

Message #7

Ruth 3:7-18

If we are going to experience the ultimate of God's blessings, there will be times we must make a move and we must take risks. We must be willing to step out by faith to go where God is moving and do what we can to see what His will is. Getting the ultimate blessings of God is a risk.

This risk may be a business risk. It may be a financial risk. It may be a surgery risk. It may be an occupation risk. It may be a relationship risk. It may be an ecclesiastical risk.

Ruth had gone out to get food and scored big. When she got home to Naomi, Naomi wanted to know where she had worked. She learned that she had worked in Boaz's field. Naomi came up with a plan to see whether or not God would work and give Ruth a great life.

She did not want her having to stay at home with her the rest of her life. She wanted a better life and she had a plan. She knew Boaz was a godly man. She knew Boaz was a kind man. She knew Boaz was a gracious and generous man. She also knew something about a Levirate marriage.

She did not know if this would actually work because Ruth was a Moabite woman and her previous marriage to her dead husband was not technically one that fell into the category of a brother-in-law marrying her to carry on the family name.

But she also knew the potential could be there if this were handled right. So she came up with a plan.

She wanted Ruth to take a bath, put on her good clothes and perfume and go out to where Boaz was and wait until he went to sleep. She was then to sneak into camp and lie down at his feet and keep warm with the bottom of his blanket. She believed that God would turn Boaz's mind to make the final decision.

Ruth had agreed to this (3:6). As we mentioned last time, this is a big risk she is taking at night. She has to go out at night which is risky for a single girl. She has to find Boaz and watch and wait and then when he has fallen asleep, she has to sneak into camp and curl up under a blanket at his feet and hope that when he wakes up, he will be favorable to her being there.

This is a big risk. She would have never done this for some strange man, but Boaz was a very close relative and she obviously felt safe in being with him. Boaz had an impeccable testimony.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #1 – Boaz had eaten and had drunk and his heart was merry so he went and laid down at the end of the heap of grain. **3:7a**

It had been a hard day of work and Boaz ate a meal and drank some wine and was tired. The statement “his heart was merry” indicates that he was very content and satisfied with the work and the wine increased his sense of joy.

He was not in some drunken stupor. It had been a good day and he was happy. He was in a good mood because of all of the blessings of God.

Now typically the good grain was piled up so that it could be hauled away. It usually was piled near the end of the threshing floor. Also the chaff and stalks formed somewhat of a soft cushion, which did make a nice place to lie down and go to sleep.

So Boaz decided to go down to that end and go to sleep. He would have not had total privacy. This was a public place where he did his work. After eating and drinking wine, he obviously laid down and had fallen into a deep sleep.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #2 – Ruth secretly came and uncovered his feet and laid down at his feet. **3:7b**

Ruth was standing somewhere in the shadows watching this. Naomi had told her watch and spot where Boaz went to sleep and then go and uncover his feet (3:4).

We don't know how much time elapsed but at some point she decided it was time to secretly sneak into camp and uncover his feet and lay down at his feet.

For her, this is a big risk. First, she is assuming that no one will see her and there must have been other people around. Second, she has no idea how Boaz will respond to any of this.

She is following the directions of Naomi and she is also trusting in the sovereignty of God. So after watching from a distance, she sneaked in and laid down at his feet.

As we have said, there are times if we are to experience God's ultimate blessings we must take risks. Ruth has to take a risk here. But it is not some crazy risk. Five risk points to consider:

- 1) It is based on the council of someone who does know things about God and His word.
- 2) It is consistent with the word of God in the sense that a kinsman redeemer option is a Biblical possibility.
- 3) It is not an act that is beyond the realm of what is reasonable and responsible.
- 4) It is based on a faith that does depend on God to show what His will is.
- 5) If it is not God's will nothing major is lost. Ruth still has her integrity and her job.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #3 – Boaz was startled in the middle of the night when he found a woman lying at his feet. **3:8**

Sometime in the middle of the night, Boaz woke up and was startled. The word “startled” has to do with shaking. He obviously is not shaking out of fear. He was probably chilled because there was a draft by his feet and we suspect he was trying to get the covers back on his feet due to the chill.

When he bent forward to probably pull up the covers, he was shocked to find someone lying at his feet. She is not lying by his side, but down by his feet.

Boaz is not an older man out looking for a relationship with a younger woman. Frankly, when he woke up he was shocked. Here was a faithful, classy man of God waking up and finding a girl at his feet covered up with part of his blanket.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #4 – Boaz asks the woman to identify herself. **3:9a**

Boaz had no idea who was lying at his feet so he asked the person to identify herself.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #5 – Ruth identifies herself as being Boaz’s maid and a close relative. **3:9b**

Ruth responds in four ways:

(Way #1) - She identifies herself by name - I am Ruth. Notice she does not say “Ruth the Moabitess.”

