

Redemptive Love

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Tonight our text is going to be from Ruth 4:7-15 and I would like to read those verses to set them in your minds before we move into them verse by verse, and just to give you a sense of anticipation, this passage is going to lead us to a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ at the end and so we're seeing more than just a story of human marriage and romance, we're seeing a picture of Christ ultimately in what we're going to look at this evening. So Ruth 4, beginning in verse 7,

7 Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange of land to confirm any matter: a man removed his sandal and gave it to another; and this was the manner of attestation in Israel. 8 So the closest relative said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself." And he removed his sandal. 9 Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses today that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon. 10 Moreover, I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, to be my wife in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance, so that the name of the deceased will not be cut off from his brothers or from the court of his birth place; you are witnesses today." 11 All the people who were in the court, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel; and may you achieve wealth in Ephrathah and become famous in Bethlehem. 12 Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring which the LORD will give you by this young woman." 13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went in to her. And the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. 14 Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed is the LORD who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel. 15 May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him."

Now, let's take a moment to reset the stage here, reset the context for what we're studying here this evening because the last two weeks we went on a little bit of a deliberate tangent

to consider a marrying kind of man and a marrying kind of woman from the text here in Ruth 4 and I think those studies were necessary and it's good that we did, but it's been just a little bit of time since we actually considered exactly the context here and I just want it to be fresh in your mind. You know that Boaz has committed himself to redeem Ruth and to marry her and he's working through the implications legally with the closer relative, the prior kinsman Redeemer, and we saw two weeks ago that the prior kinsman redeemer had waived his rights and cleared the way for Boaz to obtain Naomi's property and to marry Ruth. Look at verse 6 in Ruth 4, "The closest relative said, 'I cannot redeem it for myself, because I would jeopardize my own inheritance. Redeem it for yourself; you may have my right of redemption, for I cannot redeem it.'" Now, notice right there because this will become more important later on, notice the theme of redemption that is framing everything that happens in here, and we just want to be mindful of the fact that Boaz is using his position as a close relative and he is using his resources to provide for Naomi and Ruth according to the obligations that he had under the law and under customs and it was something that he gladly and willingly did. And now as we return to Ruth 4 this week, we see the happy conclusion. We see the outcome of Ruth's loyalty to Naomi and how the Lord blessed that and how he gave to Ruth and to Naomi far more than they ever could have dreamed, mark that, far more than they ever could have dreamed, and now we see the conclusion of that and we find in this a picture that points us to an even greater redemptive love in the end.

But first we want to walk through the story a little bit verse by verse. The closer relative yielded his redemption rights to Boaz and now they are going to formalize the transaction. Look again at verse 7 with me. We kind of tend to read the text twice, once all the way through and then we go back through it again verse by verse. It's important for you to understand why we do that and to embrace it. The way we teach here at Truth Community, we want it to be an open word. We want you to see the text for yourself and we want the word to be saturating your mind and saturating the direction of everything that we say. That is where safety is in biblical teaching; that is where safety is in any kind of preaching, it's when a man closes the Bible or doesn't open it and walks around on a platform and starts telling you stories about himself, stories about his family, that you get into a lot of trouble. Our anchor and our protection against that at Truth Community, is to have the Bible open and to keep pointing to the text again and again. The text is what matters. Our opinions don't matter. It's the text that is imported and that's what we try to point you to. So that's why we kind of read the text and repeat it again and again, it's so that the word of God would be central and would guide everything that we say.

