



**Ruth 4:13-22**  
*According to His Purpose*

13 So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son.

14 Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel!

15 "And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him."

16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him.

17 Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "There is a son born to Naomi." And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

18 Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron;

19 Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab;

20 Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon;

21 Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed;

22 Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.

I love the way Ruth ends, and not just because it has wonderfully happy ending for Boaz, and Ruth, and Naomi and not even because we started the story with sin and curses and death and hopelessness and we end it with obedience and blessings and new life and faith and hope, although that too is wonderful. I love it because of the genealogy at the end that suddenly reminds us that all of these events were part of a much larger picture, a much grander plan.

The genealogy is almost like the storyteller closing the scroll and turning to his listeners and saying "***and that is the amazing story of how the grandfather of our great king David was born!***" It's at that point that we all realize that this is much more than the story of how God saved two poverty-stricken widows from destruction. We see that all of these individual characters all played a role in a much bigger story. We go from seeing individual trees, to a much larger forest.

Now by itself, that would be pretty impressive. Who would think that God would save a penniless widow from Moab of all places and make her the great grandmother of King David! "What are the chances of that?" we might ask. But if you are familiar with the first chapter of the New Testament, you know that all these characters occur again as the ancestors of someone even more important than David. In the genealogy of Jesus in Matt. 1:5 we read "Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king." And then it goes on to trace the line of ancestors from David to Christ.

These two widows weren't used just to provide Israel with its greatest mortal king. They were an integral part of God's plan of redemption, He made their lives part of the greatest story ever told. All

of this had taken place – the good and the bad – to fulfill the Lord’s purposes and was all part of his grand design.

Now brothers and sisters, we can read **Romans 8:28** “*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*” And never really grasp the truly amazing thing that we are being told. We can read that and still spend our lives trapped in the details, forgetting that they too are all part of much larger plan. It is only when we read books like Ruth and see how that principle that “*all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose*” actually works out that we can begin to get an inkling of what the sovereignty of God really means. And if we begin to understand that, then we will also have the key to so many other things like understanding how to be content no matter what our circumstances may be and with God all things really are possible.

Now the women of the city had an understanding of that – after the marriage of Ruth to Boaz and the birth of Obed who is legally her grandson – the women know who to thank – they don’t say, “*that was lucky Naomi*” – they say “**Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a close relative**”

They knew for instance that for TEN YEARS Ruth had been married to Mahlon without having children, and now she has married a much older man, and yet she conceives – because it is the Lord who opens and closes the womb when the time is right for his purposes. For instance, for many years Hannah was childless, we read explicitly in 1 Sam. 1:5 that the Lord closed her womb, but when she prays and vows that any son He might give her will be dedicated to His service the Lord opens her womb and she gives birth to the boy who would eventually go on to be the mighty prophet Samuel. God in his plan didn’t want merely another Son for Elkanah, he wanted a prophet to succeed Eli and teach his people. And it wasn’t until the time was right and Hannah was in the place where that could happen that he saw fit to give her a child.

God’s plan was not that Ruth and Mahlon would have a large family of apostate children who would become farmers in Moab, his plan was that Ruth would be saved and that she and Boaz would have a faithful son called Obed, meaning servant who would truly be better to Naomi than seven sons (meaning the ideal or complete family) in Moab would have been.

The women of Bethlehem who name Obed – and incidentally just as Ruth doesn’t explicitly prescribe for us how to find a husband, it also doesn’t prescribed for us how to name our kids – so you don’t have to ask the other members of the church – anyway they call him that because they are sure that in due time he will serve her as a *Go’el* in the sense of being *a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age*. Boaz is probably older than Naomi, he will probably be deceased by the time she reaches old age. Naomi, they say, your descendent OBED will take care of you.

The spoke better than they knew, for just as Naomi’s descendent Obed – meaning servant would take care of her physical needs, so too the suffering servant Jesus, who was born to save His people from their sins would take care of her greatest need – her need for redemption.

Well a few final applications – I hope you have noticed several things as we have gone through Ruth.

1) I hope that you have seen again that what Christ tells us in Luke 18:29-30 is certainly true:

***“So He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,  
30 "who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life."***

Orpah chose not to leave her house and her parents and instead returned to Moab, whereas Ruth forsook everything for the sake of the kingdom. The pragmatic observer would have said Orpah made the smart decision, just as they would have said that Peter should have stayed in his Dad's fishing business on the Sea of Galilee. But they both chose to follow the redeemer instead, and who ended up better off both in life and certainly in the final judgment. Ruth turned out to be a literal fulfillment of the words of Psalm 113:

***Psalm 113:7 He raises the poor out of the dust, And lifts the needy out of the ash heap,  
8 That He may seat him with princes -- With the princes of His people.  
9 He grants the barren woman a home, Like a joyful mother of children. Praise the LORD!***

Brothers and Sisters, my observation has always been that he who follows the world gains nothing of value and in the end, loses everything, but that the person who follows Christ has much real treasure here, and in the end, inherits a kingdom that no one can ever take away.

2) I hope also you have noticed that here we have a story in which God worked exclusively through secondary means, although he could have provided for the needs of Naomi as he did the widow of Zarephath, giving her a jar of oil that never ran out, a bin of flour that was never exhausted even a prophet to raise her son from the dead, yet he chose to work through Ruth and Boaz. Yet work he did. We need histories like this in the word, where God works wonderfully to bring his plans out to their appointed ends, but exclusively through secondary means, just as much as we need the histories of His miraculous workings, because Brothers and sisters we seem to assume that unless the Red Sea is being parted before our eyes, our ailments are not being instantly cured by the touch of an apostle, and our enemies being destroyed by giant hailstones from heaven that God is not at work in our lives!

Brothers and Sisters, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, I can tell you this for certain, HE is working in your life, and that even the things that may hurt you for a time will ultimately work out for good. There are more stories than I can mention that prove that point, but I have recorded just one for you:

***You may have heard also the story of that eminent martyr who habitually said, “All things work together for good.” When he was seized by the officers of Queen Mary to be taken to the stake to be burned, he was treated so roughly on the road that he broke his leg. They jeeringly said, “‘All things work together for good,’ do they? How will your broken leg work for your good?” “I don’t know how it will,” said he, “but for my good I know it will work, and you shall see it so.” Strangely, it proved true that it was for his good. Having been delayed a day or so on the road through his lameness, he just arrived in London just in time to hear that Elizabeth was proclaimed queen. So he escaped the stake by his broken leg. He turned to the men who had carried him, as they thought, to his death, and said to them, “Now will you believe that ‘all things work together for good’?”***

3) Finally I hope you will have woven all those threads together and that you will realize that the sovereign God of all creation has a plan of salvation that he has been working out in history ever since the fall of man.

Gal. 4:4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Far from being inconsequential, if you are believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are part of his plan. He was thinking of you not only *before* he formed you: As the Psalmist says in *Psalm 139:16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.*” He was planning out your eternal destiny before he even created the earth and the stars:

Eph. 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

I hope then you will see that God can be trusted and that if He is working out his purposes then it is only if you have, like Ruth, trusted in His plan of redemption that you will be saved and ***all things work together for good ONLY to those who love God***

Brothers and sisters we foolishly think the events of the day are so important, even Christians act like the politics of the moment are the be all and the end all of existence.

All of these presidential candidates who regard themselves as so important and who are so desperate for fleeting power will barely form a footnote in history and someday, all of them will come just like every king and every slave before the throne of God and on that day the only thing that will matter is their relationship to the great descendent of Boaz and Ruth, the King of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ.