

230503-4 Christ's Love for the Gentiles–CThurman

There is in the Book of Ruth a beautiful story of the LORD's love for a Gentile, how she was convinced to leave all that she had ever known, to forsake her family and her people to come to another country and people of whom she knew nothing. It's a story that tells of the Lord's great love not only for one gentile then, but in a picture it foretells of the Lord's great love for the Gentiles ahead. Certainly the main character of this book was not the only Gentile that the LORD loved and work in so very wonderfully. We cannot say how many Gentiles in whom the Lord worked the grace of life among them during the time between Adam and Abraham (Abel, Seth, Noah and his family.) But once the LORD focused upon Abraham and delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage it was a rare thing indeed for the LORD to savingly deal with Gentiles at all. But here in the Book of Ruth, the LORD brings this widowed, Gentile woman into the nations of Israel and even into the very lineage of mothers which bring forth the child and our Savior, Jesus. She was one of a very few Gentiles come to Christ. Mention could be made of Rahab the harlot, the widow of Zarephath, and Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria. Now, if the Lord will, I want to present the Lord's dealings to save Ruth and mingle into this the Lord's dealings to also save among the Gentiles later. For the time being we are living in the time when the LORD is doing a saving work among the Gentiles. But He will turn to Israel once again in the not-too-distant future. This present millennium will close with the full numbers of the Gentiles saved, and the nation of Israel, in that order. (cf. Ro.11.25, 26)

Here are the parallels that I make of the characters in the Book of Ruth.

- Elimelech and his sons – Adam and those in him (descendants).
- Naomi – wife to Elimelech; mother-in-law to Ruth (the law).
- Ruth – a Gentile.
- The nearest kinsman – the first man, the natural man, the unregenerate man. And,
- The next or near kinsman – the second man, the Lord from heaven (1Co.15.47), the last Adam, the Spiritual man (1Co.15.45).

Now, it is not my purpose to go over the entire book of Ruth, verse by verse. We have already done that in the above series. I will use only a few select verses to fill out the picture salvation of this Gentile and all Gentiles.

Ru.1.1 ¶ Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.

2 And the name of the man [was] Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah (or to put it another way these were Bethlehemites of the city of Bethlehem in Judah's territory). ***And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.***

3 And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.

4 And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one [was] Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.

5 And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

There was a man named Elimelech that decided by an act of rebellion to forsake all that he had, and his blessed place, to go to the fields of Moab, to the place of a washpot, a place where the filthy rags were washed. Filthy rages are the best of the righteous acts that a man may do before God. And here Elimelech died and his sons. This act of rebellion is parallel to the rebellion of Adam when he was in the garden of God. In the day that he sinned he, and all those in him, died; they became dead in trespasses and sins. (cf. Eph.2.1) And for this reason Adam was driven from the garden and from the presence of the LORD. But before the LORD put out He gave him a promise that there was coming One that would restore men to a right standing before Him.

Ge 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee (Satan) and the woman, and between thy seed (the Serpent's seed) and her seed (the Seed of the woman); it (the Seed of the woman) shall bruise (crush) thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel (the woman's Seed would be wounded in the act ... nailed to a tree).

Ru.1.6 ¶ Then she (Naomi) arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.

Ruth, under the governance of her mother-in-law, labored to come into a place where she had heard that the LORD had visited His people to provide for them relief from the great famine. So, she sets her sights upon another country, a country afar off. (He.11.14) She was presently without hope and without God in the world. (cf. Eph.2.12) That holy, just, and good rule of law (Ro.7.12) could not help her to arrive to her journey's end. Naomi was *along for the ride*, so-to-speak. She was in a sense simply pointing the way for Ruth just as the law points sinners to Christ.

Ga 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [to bring us] unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

And as you know, Ruth, with her mother-in-law, arrives to Bethlehem of Judah. And those things which appear to her to be complete happenstance, accidents, God is providentially working for her good.

Ru.2.2 And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after [him] in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.

3 And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field [belonging] unto Boaz, who [was] of the kindred of Elimelech.

Ruth knows not the man and the fields upon which she has come glean. But mark this: more important than her knowing him, is His knowing her.

Ru 2:11 And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done ...

