaz is starting to get stoked. That's what it says in the Hebrew there. He's like, "Yeah, yeah." So, in verse seven, it says, "Now, this was the manner of the former time in Israel concerning the redeeming and concerning the changing, charging for the confirm all things. A man plucked off his shoe, gave it to his neighbor." That's the man who wouldn't redeem it. "The man who wouldn't redeem it took off his shoe and actually would give the shoe actually to Naomi, is what he would do. And this was a testimony in Israel. Therefore, the kinsman said under Boaz, 'You buy it for yourself.' So, he drew off his shoe."

"And Boaz said to the elders," verse nine, "and to all the people, 'You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, at the hand of Naomi.'"

And then verse 10, "Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon-" and by the way, this is where we learn the son that was married to Ruth, it was Mahlon, "... and I have purchased to be my wife to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place, you are witnesses this day."

Now, there was, in the Old Testament, it was called the levirate law from Deuteronomy. And that was that if you had a brother that married a woman and you died without having children, that you had to marry your brother's wife and you had to have children with your brother's wife. And those children then would be your children and carry your name on. This is how they would carry their name on.

So, this is not at all from the scriptures, but I imagine that they would actually make a pact among the brothers, "Marry only good-looking women because if you die, dude, I got to marry her." So, they had to get their brother's approval. "I'm going to marry this one. Do you think that's okay?" "Yeah, that one will do okay. If you die, I can handle that one." That's my crazy theory. Obviously, it's not biblical. I don't know that that's what's happening here.

What would happen, actually, and this is the way it's described, is if you refuse to fulfill your obligation and responsibility in the levirate law, that you would take off your shoe, you would give it to the woman, and then she would spit in your face. Thank you very much. So, you're walking around with one shoe and spit on your face.

So, very few guys would not do their responsibility in this levirate law, but this wasn't an issue of whether Ruth would be married or the land would be redeemed. This was an issue of who would do it. So, it wasn't so much, no one's going to do it, take off your shoe, spit on them. It was an issue of, who's going to do it? And Boaz wanted to do it.

Now, lest I forget. Let's make it very clear. Boaz loved Ruth. He didn't give a squat about the land, and he wasn't that concerned about an inheritance issue. He actually loved this woman and he was willing to sacrifice. And did you know that the Moabites were actually cursed and they were not supposed to be entering into the congregation of the Israelites.

But God and His grace and His mercy allowed Naomi to come in and become in the lineage of Boaz, which, eventually we're going to see tonight at the end of the chapter, was in the lineage of Jesus Christ. So, we see the grace of God and the mercy of God. But Jesus Christ is pictured in this man, Boaz, who loved us, gave Himself to redeem us, to buy us as His bride, that we might be redeemed.

Now, I want to stop right here and talk about redemption before we move on. The word redeem means to buy means to buy. It means to buy. It means that God has purchased us or bought us. He goes into the slave market, the picture of the image, and He buys us or He redeems us. So, Jesus Christ is our kinsman redeemer. The idea of the kinsman... Is that rain? It's a good thing God said he wouldn't destroy the earth with a flood anymore, right?

Man, who said it doesn't rain in Menifee? So, anyway, I forgot even where I was. Where was I?

Okay, back to the drawing board. So, Jesus is our redeemer, our Goel. He's bought us. But what are the marks of the redeemer? This is the point that really excites me. Write these down. Three basic things that were needed to qualify as a redeemer, a kinsman redeemer, to be able to redeem a relative's property.

Number one, you had to be near kinsman. You had to be a near kinsman or a relative. Leviticus 25:25. Lest the application to Jesus, our Redeemer. Jesus Christ became a man to be our kinsman, Goel, redeemer. The idea is of His humanity. So, it speaks of the incarnation, the fact that the word became flesh and dwelt among us. And that He took on a body and that He became near of kin. He was tempted in all points like we are yet without sin.

He was every bit totally, completely human, but He was without sin. He was a sinless human being. Now, there's never been a sinless human being before Him except for Adam before the fall. And there will never be a sinless human being after Him. I believe the Bible teach us, we're going to get this in Romans, that we actually inherit a sin nature at birth from Adam who acted as a federal head and brought sin upon the whole human race.

And that the reason that we sin is because we are sinners. We're born with a sinful nature and then it manifests itself in sin. So, Jesus became a man. He is the near of kin. He is our Goel, our kinsman redeemer. Then the second characteristic needed to be the kinsman redeemer, the Goel is you must be able to pay the redemption price. You got that? You must be able to pay the redemption price.

Jesus Christ, and no one else, was able to pay the redemption price. Now, how did God become a man, become near of kin? Through the womb of the Virgin Mary. Without the virgin birth, you do not have a sinless human nature in Christ. If Christ was born out of normal relationship of a man and a woman, then He inherited sin from Adam and He cannot redeem us. These are theological truths that are absolutely foundational to Christian doctrine.

If you take the virgin birth out of the gospel, you do not have a gospel. If you take the virgin birth out of the life of Christ, you do not have a sinless redeemer. He can't pay for man's sin. So, He was perfectly suited or qualified. The Bible says in 1 Peter 1:18-19 that we were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver and gold received by tradition from our fathers, but with the what? Precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Amen.

So, He was near of kin, human, sinless human, and He was able to give His life, to die for us because He was born without sin, which means He had no inherited defect. And He lived without sin. He had no acquired defect. When a lamb, in the Old Testament, was used as a sacrifice, it had to be without blemish and without spot, without blemish and without spot, without blemish, no inherited defect, couldn't have a bent ear, couldn't have one ear, couldn't be cross-eyed.

If you brought a lamb to the priest and said, "I want to offer this as a sacrifice." And the lamb looked at the priest and it was cross-eyed. He said, "No, I can't. This lamb's got a blemish." And

then the spot means that after the lamb was born, maybe perfect, acquired a defect. Something happened to it. It got burnt or broke a leg or something like that. It wasn't perfect. So, you had to have a perfect lamb without blemish and without spot.

Guess what? Jesus Christ was without blemish, born of a virgin, and without spot. He lived a sinless life. There's two things that we cannot compromise as Christians. Number one, we can't compromise the virgin birth. And number two, we can't compromise the sinless life of Jesus Christ. Don't ever, ever believe the lie that Jesus had a harem and that Jesus had wives and that Jesus did things that were sinful, that He was no different than anyone else. He was just a man.

No, He was the God man, the sinless God man, born of a virgin without a sin nature, and lived a sinless life. So, He's the perfectly suited goel, kinsman redeemer. And then the third qualification is, and this is simple but simply profound, he had to be willing to do it. He had to be willing to do it. He could have been like the other near kinsman that said, "No, no, I can't do it. No, no, no, I can't do that. I don't want to do that."

And if you wanted to, you could just simply say, "No, I'm not going to do that." You have to take off a shoe and get spit in the face. Jesus Christ gave His life on the cross willingly. You got that? You say, "Well, didn't the father send Him?" Yes, but Jesus also willingly, voluntarily came and died. When we speak of the death of Jesus Christ, we speak of it being vicarious. He died in our place. We speak of it being victorious. He conquered sin and death at the cross.

When we speak of the cross of Jesus Christ, we speak of it being a willing sacrifice. He willingly laid His life down. He said, "No one takes My life from Me. I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down and have power to take it up again." I don't know about you but that overwhelms me to think that He would willingly, voluntarily, for me, give His life to die on the cross. That, to me, is just amazing.

Now, I pointed out, as I read this passage in verse six, that the other near kinsman said, "I cannot redeem it for myself." And at the end of the verse, he says, "For I cannot redeem it." Many Bible teachers, and I think it's an interesting picture, see in this near kinsman the Old Testament law, because the New Testament says very clearly that the law cannot save us, that the law cannot redeem us.

"By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight." That's another theme we're going to learn in the Book of Romans, that we're justified by faith in Jesus Christ. No one can work their way to heaven. No one can be good enough to save themselves. No one can keep laws or rules or regulations or codes and be saved. The law cannot save. It's enabled. The purpose of the law, which is wholly just and good, is to show us our sin and our need of a savior.

