

A Story Of Redemption

There was a famine in the land. People were hungry and out of work. Everywhere there was despair. And so Elimelech took his wife Naomi and their two sons to Moab, where things were said to be better. But while in that land, Elimelech and his two sons died. Naomi was devastated. She was left a widow and childless. Only two daughter in laws remained with her, Orpah and Ruth. Naomi then heard that there was food in Bethlehem, the land of her birth., and decided to return to her homeland. She encouraged the wives of her sons to remain in their own land because she had nothing to offer them. Penniless and destitute she began the journey home. Orpah decided to take her advice and remained in Moab but Ruth stayed with her saying, “Your people shall be my people, and your God shall be my God.”

And so these two women returned to Bethlehem. Naomi’s return caused quite a stir. She had left her homeland a notable and prosperous woman and now she returns with nothing to her name. Naomi says to her friends, “I went out full, but the Lord has brought me home empty.” This has to be the confession of every soul that desires to be restored. All had been lost and the shame was almost more than she could bear.

It was the “time of harvest” when they returned. It is always the time of harvest when you return to the Lord! There is always plenty in God’s presence. Even for those who have wandered away, mercy and grace await you when you come home. God had said, “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not completely clean the corners of your field, but shall leave them for the poor and the stranger.” And the poor who worked in the fields following the reapers, to get what was left over were called gleaners. And in order to take care of Naomi, Ruth takes the humble position of being a gleaner. Oh how we rob ourselves when we maintain a high place. It is only the broken and lowly who know true grace!

She begins to work in the fields of a wealthy man named Boaz, who happens to be a close relative of Naomi. She does not know in whose field she labors, but God does! It is no accident she is here. God’s eye was upon Rebekah and he led her to the well to meet Abraham’s servant. He constrained the woman of Samaria to go to the well and meet the Son of God. He knows and draws each of us to an appointed place and at an appointed time.

And this poor stranger girl, shrinking from every curious glance and feeling her isolation in a strange land, thinks she goes totally unnoticed. But she has found the eye of the master of the field! And Boaz says to her, “Do not glean in another field.” Oh how jealous God is over us. No matter how much you are tempted, he pleads with us not to leave the fields of grace. God wants you in His field! And Boaz also commands his servants to let her glean wherever she will, even among the sheaves without reproach. It was natural for the gleaners to remain far behind the reapers and not come close. They were to touch only what was left over. But Boaz says, “Let her go where she will.” There is no hard line upon which needy seekers must fear crossing. Let the reapers in God’s fields remember this. Never turn away those who are seeking. Let them reap without limit! The whole field of grace is before them, the whole Word of God is there for them to reap and have all they want.

But every gift from the hand of the giver makes us longs not only for more gifts, but for the giver Himself. Nothing short of the Lord Himself will do. And so upon Naomi’s advice, Ruth is to prepare herself and present herself to Boaz, claiming kinship,

and pleading for the provision that the kinsman should provide. It was the obligation of the nearest kin to redeem the inheritance of Naomi's husband and restore to her what had been lost. It was a bold stroke. Ruth would either leave his presence recognized as a relative, or walk away in shame. And when she presents herself to Boaz at midnight, he says to her, "Do not fear. I will do whatever you ask." Boaz tells Ruth he is willing to redeem Naomi's inheritance, but that there is someone who is more closely related to her and that person will have first choice. So Boaz goes to the leaders of the city to have the matter resolved.

Boaz tells this nearest relative about Naomi's plight and he agrees to redeem her inheritance. But then Boaz tells him that when you redeem Naomi, you must also redeem Ruth, the Moabitess. And this the man was not willing to do because Ruth was a gentile. And so he passes the right of redemption to Boaz. And now Boaz is free to follow his heart in the matter. And so he announces his intention not only to redeem Naomi's inheritance, but also to make Ruth his wife! She would not just be a relative, but would become his bride!

Dear friend you need to see that our nearest kinsman was the law, and it could not and would not redeem us. But our precious Lord Jesus stepped in and claimed the right of redemption and made us His own! He paid the complete price of your redemption on the cross with His precious blood. All has been settled. All has been paid in full!

Boaz and Ruth were married and gave birth to a son, whose name was Obed. And Obed gave birth to a son, and his name was Jesse. And Jesse had a son whose name was David! So Ruth, the Moabitess, the humble servant girl who was a gleaner in a field, became the grandmother of King David, and a distant relative in the line that brought forth the redeemer of the world! What marvelous grace is found in this story of redemption!