Sinners know not Christ, but Christ certainly knows His own.

Ga 4:9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God ...

Joh 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me ...

2Ti 2:19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. ...

Ro 8:29 For whom he did foreknow ...

Then Boaz speaks comforted Ruth and spoke directly to the need of her heart.

Ru.2.13 Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly (marg. 'to the heart') unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.

In much the same way the Lord Jesus speaks comfort to the hearts of sinners.

Joh 7:37 ... If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

Mt 11:28 Come unto me, all [ye] that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

And strewn all along in the way where sinners have been laboring day after day, under the heat of the day, there are those accidents we might call them. There are *handfuls of purpose* left behind which work upon sinner's heart to draw him to Christ, to stir up the affections for the Man and on account of the love they see that He has for them.

Ru 2:16 And let fall also [some] of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave [them], that she may glean [them], and rebuke her not.

In much the same way that Boaz drew out of Ruth new affections for this man, affections she had never felt before, and for which she would not be

ashamed to show, so Christ begins to work upon the heart of a sinner so that the affections begin to seize up Him for the love He has shown.

There is in the following a beautiful picture of the Spirit's work in the sinners heart. These are things which prove the reality of one's faith in Christ. We read,

Ru 3:3 Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: [but] make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking.

It is at the midnight hour, *at midnight, ..., 8 And it came to pass at midnight ...* It was at midnight when the LORD drew Israel out of Egypt. (Ex.11.4) In the sinner's time of greatest need, not when he is standing in the light, not when he is at his best, but when he at the darkest hour, in the depths of a depraved heart and in darkness of sin-blinded eyes that the Spirit of the LORD works to bring forth, not the righteous, not the living, but the dead in sins. Ruth lays at the feet of the master, in complete surrender, ready to receive his every word and obey his every commandment. Whether its Saul of Tarsus or the demoniac of Gadara they all surrender at the feet of the Master.

Ac 9:6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

Lu 8:35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind ...

When the Spirit of the Lord truly works in a sinner's heart, he becomes willing to do the will of God.

Ru 3:2 And now [is] not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to night in the threshingfloor.

What had Boaz been doing before Ruth's approach to him? Laboring on the barnfloor! This is like Christ's laboring under the Law of God to work a

righteousness which would be put to the sinner's account. By His perfect work Christ would make full satisfaction for sinners when the time came for him to hang upon the cross of Calvary.

At this Boaz acknowledges to Ruth that he is her near kinsman, BUT, there is a nearer kinsman that has first right to redeem *if he will*. I think every sinner is brought to this crossroads. Christ is all or nothing. It is either my works or His; not a mixture.

Ru 3:12 And now it is true that I [am thy] near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.

I think that near kinsman stands representatively of the natural man, the first man, that which is born after the flesh, the unregenerate man, the man separated from the life of God that is in Christ Jesus. I spoke of a crossroads. The natural mind thinks that the salvation of God can be merited, at least a little by the things that he can do. He is persuaded that he can do this thing. He says, 'I AM ABLE! He glories in his own, human efforts. Certainly there is no doubt that the natural man can do great things as measured against other men. However that isn't the concern. Forget about how we might measure up to other men. No, how do we measure up to the righteous standard of God's law? For example, have we ever thought a bad thought? Have we ever stolen? Have we ever spoken a single bad word? Have we ever been envious or jealous? Have we ever had doubt? Have we ever hated? Just one act, just one such violation and we are guilty of breaking God's law.

Ja.2.10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one [point], he is guilty of all.

And breaking God's law demands satisfaction. And satisfaction for breaking God's law is death. It can't be forgiven without someone else paying the price of blood!

Eze 18:4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

The last thing the near kinsman, the unregenerate man will admit is, 'I am undone.' (Is.6.5)

undone, Hebrew Niphal verb (simple pass.) דָּמָה, dah-mah, tss. *to be destroyed, to be brought to silence, to be cut off, to be cut down.*

What will this nearest kinsman do? Will he redeem? Can he redeem? We read of Boaz ...

Ru.3.18 ... for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.

It was in light of this nearest kinsman that Boaz set himself to make the purchase, in view of this seemingly insurmountable obstacle, he sets out to redeem Ruth. He will not rest until he has accomplished this thing *today*.