That's the purpose of the law. Its purpose wasn't to save us. Its purpose was to show us that we were sinners and we need a savior and to drive us to Jesus Christ, our redeemer, for salvation. So, He could not redeem them by the law. But there's also some interesting contrast between

Boaz and Jesus. Not only is Jesus the redeemer like Boaz who loves the bride, the church, and seeks to purchase it, but there's also some contrast.

There's also the contrast in that Boaz purchased Ruth by giving out of his wealth, while Jesus purchased His bride by giving Himself on the cross. Boaz didn't have to suffer and die to get the bride. Boaz had a rival in the other kinsmen, but there's no rival to challenge Jesus Christ. Boaz took Ruth that he might raise up the name of the dead, chapter 4:10, but we, Christians, glorify the name of the living Christ.

There were witnesses on earth to testify that Ruth belonged to Boaz, but God's people have witnesses from heaven, the Spirit and the word, that Jesus Christ is our redeemer. And then I pointed out in Ruth 4:1-2 that five times the phrase, "Sat him down. Sit down, sit down," are repeated in verses 1-2. Notice in verse two, "Sit ye down here." And then again in verse two, "And they sat down."

It's a reminder, when Jesus died to redeem us and rose again to heaven, that he was seated at the right hand of the Father. In the Old Testament, whenever the priest would go into the holy place and sprinkle the blood on the altar for atonement, there was no place to sit down.

You know that in all of the furniture of the tabernacle and all the furniture of the tabernacle by which man approached God in the Old Testament, not one place to sit down. And you want to know why? Because your work was never done. Symbolically, when you sit down, it's a picture of your work is finished. I like to sit a lot. Thank God for sitting. And when your work is done, you sit down, "Oh, it's done."

So, Jesus sat down. And the Bible in the New Testament says that over and over again. When Jesus died in the cross, He cried to tell us that it is finished. And right now, guess what Jesus is doing? He's sitting in heaven. He's sitting in heaven because His work is finished, it's complete, and that we can have access by the blood of Christ into His presence.

Now, the second movement, and we won't spend it all the time, we just did on this first point, is that we move from the bridegroom to the bride, verse 11-12, "And all the people that were in the gate, and all the elders said, 'We are witnesses. The Lord make this woman that is coming to thy house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel, and do thou worthily in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem.'"

Using a little Hebrew poetry there, "Worthily in Egypt, or in Ephrathah, and be famous in Bethlehem." So, the 10 elders, and now others had congregated around, they pronounced a blessing on Ruth. They said, "The Lord make this woman that has come to the house like Rachel and like Leah." Now, these were the two wives of Jacob. And through these two wives, eight of the 12 tribes were born. And so, these two women populated the tribes of Israel.

And of course, Rachel, the wife that Jacob loved. And they said, the Lord bless Ruth and make them like Rachel and Leah. And then in verse 12, "And let thy house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bear unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman."

Now, notice how Ruth's life has radically changed. She goes from being a widow to being a bride.

She goes from weeping to being wed, all because in faith, she decided to follow the Lord of Israel, "Where you go, I will go. Who you worship, I will worship." And she followed Naomi back to the land of promise. And her life had changed because of that. From loneliness to love, from toil to rest, from poverty to wealth, from worry to assurance, from despair to hope. She is now the bride of Boaz.

And I love to see the faithfulness of God and the blessing of God and the hand of God on her life. And by the way, a little footnote, this Tamar mentioned in verse 12, as in this lineage here, is mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus Christ, Matthew 1:3. Actually, Ruth is mentioned, Tamar is mentioned, and Bathsheba is mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. And then we thirdly move in verse 13-22 to the baby.

So, you have the bridegroom, you have the bride, and now we end the book with a baby that is born. "So, Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. And he went in unto her, and the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son." God is good. "And the woman said unto Naomi," Now, these are the women that are gathered around. They said, "'Blessed be the Lord, or praise the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman-'" That is in the Hebrew, a Goel, a kinsman redeemer.

