

Ruth 4:1-12
Love in Action
February 10, 2008

- I. Two kinds of kinsmen
 - A. The encounter at the gate
 1. the gate – the center of city life – where legal and business transactions occurred
 2. Boaz meets Mr. So-and-So
 - a. this story emphasizes the importance of names
 - b. ironic: the man without a name
 3. the first proposition: Elimelech’s land (vv. 3-4)
 - a. calls the unnamed to fulfill the role of a redeemer
 - b. smart business decision – without the possibility of any sons or grandsons, his family would keep the land for their inheritance
 - c. emphatic: I will redeem it
 4. the second proposition: Ruth the Moabite (v. 5)
 - a. calls the unnamed to fulfill the role of a levir
 - b. greater financial sacrifice
 - i. spend part of your inheritance to secure the inheritance of another
 - ii. the land belongs to the inheritance of Elimelech’s grandson
 - c. emphatic: I cannot redeem it
 - d. the point → price too great
 5. the right of redemption passed to Boaz (v. 6)
 6. the passing of the sandal
 - a. not the shame of refusing Levirate marriage
Deuteronomy 25:9-10 ⁹ *then his brother's wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face. And she shall answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.'* ¹⁰ *And the name of his house shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal pulled off.'*
 - b. remember, the law doesn’t require this kinsman to marry her – not Elimelech’s brother
 - c. important to distinguish obligation of the law and the willing sacrifice that Boaz makes – he redeems even when the law doesn’t require it
 - d. exchange of sandal → “to confirm a transaction” (v. 7)
 - B. Boaz and Mr. So-and-So
 1. narrator setting up an intentional comparison
 2. What kind of man was Mr. So-and-So?
 - a. to redeem the land and Ruth required a costly sacrifice that he was unwilling to pay
 - b. because of his unwillingness, his name erased from the history of redemption
 - c. notice the great irony
 - i. he refuses to act as redeemer in order to preserve his name
 - ii. the narrator refuses to include his name in the story
 3. What kind of man was Boaz?
 - a. no price or sacrifice too great
 - b. love beyond the letter of the law

Jeremiah 31:33 ³³ *But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

- c. his name became great in the history of redemption
 - i. the north pillar of the temple (II Chr. 3:17)
 - ii. the genealogy of Christ (Mt. 1:5)
4. Boaz – the hero of this story
 - a. he lived the gospel ethic
Luke 9:24 ²⁴ *For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.*
 - b. model husband – model redeemer

II. Redemption Accomplished

A. Land and Seed

1. restores the land – not only of Elimelech and Mahlon, but also of Chilion
2. redeems a bride – again showing his generosity above and beyond the law, for his bride is a Moabite woman
3. resurrection theme
 - a. perpetuates the name of the dead
 - b. restores them in both their family and their covenant community

B. Public view of marriage

1. covenant relationship
 - a. at the city gate
 - b. before witnesses
2. public declaration – you are witnesses
Bonhoeffer: “Marriage is more than your love for each other. It has a higher dignity and power, for it is God’s holy ordinance . . . In your love you see only the heaven of your happiness, but in marriage you are placed at a post of responsibility towards the world and mankind. Your love is your own private possession, but marriage is something more than personal – it is a status, an office . . . that joins you together in the sight of God and man.”
3. marriage – a gospel proclamation

C. Public blessings

1. Blessing for Ruth – fruitfulness like the house of Israel
2. Blessing for Boaz – prosperity within the covenant community
3. Blessing for their family – like the household of Perez
 - a. similar situation
 - b. offspring – seed (hint: look at the end of the book)

III. Application

A. Law and love – the example of Boaz

1. obedience involves much more than following rules
2. in fact, Boaz loved the Lord so much, he was willing to go beyond God’s law
3. Boaz was willing to sacrifice his personal interests because he loved God
4. And because he loved God, he gave of himself to others

B. The love of Christ

1. As we prepare to come to the Table, more than appropriate to consider the love of Christ
2. While Boaz serves as the hero of this story, he was merely a dim reflection of the sacrificial love of our Savior