So, they formalize a transaction in verse 7 and the writer says, "Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange of land to confirm any matter: a man removed his sandal and gave it to another; and this was the manner of attestation in Israel. So the closest relative said to Boaz, 'Buy it for yourself.' And he removed his sandal." Now, that sounds a little bit strange to our ears to think about handing a sandal over to confirm a property right transaction. I understand that that sounds odd to our ears but think with me just a little bit and you'll see that this isn't nearly as strange as it might seem on a first reading. The recognition of property rights is something that we recognize as being very significant and it's a formal transaction. Those

of you that have purchased homes or even just leased a home or an apartment for living purposes, you know that there is a lot of formality that goes into it. A home is purchased and there are notaries that are stamping off on things and bank officers are signing on the loans and the courthouse gets involved. There is a lot of formality to it because property rights are so valuable and so significant that they need to be recognized and the formality that we attach to it shows the significance of what is involved. Well, just the paperwork that we use to sell a home points to that.

Well, here in this passage, the handing of the sandal was symbolic of something, we'll get to that in a moment, but also you find that there are multiple witnesses to the transaction. Look at verse 9 with me, "Boaz said to the elders and all the people, 'You are witnesses today that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon. I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess to be my wife in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance, so that the name of the deceased will not be cut off from his brothers or from the court of his birth place; you are witnesses today.'" We saw earlier in chapter 4 that there were 10 leading men from the city that were there. Why? You know, why this formality? Why all of the witnesses? Well, they didn't document in paper their legal transactions, their property right transactions like we do today, rather, instead they had a multiplicity of witnesses that would secure the validity of that transaction going forward. There would be by a multiplicity of witnesses, there was affirmation that the transaction was legitimate and then going forward, the multiplicity of witnesses would secure the validity of the transaction if it was ever questioned going on, later on, I should say. So the witnesses gave a validity to the transaction and an affirmation and a formality to it that we now assign to paper in our own traditions here, in our own legal system here in Western culture.

Now, the local custom in this time required the one transferring his right to give his sandal to the one receiving the property rights. Now, you know, you think about that and to us it almost sounds just a little bit disgusting. "I don't want your sandal. You can keep your sandal." But there was a significance to it that is evident even though the precise symbolism might be uncertain. One authority suggests this, that land was purchased based on whatever size triangle a buyer could walk off in a given amount of time: in an hour, in a day, in a week, in a month, and since they walked off the land in sandals, the sandals became sort of a moving title to the land, and when the sandal was transferred over to someone else, it symbolically indicated the purchaser's right to walk on the land as his property. The original owner had walked it off in his sandals, he hands a sandal over to the buyer, to the one receiving the rights, and in essence says, "You now stand in my shoes on the property." So the transfer of the sandal indicates a transfer of the rights to that property, and here the kinsman redeemer who had the prior rights to Naomi's property and to Ruth, hands over his sandal and symbolically says, "You can step into my shoes. You can step into my place. You now have the rights that I have. I waive them. They now belong to you as symbolized by the handing over of my sandal to you."

Now, the effect of that transfer is clear enough even if the symbolism is a little bit murky to us. Here's one way to think about it: if it seems murky to us, well, understand that it

was going to be murky at that time that the book of Ruth was written as well because look at verse 7 with me again. Remember that the book of Ruth is being written a few generations after the events described in Ruth actually take place. Well, verse 7, the writer of Ruth is explaining to his contemporary audience what the meaning of this transaction is and what the meaning of the transfer of the symbol is. He says, "this was the custom in former times in Israel." He's got to help his audience out to say, "Let me explain to you what's about to happen here, the man removed his sandal and gave it to another, this was how things were attested in Israel." So this is a parenthetical statement added by the author to supplement the narrative of the events with Boaz so that the reading audience would understand what's going on when this sandal is transferred.

So this is what's going on. There is a formality here. This isn't simply a man getting more comfortable by taking his shoes off. There is a legal formality here. There are a lot of rights at stake and so the participants, the prior redeemer and Boaz are going through a lot of legal formality to show the validity and legitimacy of what's happening. Now, when you remember that they had a child and that child became an ancestor to David who became an ancestor to Christ, you can see that the validity of this actually had a long-term purpose in redemptive history to make sure that this was established for all time and that's what they did here even though the participants at the time weren't aware of the long-term significance of what was happening.