And that kinsman redeemer there is not Boaz they're talking about. They're talking about Obed, this baby that is born, "'... that his name may be famous in Israel, and he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life-'" Notice that. Even as Jesus comes to restore our life, "'... a nourisher of thine old age, for thy daughter-in-law which hath love thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him.'"

And so, Naomi took the child, verse 16, this grandmother that's so excited. She takes the child, she laid it in her bosom, and she became nurse unto it. It doesn't mean that she physically nursed the baby. It means that she adopted the baby. She changed its diapers and she took care of him, burped him, put him to bed. And this is like a live-in grandma that took care of the baby. And she just says, "I'm going to just adopt this child and take care of it."

"And so, the woman and her neighbors gave him a name saying, 'This is a son born to Naomi.' They called his name Obed." By the way, Obed means servant. "He is the father of Jesse and the father of David." Now, these are the generations of Perez. Perez begat Hezron, and Hezron begat Ram, Ram begat Amminadab, and Amminadab begat Nahshon, Nahshon begat Solomon, and Solomon begat Boaz, Boaz begat Obed, and Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat who? Wow.

And David eventually begat who? Jesus. You see why this book is in the Bible? It brings us down through David to Jesus. Now, we knew that Jesus would come through the tribe of Judah, but we didn't know what family. But God had made a promise to David. I preached on this a few

weeks ago. It's called the Davidic covenant.

He said, "David, you can't build me a house but I'm going to build you a house. You're going to have a son, and your son's going to sit on your throne, and he's going to reign forever and ever and ever and ever and ever. In other words, he's going to be the Messiah." David was so overwhelmed. This man who could write these beautiful songs sat down, and he was speechless. He just thought, "I don't know what to say. It's just amazing."

So, God had promised through David the Messiah would come. Now, this whole drama, this whole story comes together right in this last verse when we see the sovereign hand of God in blessing Boaz and Ruth and Naomi with a son. His name was Obed. Obed was the great grandfather of David. Boaz was. Excuse me. Obed was the grandfather. Jesse was the father of David who eventually had Jesus.

Now, this son would bring blessing in several areas. He would bring blessing to Boaz and Ruth. Notice in verse 13, go back with me to verse 13, it says, "So, Boaz took Ruth as his wife, and he went into her." By the way, this is the proper order. You get married, you consummate the marriage, and children are born. Just thought I'd throw that in there. This is the sequence. You get married, have intimacy in marriage, children are the fruit of marriage.

And so, notice what it says unto her. It says, "The Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son." Who gave the child to Boaz and Ruth? The Lord, right? Children are a gift from God. Amen. So, you're going, "Amen. I guess so." This time in the United States, in our culture, let's just take the United States and our culture, let's hold that banner high. Let's hold that banner. Let's not be ashamed.

If you've got a big family, a lot of kids, don't be intimidated when people look at you like, "What planet did you just come from?" We only have four kids. My kids, the other day, were talking about, "Remember when we were all together and we'd go in a restaurant and people would look at us like we were weird?" I go, "They did not."

I was talking to my friend Casey Kendall the other day, who has seven kids. Let's not be intimidated by, "Oh, yeah, you just have your comfortable little one or two kids," which is fine. If that's what the Lord has called you to do, that's fine. But why is it that we feel like kids cramp our style? Why is it that we feel like they cost too much? There's too much commitment. There's too much expense.

The Bible says, "As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of thy youth. Blessed is the man that has the quiver full." I don't care what our culture thinks. I don't care what our culture says. Children are a gift from God. And children are a blessing. And you need to keep that perspective. And I want you to remember, too, that God gave you those children and they belong to Him.

And the reality, they're actually His. He loaned them to you. And you're going to have to give an account to God as to how you raised them. So, do a diligent job in raising your children. "But he

would become a blessing to Boaz and Ruth." Secondly, Obed would be a blessing to Naomi. Verse 14, "They said to Naomi, 'Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left you this day without a kinsman, that his name be famous in Israel.'"