(Way #2) - She identifies herself by rank - I am your maid. This is a humble classification of herself. Hebrew – amah “handmaid,” not shifichah “maid servant.”

She basically says I am your “handmaid.” This choice of words is conducive to marriage possibly, not a slave relationship.

(Way #3) - She asks Boaz to marry her.

The request to “spread your covering” literally “spread your wings over your maid” is a way of asking Boaz to marry her and enter into a covenant relationship with her (Deut. 22:28-30; Mal. 2:16; Ez. 16:8).

It is also a way of saying I feel safe in lying by your feet depending on you as one of your maids. She feels secure and protected here. Ruth is really taking a big risk here by asking Boaz to consider marrying her.

(Way #4) - She identifies Boaz as being a close relative - you are a close relative.

Now she identifies Boaz as being the “close relative,” the goel who is the kinsmen redeemer.

Her thinking is as the closest relative or goel you can redeem, reclaim, remarry and re-vindicate.

Now the truth is nowhere in the Bible does it say the kinsman redeemer or goel has a responsibility to marry or remarry anyone. According to Deuteronomy law, if a Jewish woman lost her husband and she did not have a child, the brother of the husband was to marry her and carry on the name (Deut. 25:5-10). So the assignment of marriage is not specifically given to the closest relative or goel, but to a brother.

This is somewhat of a stretch to assume that Boaz should marry her because he is the closest relative. Ruth is not a Jewish woman, but a Moabite woman and Boaz is not the brother of Mahlon (4:10).

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #6 – Boaz responds to Ruth. 3:10-13

There are five responses Boaz has to Ruth:

Response #1 - May you be blessed of the Lord. 3:10a

Boaz immediately brings God into this relationship. He wants the Blessings of God. That must have been a relief. Boaz is not cursing her, he is asking God to bless her. Furthermore, he identifies her as “my daughter.” So he acknowledges that she is in the family.

Response #2 - You have shown great kindness. 3:10b

The word “kindness” (hesed) is one that refers to loving kindness and mercy. Ruth had not only demonstrated tremendous kindness to Naomi in leaving her own family in Moab to move here to care for her, but now she had done something even more amazing; she wanted to marry him.

She had not gone after a younger man whether poor or rich. She could have gone after anyone she wanted and she chose him. It obviously was something Boaz saw as pure grace.

Response #3 - Do not be afraid for I will do whatever you ask. 3:11

Boaz addresses her again as “my daughter.” Boaz’s response is interesting. We may recall that Naomi had said that Boaz will tell you what to do (3:4). Now Boaz is saying to Ruth, “I will do what you ask me to do.”

She must have been scared for she had no idea how Boaz would take this. Boaz says all people know that you are a woman of integrity and an excellent woman. There is nothing sleazy here and nothing immodest here. Ruth was a virtuous woman.

There is nothing unworthy about your proposal. Here Ruth had come to Bethlehem a few weeks earlier, a nobody with nothing and now you have one of the most successful men in the area elevating you and telling you he will do whatever you ask.

This is what Jesus Christ does for us when we come to Him. Takes us from our lowest and elevates us to the highest level.

Response #4 - I am a close relative but there is a relative closer than me. **3:12**

I am sure when Ruth heard these words, it must have disturbed her. Boaz says I am not your closest relative. He basically says it is true that I am a goel and kinsman redeemer, but I am second in line here. There is one closer than me.

Response #5 - Stay here tonight and if the closest relative redeems you let him, but if he doesn't redeem you, I will. **3:13**

Boaz is a man of Biblical integrity. He knew about the redemption possibility that existed in the word of God. So he said if the closest relative doesn't redeem you, I will.

Now this redemption does not appear to have anything to do with producing children and preserving the family line of Mahlon. The issue here was marriage that would provide security for Ruth. That is what this was all about.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #7 – Ruth stayed at his feet all night and left before light.
3:14

Remember Naomi told Ruth do what Boaz tells you to do. In this case, cover up and lie down at my feet until morning. So she did that. To protect from bad appearances, she left before it was daylight and went back to Naomi.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #8 – Boaz gave Ruth six measures of Barley and she went back home. **3:15**

Boaz requested that part of a garment be used as a container. This was a strong outer garment that could hold grain. It is hard to know what “six measures of barley” actually weighs. It obviously could be held by the garment container and could be carried by a young woman.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #9 – Ruth gives Naomi the story of what happened. **3:16-17**

When Ruth got home she wanted to hear all about it. So Ruth told her the story and gave her the Barley and told her that Boaz did not want her coming home to Naomi empty handed.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #10 – Naomi advised Ruth to wait to see what would happen.
3:18

The Hebrew “wait” (yasab) means sit and stay. We could say it means “sit tight.” Naomi says let's stay here and quietly wait.

She knew Boaz and she knew he was not a man who would just let this go. He was a man who got things done.