

The True Husband

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[0 : 0 0] didn't wear flannel and we don't know what he looked like but he did own a farm. He owned land. And it turns out that Boaz is a distant relative of Naomi's late husband, Elimelech.

He showers all sorts of favor on Ruth and it really seems now like a romance is starting to develop between the two of them. Then Naomi comes along and she says, you know what? But Boaz is, he's a kinsman redeemer. He's a guardian redeemer. Now in the Old Testament, a kinsman redeemer did exactly what his title suggests for an extended family group. He redeemed family lines by marrying the widows of deceased brothers or even cousins. He could redeem land. He could redeem family members who were sold into slavery. He was even sometimes responsible for carrying out civil punishments like the death penalty on someone who had murdered a family member in that law system. So his job was to redeem. His job was to put right what was wrong, to rescue, to reconcile. So Naomi, knowing this, tells us to Ruth and then encourages Ruth to basically make an advance, make a proposal of sorts. And there's this very, very strange threshing floor encounter that takes place. It's all above board. There's nothing dodgy in there. You can read about it in chapter three. We're not going to get to today. But the long and the short of it is that Boaz accepts Ruth's proposal to redeem her and the family line and to take her as his wife then. But like any good Hallmark movie, there's a catch. Boaz reveals that there's actually another relative in the town who's even more closely related to Elimelech and therefore would actually be first in line to be that guardian redeemer, to redeem the family line. And so you say, well, what's going to happen? And we're going to pick up the story from this point. So here's our second point, a costly love story. If you've got that passage open, go to chapter four and look at verse one. Verse one says, Meanwhile, Boaz went up to the town gate and sat down there just as the guardian redeemer he had mentioned came along. And Boaz said, come over here, my friend, and sit down. And so he went over and he sat down. And Boaz took 10 of the elders of the town and said, sit here. And they did also.

[2 : 3 0] So this seems to be the morning after Ruth's proposal. And Boaz doesn't rest. He goes straight away to try and figure the situation out. And he heads up to the town gate because that's where the elders usually gather at the town gate to make important decisions. And he's a really smart guy.

He enters into this negotiation with the other relative, but he gets the elders of the town to sit around so that he's got witnesses, so that everything is done above board and is legit. And here's what he says. He says, verse three, Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of these seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you will not tell me, so I will know, for no one has the right to do it except you and I am next in line. Now here's how the guy responds. He says, I will redeem it. So this doesn't look good for our love story. The other relative wants to redeem the land. And yet notice that at this point Boaz has said nothing about Ruth.

And so that's kind of his ace up his sleeve here in verse five. Then Boaz said, On the day you buy the land from Naomi, you will also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead man with his property.

[3 : 5 3] And this, the guardian, sorry, at this, the guardian redeemer said, Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it. So one second, the guy is super keen to redeem the property, but as soon as Boaz mentions Ruth, he then backpedals, steps right out of it.

Evidently, there was some still remaining family property that must have belonged to Elimelech with the nearest of kin had to come and redeem it. Now it would have probably meant paying some sort of small fee to Naomi.

And the guy obviously wasn't opposed to that. He's keen. He's like, I'll pay that. It's not going to be a lot. I'm going to get property. Then Boaz drops the bomb.

Oh, there's also Ruth, Naomi's daughter-in-law. You're going to have to marry her too if you want the land. And this is a really, really big problem for this unnamed relative. You see, because if he marries Ruth, and he has a son by Ruth, what happens is that land, which that son inherits, automatically reverts back to the line of Elimelech.

That son is considered as continuing Elimelech's line, not the unnamed relative's line. Plus, if he has other sons, he might now be forced to share his own inheritance, his property amongst all his sons, including this son he has now had through the guardian-redeemer relationship.

[5 : 22] So he actually has to separate his own property up then as well amongst the different sons. That's just a cost he's not prepared to pay as this kinsman-redeemer.

But there's probably even more to it than that. It's actually highly likely there's a large element of superstition here. It's probable that people in the town thought that Naomi and Ruth were cursed. All the men in their life keep dying. And it looks suspiciously like they are under God's judgment. And we know this because there's a very similar story to this in the Bible, in the book of Genesis, Genesis 38, in which Judah, one of the 12 sons of Jacob, finds a wife, a woman named Tamar, for his eldest son.