Now, with that said, going back into the realm, going back into the realm in which Boaz was acting here in his time and in his place, by purchasing Naomi's property, he had undertaken to care for her for the remainder of her life and by acquiring Ruth, he says that he would provide children to her. Look at verses 9 and 10 with me again as we see the immediate significance of this transaction for Boaz, Naomi and Ruth. In verse 9, Boaz says to the elders and to the people, "You are witnesses that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech," her former husband, "and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon," her two deceased sons. So Boaz by this act of exercising his redemptive prerogative, has acquired everything that belonged to Naomi and has done so on the premise that from his position as the redeemer, he would care for her for the remainder of her natural life.

Further, he speaks about the significance about this with Ruth. You see, there is a lot going on here legally. I get kind of geeked out when these kind of legal rights things come up and so it's particularly interesting to me. Legally speaking, he's now acquired a right to Ruth the Moabitess. Verse 10, "I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess to be my wife." And in the presence of all of these witnesses, these legal rights are being transferred; the witnesses affirm it, it is symbolically represented by the transfer of the sandal so that Boaz is in a legal position to control Naomi's property; he has undertaken the responsibility to provide for her out of his means; he has received the legal right to marry Ruth and said, "I will provide a son to her going forward." So there is great legal significance to what is taking place here in these verses. Great consequences. Boaz, watch this, Boaz has assumed responsibility for the care of Naomi and Ruth by what he has done.

Now, the response of the community shows that this was a righteous thing for him to do. It was a joyful occasion. There was great blessing and great overflow and good wishes flowing from the people as they watched this take place, as they affirmed it in verse 11. Look at it there with me, "All the people who were in the court, and the elders, said, 'We are witnesses.'" Boaz had called them and had formalized and said, "You who were here, you are formal witnesses to what has just transpired." And they accept that responsibility. They affirm it publicly in Boaz's presence and in each other's presence and literally in the original language it simply says witnesses. That's why the "we are" is in italics is because it's not expressed in the original text. They are simply saying, "Yes, we are witnesses to this." In other words, "We affirm the legal declarations that you just made. We are witnesses to that in front of you, in front of each other. Everybody affirms that this is a righteous transaction. The legality has been honored in that Boaz is indeed entitled to the rights that he just asserted regarding Naomi and Ruth."

So with the legal aspect of it out of the way, they turn and they express their blessings, in a sense a prayer, a benediction upon Boaz. Look at verse 11. This is very precious really, when you think about a community affirmation of a wedding. You get a sense of what's being said here. They recognize the significance of it and they say, "May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel; and may you achieve wealth in Ephrathah and become famous in Bethlehem. Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring which the LORD will give you by this young woman." What are they saying here? Well, they're calling upon the history of Israel and how women provided children and blessing in the past to men and in an abundant way and they are wishing abundant blessing on Boaz as he moves forward now having accepted these responsibilities. Rachel and Leah, you'll remember, were the wives of Jacob and they and their concubines provided to Jacob 12 sons who became the 12 tribes of Israel, became the heads of those tribes. That was 900 years prior to this time with Boaz and with Ruth, and so the exponential geometric growth that occurred to the line of Jacob, they call upon that and say, "Just as our father Jacob gave rise and these women gave rise to a nation to this one man, Boaz, we pray that there would be a similar prosperity to you as a result of what's taking place here." They call upon the memory of their own nation for nine centuries and say, "Boaz, that's what we wish for you here." You know, when you think about the blessings that we go to a wedding, a righteous wedding, a man and woman get married in the Lord and we pronounce blessing on them, well, that's a little picture but usually we're not so expansive and have such a broad view of history in place when we do. We just want them to be happy in life. Well, they're saying, "You know, remember the fullness of our national history. Remember how Rachel and Leah gave so much to Jacob? Boaz, we pray that there would be a legacy that comes from your loins that would be equivalent to that." You've got to love the generosity and the sweetness of the blessing that is given there.