Then Boaz went to chiefest place of the city (Pv.1.20-33), to the gate. Here he sets the record straight. And we should add, that Christ further went outside *the gate* to pay the price to redeem the souls of His own to God.

Heb 13:12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

It was at the gate where Boaz sets aside the nearest kinsman's pretenses to redeem. When Boaz put the near-kinsman to the test he can only say ...

Ru 4:6 And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem [it] (I am unable to redeem it) for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem [it].

The near kinsman cannot redeem it. He says I don't have the strength. I can't do it of myself. I will mar my inheritance.

mar, the Hebrew Hiphil (causative act.) fut. verb of שָׁחַת, shah-chath, *to cause destruction, to cause corruption, to cause, to perish, to cause to be spilled* (ruined).

This is the BEST that the nearest kinsman can do. The best that the flesh will ever be able to do before God is to destroy and ruin one's life for all eternity. This is the best to be expected from the first man, the natural man, the unregenerate man, the man after the flesh. But what does Boaz do on behalf of Ruth?

Boaz receives the shoe from off the foot of the nearest kinsman. Boaz calls to record before everyone that he cuts off the way of the nearest kinsman in the matter of redemption. What of this man Boaz? He is not only willing to redeem, he is able to redeem. And like him Christ *is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him ...*) And by His death, the Lord Jesus cut off the way of the flesh from ever glorying before God in the matter of salvation.

1Co.1.24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ [IS] the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, [are called]:

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, [yea], and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Elimelech was bankrupt and dead. The nearest kinsman was without strength.

Ro.5.17 ... by one man's offence death reigned by one ...

Ro 5:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Unlike Elimelech and the nearest kinsman, Boaz was a mighty man of wealth. (cf. Ru.2.1) And he effected the redemption of all of that which was the dead's and of Ruth, and raised up the dead upon his inheritance.

Ru 4.9 ¶ And Boaz said unto the elders, and [unto] all the people, Ye [are] witnesses this day, that I have bought all that [was] Elimelech's, and all that [was] Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

10 Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye [are] witnesses this day.

So, as Boaz bought back everything that Elimelech lost, Christ bought back everything that Adam lost.

2Pe 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

Mt 4:9 And saith unto him, All these things will I (Satan) give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Christ has the power to save to the fullest extent.

2Ti.1.12 ... he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Heb 7:25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him ...

Eph 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us ...

And we know the rest of this beautiful story. Boaz and Ruth married, had a child, and the child's name was called Obed, meaning 'A Servant.'

Ru.4.13 ¶ So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son.

...

17 And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed ...

All of this is what the LORD did in His everlasting love for one Gentile, widowed woman named Ruth. He went so far as to bring her into the very lineage of the Lord Jesus Christ as a mother in Israel. It was a rare thing which the LORD did to save any Gentile at this time, not to mention the great blessing he gave to Ruth to be a part of Christ's genealogy. Gentiles had long been cast off from the salvation of the Lord. But the prophets foretold of a day when the Lord would turn to save among the Gentiles, and we live in that time.

Isa 11:10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

*Is.42.6 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;
7 To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, [and] them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.*

Isa 49:6 And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

*Is.55.1 ¶ Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.
2 Wherefore do ye spend money for [that which is] not bread? and your labour for [that which] satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto*

me, and eat ye [that which is] good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, [even] the sure mercies of David.

4 Behold, I have given him [for] a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation [that] thou knowest not, and nations [that] knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

Zec.2.10 ¶ Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.

11 And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.

...

Zec 9:10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion [shall be] from sea [even] to sea, and from the river [even] to the ends of the earth.

Jer.3.17 At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.

Ac 11:18 When they (The apostles and brethren that gathered to Jerusalem church.) heard these things (the report which Peter gave of the Lord saving several Gentiles there at Caesarea), they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

We are living in the time of the LORD's saving dealings with the Gentiles. What a salvation there has been among the nations in these past 2,000 years! What love He has shown to us that were so far off from God. If you have never believed on Jesus Christ I hope you will today. The time is far spent. The time is at hand for His return. Believe and be saved!