But his son is very wicked, and so the son dies. So Tamar gets passed to the next son. The next son is very wicked, and he dies.

Now Judah, the father, he has another younger son who's not quite old enough to get married yet, but he's thinking, look, when this son grows up and is of marriageable age, there is no way I am letting him marry this woman.

[6 : 32] He doesn't know why the guy's all dying, but he's like, she must be cursed. I'm not letting my kid marry her. It's very probable the relative here in Ruth is thinking the same thing.

That's possibly why there's a reference to Tamar later on in verse 12. So between the potential danger in damaging his estate and his superstitious thoughts about Ruth, he's just not prepared to pay the price for Ruth's redemption.

But Boaz is completely different. Boaz is prepared to count the cost and redeem Ruth and her family line. So look at verse 7. In earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other.

This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel. So the guardian redeemer said to Boaz, Buy it yourself, and then he removed his sandal. Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Killian, and Melon.

I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Melon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown.

[7 : 53] Today you are witnesses. Driven, I think, by love, but I think also by faithfulness to God's law, which you actually see in the middle two chapters of the book, Boaz redeems Ruth.

You see, here's the difference between a true redeeming husband and a false one. The unnamed relative is completely self-interested in his dealings, which really defeats the point of being a guardian redeemer, a kinsman redeemer.

The whole point of this kinsman redeemer is to step into a family situation and sacrificially help that family out at cost yourself. That is the whole point. Someone's got to redeem.

Someone's got to pay. He doesn't want to do any of that. He just wants personal gain at minor, minor, minor cost. Boaz, on the other hand, he's the true husband. He's prepared to bear the burden of Ruth, to bear the burden of her security, her comfort.

He's prepared to endanger his own estate for her sake. He's prepared to dismiss the superstition for her sake, which in that culture, dismissing superstition was not a small thing, not something you scoffed at.

[9 : 02] He takes the cost upon himself, and he redeems Ruth. He's the picture of a true redeemer. He's the husband you want.

He's a picture of our Lord, our Lord Jesus, motivated by love, motivated by obedience to his Father. He hangs on the cross, and just as he's about to die, he cries out, Tetelestai, the Greek word Tetelestai. It is finished.

It's paid for. It's the same word you would actually find often at the bottom of a first century transaction document. It is paid for.

Instead of taking your sandal off, you would say, Tetelestai, it's paid for. Jesus considers the cost, the cost of taking us on as his bride, and he pays it as the ultimate kinsman redeemer.

[10:06] He looks at our sin. He looks at our brokenness. He looks at our depravity. Everything ugly in the human race. And he picks it up, and he takes it upon himself. And God the Father pours out his punishment against sin upon him.

And Jesus bears it all. Receives that all, that punishment. He pays for it all. All of our debts. Because he's our true redeeming husband.

That's why Paul in the New Testament, in Ephesians 5, will say to Christian husbands, instructing Christian husbands, Paul will say, husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

He counted the cost he paid for it. He gave himself up for his bride. You see, I wonder if you ever ask the question of yourself, who's going to pick up the tab on my life?

Think about your own life. Who is going to pick up the tab on my life? We are all in need of redemption. Even if you don't bring God into the equation. Even, let's just talk without God in mind. We are all in need of redemption.

[11:12] We can all look back at our lives, and we can see things that we've done wrong. We can see things that we've failed to do. We can see standards that we've failed to keep. Dreams that we haven't fulfilled. We can see people that we've hurt.

We can see people that we have failed to love. And when you add that all up, it's a really, really long bill. Who wants to pick that up?

Who wants to pick that tab up? And then add God into the equation. Though he created us, though he loves us, though he gave us the gift of life, we haven't loved him as we ought.

We haven't kept his good and his gracious law. We haven't worshipped him above all else as he deserves. And so that bill just gets longer and longer and longer. More items just keep getting added to it, and you keep swiping your checkers card, and it's not coming off.

It's just getting longer and longer and longer and longer. The number at the end of the bill is astronomical. Who wants to pick up the tab in your life? Surely nobody wants to pick up that tab.