Then they go further in verse 12, they say, "Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring which the LORD will give you by this young woman." Now, the story of Tamar is found in Genesis 38. It's a little bit sordid if you remember it. Tamar was a widow and in her case, the brother, Onan, did

not honor his Levirite responsibility. He refused and he violated her by not keeping his Levirite obligation to raise up a son in the name of his deceased brother. Tamar, as you may remember, immorally joined with her father-in-law Judah after her husband died in order to raise up a son and she gave birth to twins and Perez was one of the twins, the firstborn of the twins from that union. Well, despite the original immorality, God multiplied their descendents and Perez became the ancestor of the people in Bethlehem where this story takes place.

So the people here have called upon the memory of the original founder of Judah and they call upon the memory of Perez who gave rise to their own local tribe and they say, "Boaz, we want you to have a multiplied legacy like these men did. May what happens from this day forward result in abundant blessing to you." So they realize that Boaz was going to raise up a family after someone else had refused to meet his Levirite obligation.

So here we are. The story begins to draw to a conclusion now and the city's wishes are granted. Their prayer is answered in the form of a baby. Look at Ruth 4:13, "So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went in to her." They had physical relations with one another. "And the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son." Here, the son being a sacred trust from the Lord. Remember, remember that Ruth had been married for 10 years and had not given birth to a child. She was barren in her prior marriage. Here the Lord opens her womb, enables her to conceive and she gives birth to a son, and the women come around and they congratulate Naomi. It's interesting that the focus turns to Naomi and away from Ruth at this juncture of the story. Look at verse 14, "The women said to Naomi, 'Blessed is the LORD who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel. May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.'"

Now, there are a couple of things that we want to say about this but let's step back and remember a little bit about what the context earlier in the story. You remember, go back to Ruth 1:19 with me, if you would, and keep the big picture of everything in mind. Naomi has had a hard life. They originally left Israel to go to Moab because there was a famine. In Moab, her husband dies and her two sons die. She went out with a family, she comes back with a Moabite daughter-in-law and that's all that she has, and apparently it expressed itself in her countenance even when she returned.

Look at Ruth 1:19. We're remembering the significance of the past in order to appreciate the present in the narrative. So verse 19, chapter 1, "they both went until they came to Bethlehem. And when they had come to Bethlehem, all the city was stirred because of them, and the women said, 'Is this Naomi?' And Naomi said, 'Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has witnessed against me and the Almighty has afflicted me?'" That's where she came from. When she came back, her original return into the city was one borne out of sorrow and bitterness and emptiness and she comes back and the women saw her there in that condition and they speak with her and they realize the extreme sadness of her position.

Now coming to the end of the book of Ruth, go back to verse 14 with me again, they recognize the spiritual significance of this child and what it represents in the life of Naomi. They say, "Well, blessed be God. He didn't leave you without a redeemer. This child is an indication that his favor is still upon you. We pray that this child, his name would become famous in Israel, and that he," referring interestingly enough to her grandson, not so much to Boaz here, "may this grandson be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age because your daughter-in-law has given birth to him." They say, you know, without diminishing the place of Boaz in her life, they realize that this grandson would rise up and also be able to provide for her even after Boaz was gone. So they see a long-term significance to this child and they recognize him as a gift from God to Naomi. And look at what it says there in verse 15 about what they say indirectly about Ruth. They say, "your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons. Seven sons would not equal the value that Ruth has been to you." It's a great affirmation of her presence and all that she meant to Naomi and how special that she had been.