And then notice verse 16-17, "Naomi took the child later in her bosom and became a nurse unto it. And the woman, her neighbors, gave it a name, saying, 'The son shall be called Obed, which means servant.'" Naomi was blessed. It's a blessing to be a grandparent. It's a double blessing to be a grandparent. And Naomi was going to devote herself to ministering to this young boy, Obed, to nurturing him and encouraging him and blessing him.

You know how many people there are today walking with God because of a godly grandmother or a godly grandfather? There are many, many Christians today because they had a praying grandmother, they had a praying grandfather, and they impacted their life. I can't help but wonder so many times all that God has done in doing through my life if it isn't due to the prayers of my grandmother. I had a grandmother that prayed and prayed for me.

And I believe that's the case. So, as grandparents, we can have great impact and blessing on our grandchildren. They keep us young and they keep us looking to the future. And then thirdly, he became a blessing in Bethlehem, verse 22, became the city where David would eventually be born, put Bethlehem on the map, birthplace eventually of Christ. And then fourthly, he became a blessing to all of Israel for the Messiah of Israel would come.

And then fifthly, he became a blessing to the whole wide world. Think about that. Now, I wish I could adequately wrap this up and convey this idea. Elimelech and Naomi run to Moab in a time of famine. So, there's a famine. Times are hard. They're suffering. And they run to Moab. They get to Moab, and Naomi's husband dies. Her two sons had married a Moabite women, and her two sons die. How easy it would have been for her to just grow bitter?

When she came back to the land, she said, "Call me not Naomi but call me bitter, for God has dealt bitterly with me." But I love, I love the idea and the truth so clearly taught all throughout the Bible, and here so clear in the book of Ruth, that God is faithful, that God goes with us in our sorrow and our suffering, that God uses it for our good and for His glory.

When Naomi was grieving over the loss of her husband and the death of her sons, and when Ruth and Orpah were grieving over the loss of their husbands and wondering what the future holds, could you think they could ever, in their wildest dreams, imagine, especially Ruth, could she ever imagine that as a result of her obedience to God, her faith in God and her step of faith, what God had in store and God had planned for her when her heart was broken, she was tasting those tears of bitterness?

You never know what God is doing. You have no way of knowing the next chapter of your life. You have no way of knowing what God has planned for you. You have no way of knowing the good and the blessings that God has in store for you. Don't grow bitter. Don't grow impatient. Don't grow angry. Stay in a place of obedience and submission. Love the Lord with all your

heart, your soul, your strength, and your mind.

And even though it may be dark and time might be difficult and you may be weeping tears of bitterness, it maybe seems like your family is falling apart, your life, your health, your wealth, everything's going down the drain, God still sits on the throne. And they come back to the land of Bethlehem. She goes, "Well, I guess I might as well go out and see what I can glean in the fields." And it just so happened that she lands in this field of a near kinsman. His name was Boaz.

And it just so happened that Boaz took sight of her, took an interest in her, and pursued her. And it just so happened that Moab Boaz married her. It just so happened that Boaz and her had a son. And it just so happened that son became in the lineage of the savior of the world. You never know what God has for you. You never know what God's plans are for you. God says He has plans for good and not for evil, plans to bless you and plans to prosper you.

But what we need to do is walk in faith and walk in obedience and trust Him, and know that many times, it's darkest just before the dawn, and that God can turn our lives around, that God can bring us gladness for sorrow, He can bring us the garment of praise for the garment of heaviness, that God can turn our lives around. I see the providential care in the hand of God.

And when I read the Book of Ruth, I think, "Isn't God good, and isn't God faithful?" God is good and God is faithful. And if you walk in obedience to God, you'll come to the end of your days and you'll say the same thing, "God is good and God is faithful." The other day, I was watching a video of Ruth Graham, the wife of Billy Graham. She's gone to be with the Lord several years ago.

But not long before she died, she was being interviewed by her daughter, Anne Graham Lotz, and she said, she called her, "Mama, tell me, what have you've learned from your long life? What one thing have you learned from your long life that you can share with us?" And I was so struck by what Ruth Graham... So, she said, "I've learned that God is faithful, that God is faithful and that we can trust Him." Let's pray.