[12:17] I've done too much wrong. I've failed too much. I don't deserve anybody picking up that tab. I accrued these costs. Friends, I want you to know this morning that you have a husband who will.

Who will pick up that tab. I want you to know with absolute certainty this morning that you have a Boaz. You have a selfless, sacrificial, cost-bearing husband, and his name is Jesus Christ.

And he, if you will trust in him by faith, he will pick up that tab on your life. He'll pay it all. At the cross, he did pay it all.

Jesus is not some self-interested, unnamed relative who pulls out when the cost gets too high. It's not like you come in church, and you start a relationship with Jesus, and then he starts to get to know you.

You pray to him. You sing songs to him. He starts to commune with you, and then he goes, Oh, wait, hang on. Now that I've actually seen who you are, now that I see what you've done with your life up until this point, now that I've seen those thoughts that go through your mind, well, you know what?

[13:30] I don't know if I want to pick up that tab. He's not like that. He redeems your entire life, everything you've done, everything you've failed to do, and everything you will do or fail to do in the future that's not in line with his law.

As the hymn says, Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow.

Friends, we talk a lot about mental health and about well-being in society today. I cannot, psychologically speaking, I do not think there is a better platform, a better foundation upon which to build your life and to build your sense of self, your sense of worth, than this truth.

Jesus, your true husband, paid it all. Think about the person you would be if you woke up confident in that truth every single morning.

Third point, a completed love story. So the second half of the chapter, what it does is it picks up all the loose ends, the loose strands of the book and the storyline and bring them all together in completion.

[14:53] The beginning of the book, you meet Ruth, who is an outsider. She is a foreigner. She is desperately looking for inclusion amongst God's people. She clings to Naomi and says, please let me come to your people.

Let your God be my God. She is desperately seeking a home. She is desperately seeking security. She is desperately seeking refuge under the wing of the God of Israel. She uses that language in the middle part of the book.

Here through the love of her true husband, she finds that refuge and she finds that inclusion. Look at verse 9. Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Kilian and Malon and I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Malon's widow, as my wife in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown.

Today you are witnesses. And then the elders and all the people at the gate said, We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah who together built up the family of Israel.

May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. Through the offspring the Lord gives you by this young woman may your family be like that of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah.

[16:16] She goes from being a complete outsider to being completely integrated into the people of Israel. So much so that the elders of the town compare her to some of the most important women in the history of the nation.

But that scope of redemption, that effect of redemption, it isn't just centered on Ruth and her having her fortunes restored. That scope goes way beyond actually to the very nation of Israel itself.

The people of Israel are people who are at this point in time are trapped in the period of judges, a period of war, a period of disobedience, a period of death and famine and struggle. People trapped in unrest.

It's in a perpetual state of unrest. They have wandered afar from God and they are in desperate need to be brought back to the God of rest. Well here, through the sacrificial love of a true husband, Israel finds a path out of their unrest.

Look at verse 13. So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife and when he made love to her, the Lord enabled her to conceive and she gave birth to a son. The woman said to Naomi, Praise be the Lord who this day has not left you without a guardian redeemer.

[17:33] May he become famous throughout Israel. He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age for your daughter-in-law who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons has given him birth.

Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. And the woman living there said, Naomi has a son and they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

This then is the family line of Perez. Perez was the father of Hezron, Hezron was the father of Ram, Ram the father of Aminadab, Aminadab the father of Nashon, Nashon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz and Boaz the father of Obed.

Obed the father of Jesse and Jesse the father of David. Through the birth of Obed comes the family line of David, the king of Israel who will lead the people out of unrest and into their greatest period of rest as a nation.

So much so that when you read forward to the book of 2 Samuel chapter 7, actually a passage we referred to last week, you'll find David there at the kind of peak of his reign and the Lord declaring to him that he has given him rest from all his enemies.

[18:54] The unrest is over. That turmoil of the judges period is over. Israel at rest. But that's not even the full extent of this redemption that comes from Boaz is sacrificial love because the gospel of Matthew opens with these words.

This is the genealogy of Jesus, the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. What follows then is a pretty lengthy genealogy, my son's favorite passage in the Bible for some strange reason.