Now, let's stop and we'll stop the text there and think about a couple of things along the way. We'll see what we can do to bring this out and we'll hopefully complete Ruth next time. First of all, let's step way back, beloved, let's step way back in the story and realize and just kind of walk through it in an overview perspective from where Naomi was coming from when this story began. Who could have read the purposes of God accurately when that family left Israel to go to Moab? Who could have read the purposes of God when her husband died and she buried him and then her sons died and she buried them, and she goes back empty into Israel? Who would have thought that the purposes of God were good in the midst of that? Sometimes, quite often, you cannot, well, let's just say this: never in the moment can you ever rightly read the purposes of God of anything that is happening in your life, and we realize and we recognize that when difficult times hit and, "Why is this happening? What's going on? This is so painful and so sorrowful," beloved, what we have to understand as a congregation and what you must understand individually if you're going to walk rightly with Christ is that your judgment in the midst of your deepest trials about the purposes of God are completely unreliable. You cannot assess the purposes of God in the midst of your trials, in the midst of your pain. What I'm trying to say here is that you should not try to interpret the ultimate purposes of God when you are in the midst of a very deep valley in life. You will get it wrong if you think that this is so hard and painful that God's purposes for me cannot possibly be good. That's not true and you have to take control of your mind, you have to think right thoughts about God and realize that God's purposes for his people are always good and the fact that you cannot see it or understand it in the moment does not contradict that ultimate fact. It would be impossible, you are more likely to jump to the moon than God is to deal badly with you as one of his children. That's just not going to happen. God is too good to deal badly with you.

So you have to settle that conviction in your heart and in your mind when things are a little bit placid in your life maybe, things are peaceful; you have to let that go deep into your heart and let it be a formative conviction about the way that you think about God so

that when the bad times do hit you are not tempted to dishonor God and to question his goodness because you're going through a sorrowful painful time. We should never question the goodness of God. You are never right to question God's goodness; never right to question his love for his children. That is never an acceptable response to trials. We must be so settled and so convinced of the goodness of God in our heart that we are of a mind that whatever else I think about this, it cannot be possible that God is dealing harshly or unkindly with me in a way that will prove to my ultimate detriment. We just have to think lofty thoughts about God and, you know, when we talk about, people talk about having a high view of God, we want to have a high view of God and it's good to have a high view of God, often when that's said, people are thinking about it and having a high view of his sovereignty and that's true. We should have an absolute high view of the sovereignty of God. He is in perfect control of everything that happens but, beloved, do you understand that you should also have an absolutely high view of the love of God as well? That God's love cannot be violated? That he would never break the bond of love on those that he has redeemed in Christ? Are you equally convinced of the love and goodness of God as you are of the sovereignty of God? Because both of those are absolutes about the nature of his immutable character. So whatever happens to us in life is not because God has lost control, and equally so it is not because he has lost his love for us or that he is violating it in us. That could never be. We should never think such things.

Now, bringing that back to Ruth, understand that while they were going through the famine, while she was going through the sorrow of her life, God's hidden purposes were always at work in this. Throughout the entire course of this story, God was silently, inexorably moving people and events to accomplish the goal that he had in mind. Did they see it at the time? No, they didn't see it. Do you see it when you're going through it in your hard times? No. You won't always see it, but you walk by faith in the sovereign love of God, the sovereign goodness of God, and say, "I will believe that even though I don't see it and feel it where I'm at right now." In the end when it was all over, in the context speaking very carefully here, within the realm and within the context of their lives, Naomi, the women around her in that context, they saw what they thought was the outworking of the purposes of God. They saw that God had restored Naomi in an earthly sense, he had brought a redeemer to her and out of that redemptive love, a son had been born and the name of her husband and her sons would be continued through that babies line that she now held in her lap and they rejoiced as well they should over the goodness of God in that. But you see that they are thinking about it in earthly terms and verse 15, look at chapter 4, verse 15 with me again when they say, "May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age. Oh Naomi, this is wonderful. This child will care for you going forward. You have been greatly blessed by God." Amen.

Now, that's all good and right and well but, beloved, here's where we have the benefit of reading the story 3,000 years later, we have the benefit of subsequent revelation. We see the unfolding of what happened over time and this is where we should get really glad, really elevated thoughts about God and just be brought to a humbling recognition that God's purposes were far greater than they recognized at the time; that in the midst of blessing Naomi with this grandson, God had far transcendent purposes in mind. Now,

we've talked about this and we'll go through it more next week, but this child became a father to one who gave birth and led to David and David led to Christ. They had no idea of that. They were just celebrating the birth of a child after years of hardship for Naomi. What we see with the veil pulled back, is that we are utterly astonished that through that Moabite woman God is raising up the line that would lead to our Lord Jesus Christ. We're humbled to the point of silence to realize that God is so great that he can work out transcendent purposes that we do not see and he is working out those purposes in the midst of our earthly lives, but his purposes are not contained, limited to, or defined by what happens during our earthly existence.

Now, that has a lot of implications that we'll try to talk about a little bit more next week. Let's just look at it from this one limited perspective for now: Boaz and Ruth gave birth to a son who headed up a line that led to our Lord Jesus Christ and in Christ we found our redemption. Do you realize that in addition to that, that Boaz himself and the way that he exercised care over Naomi and Ruth, is a beautiful illustration of how the Lord Jesus Christ has dealt with you as a believer in him? Our Lord Jesus Christ became our kinsman Redeemer. Watch this, Boaz, remember we said he used his position and his resources to redeem Naomi and Ruth and to provide for them for the rest of their earthly existence. That's a little picture of a much greater reality of what Christ has done for us. Christ used his position as the Son of God and his resources of perfect holiness and infinite essence to step into earth, to step into human life in order to redeem you and me from our sins; in order to redeem his people and to secure their well-being not only on earth but throughout all of eternity.

Boaz and Ruth give us then a picture of Christ's redemptive love for us. Think about it. Ruth was a Moabitess. That is a point that is emphasized seven or eight times throughout the book of Ruth. "Ruth the Moabitess. Ruth the Moabitess. Ruth the Moabitess." She was a foreigner and we covered in our early sessions on Ruth the fact that Moabites were outside the circle of blessing given to Israel, far outside it. And yet she converts and she comes into the people of God, but here she was, she was by blood lineage, she was a foreigner with no means of her own. She is trying to eke out an existence gleaning barley in the field and what happened? Boaz set his love upon her. Boaz sees her in her need, sees her in her lack, sees her as a foreigner and brings her in and uses his resources to bestow untold blessings upon her and to care for her. Boaz redeemed her and, as it were, brought her into fellowship.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, is that not exactly what our Lord Jesus Christ did for us? He used his position. He used his resources. Not just his material resources, he used his own precious blood as the redemption price with which he bought us. And it is so critical for us to think rightly about this and we must divest ourselves of any sense of entitlement to that blessing. Remember, beloved, that you were a sinner separated from God. In the words of Ephesians 2, you were a stranger to the covenants of promise. You were without God in the world, not having any hope. In fact, let's look over at that passage in Ephesians 2 just to emphasize that and to remind you of the helpless condition in which you found yourself. Ephesians 2:12 says, "remember that you were at that time," prior to your conversion, "you were separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of

Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." Think about yourself apart from Christ, beloved. This was you. Your nose was pressed up on the glass looking inside the window, looking through the window at God's blessing but you were on the outside and you could not get in. There was nothing by which you could commend yourself; nothing by which you could recommend yourself to God. You had no merit of your own. You were destined to perish miserably. You were not even a seeker of God, Romans 3 says. And it is in that position where you were the foreigner; you were outside the realm of God's blessing; you were outside of Christ and had no ability to force yourself into it, and what did Christ do? Christ comes in mercy. Christ comes even before you were born and pays the redemption price on the cross of Calvary for your soul and says, as it were, "I will pay the price. I will purchase them. I will redeem them." It's one of the most common words to speak of salvation, isn't it, redemption? That Christ paid a price for us with his blood in order that we would belong to him, just as Boaz paid a price for Ruth and brought her in though she was a foreigner. In a much greater way, Christ paid a price for us with his blood and brought us in though we were foreigners and strangers and outside him.