You can ask him about that afterwards. But you've got this lengthy genealogy and then carefully inserted into this genealogy in this list of descendants in verse 5, Matthew, chapter 1, Matthew, verse 5 says, Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David. And then that discontinues and it keeps going down and it goes all the way down through to Jacob, the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called the Christ. You see, in one sense, this story is really not about Ruth and Boaz. It's about the Messiah. It's about the true husband, the true kinsman redeemer who offers that ultimate redemption. [20 : 20] It's about Jesus dying on a cross to redeem those who are empty, those who are destitute, those who are outsiders, those who are in a state of rebellion and constant unrest towards God.

It's a story that says to you and to me, you actually need this husband. You need this husband. Don't just look at this romance and go, oh, that's a very nice Old Testament story. It's you need Boaz.

You need this kinsman redeemer. The real drama, I think, the real beauty of this whole story, this ancient love story, is how Ruth goes from absolutely nothing to being, in some sense, a mother of Jesus.

She goes from nothing to being a mother of Jesus, an enemy of God's people to being a mother of Jesus. She had nothing at the beginning. A hated, hated foreigner, a widow, desperately poor, all sorts of superstitions and stigmas surrounding her, at risk in a dangerous land.

She had nothing. And yet, through the love of a sacrificial husband, she gains everything. When I was dating Robin, who is now my wife, in case you don't know us, we were, when we were discussing marriage, it was pretty clear early on that this was going to be, this was not going to be a marriage of equals.

[21 : 42] This was going to be an unequal marriage. She was a chartered accountant, is a chartered accountant. She owned property. She excelled over me in just about every single field, including in Microsoft Excel.

If you know her, you know why. I was a Bible college student, training to be a minister, so not exactly a lucrative, high-paying career.

I owned next to nothing. But as unequal as that marriage was, I still actually brought something. So besides my obvious good looks, I had a surfboard, a laptop, and I had a rusted old city golf with a pretty cool boot spoiler on it and little pink lights in the front.

So I brought, I brought something into that relationship. Ruth had nothing to bring. Nothing to bring. Nothing.

She could offer to Boaz to entice him into a covenant marriage. Nothing to bring. Nothing she possessed. In fact, she brought less than nothing because she brought burden.

[22 : 55] She brought cost to him. But when she encountered her true husband, her kinsman, redeemer, she could at that point then sing these words from the hymn, Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to the cross I cling.

Naked come to thee for dress, helpless look to thee for grace. Foul I to the fountain fly, wash me, Savior, or I die. Friends, it's almost the end of the year.

Maybe you are looking at this year and looking back on this year and looking forward to the year ahead and you're feeling empty, you're feeling destitute, you're feeling like you have nothing.

Maybe you feel unworthy, maybe you feel like you just can't get a break in life.

Maybe you feel unloved. My dear friends, I want to tell you this morning that you have a husband. You have a husband who loves you to the point of shedding his own blood to take you as his bride. If you will turn from your sin and trust in him, he will take you in. He will embrace you. He will remove the emptiness. He will declare you worthy and he will secure you for you in eternity with him.

[24 : 18] An eternity of love, peace, and joy. And so my pleading with you this morning is that you will embrace that husband. Take up that offer of his love, of his sacrificial love.

Let him be your kinsman redeemer this morning. Let's pray together. Our gracious God and our heavenly Father, it is a great wonder to us that we are able to even come and pray to you and you hear our prayers, Lord, because we come with nothing.

We have nothing that should entice you to listen to us. we have nothing that should entice you to enter into this covenant relationship with us whereby you love us and you take us as your children into your family.

You bless us with incredible blessings. You wipe our sin away. You promise us eternity with you and eternity in love, acceptance.

Father, we haven't earned this. Christ, our true husband, has earned this on our behalf. It's only because he has died for his bride that we are made right to come to you.

[25 : 36] Help us to see that, Lord. Help us to cherish that. Help us to embrace that love and revel in that love, Lord. And I pray for any person who's coming here this morning who feels empty and destitute and lost and who doesn't know the love of the true kinsman redeemer, the true redeeming husband.

Lord, I pray that you would bring them to a place of salvation this morning that they might know Christ's love for them. That they might, through faith, become a part of the church, the bride of Christ.

Have that mercy upon them, Lord, we pray. We ask these things for Christ's sake and his glory. Amen.