This speaks so much of his love for us. John 3:16, "That God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever would believe in him would not perish but have eternal life." He purchased us according to his love. Romans 5:8, "God demonstrates his own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, lay down his life for us, paid the redemption price while we were foreigners, sinners, outside, separated, without hope and destined to perish miserably in the end." And yet our Redeemer came. Our Redeemer showed mercy on us. Our Redeemer brought us in though we were foreigners. Beloved, from his position as the eternal Son of God and from the resources of his infinite worth and love, Christ loved us, Christ paid the price for us at Calvary, Christ secured our blessing not only in this life but for all of eternity to come. Blessed be his name. Blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ who exercised such redemptive love on those of us who had no claim on it.

So you see, beloved, as sweet as the story of Boaz redeeming Ruth is and we look at that and we commend the character of Boaz, we commend what happened with Ruth as a wonderful human story, do you realize that that story ultimately fades from view as the greater Boaz steps forward in our thinking and our understanding and we see that we ourselves are on the receiving end of a much greater redemptive love than the beautiful love that Boaz poured out on Ruth. Humbled. You know, you remember Ruth saying, "Why would you have favor on me? I'm a foreigner." You can mark the sign of grace in your heart when hearing about the redemptive love of Christ you say, "Lord Jesus, why? Why me? I was a foreigner. I was a sinner. Why would you show that mercy to me? I realize that it couldn't possibly have come from anything that I did. Rather, it was you showering down blessings from heaven upon me that I could not have provoked on my own with my own righteousness. Lord Jesus, I see that you have undertaken to care for me in redemptive love beyond compare and I bow before you in grateful worship in response." We look to Boaz, we appreciate the picture but our minds go to our own Redeemer, not Ruth's. We go to our own Redeemer and we find our affections, our priorities, everything that we love, our purpose for existence defined in response to the

perfect redemptive love that Christ gave to his people. Is that true of you? Is that true in your heart? Do you love Christ in response to that kind of redemption?

Let's bow together prayer.

Lord, well might we ask why. We have an extra moment or two here, Father, we just recognize that life brings things and our hearts cry out why at times, not understanding the weight of life issues sometimes that come down upon us. Our Father, I pray that you would help us live life from a perspective that sees a greater and a more glorious why at stake; that sees the love of Christ and realizes that there was nothing in us that could have provoked it; that we are on the receiving end of love. Why? Why are we on the receiving end of redemptive love? It is because you, our Lord Jesus, as our Redeemer, first loved us and you do not love us in response to us choosing you, we love you because you chose us and exercised redemptive love on us. I pray, O God, that you would help us understand that, that it would become part of the fabric of the entire way that we think about you and think about life, and that we would so treasure the Lord Jesus Christ in response to this great redemptive love that he has set upon us. Lord, we were outside, separated from God. Our sins had made a separation from you and we had no access to God whatsoever. We weren't even looking, and yet you brought the Gospel to us, you brought Christ to us, and by the power of your Spirit, you turned our hearts in a way that we received this redemptive love and now because of your power as our Redeemer, because of your sovereign, unconquerable, divine love, we are secure forever. Nothing will separate us from the love of God. No one can pluck us out of his hand. Death nor life, angels or demons, no one can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is certain. It is guaranteed, our Father, that we will be with you forever and enjoy the fruit of redemptive love in countless unfolding eons of time and eternity that cannot be measured. We're overwhelmed. We are grateful. We look forward to celebrating and worshiping and thanking you in your presence face-to-face with the totality of perfect love now glorified, now as we are before you in heaven, to respond in a perfect way which we can only aspire after imperfectly here in this life. Thank you, our Father, for such great redemptive love. Let us be loyal and faithful to you in return. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

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