



Ruth 2:14-23
Stay in the Field of Your Redeemer

14 Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, "Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched grain to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back.

15 And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her.

16 "Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."

17 So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

18 Then she took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied.

19 And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz."

20 Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed be he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!" And Naomi said to her, "This man is a relation of ours, one of our close relatives."

21 Ruth the Moabitess said, "He also said to me, 'You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.' "

22 And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet you in any other field."

23 So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

Where is the grass always greener? *On the other side of the fence.* Brothers and Sisters, that is one of the Devil's most consistently successful deceits. It is so successful in fact, that it even worked in the place where the grass was greenest, in the Garden of Eden. Even there he managed to sell our first parents on the idea that if they would just hop the fence of God's commandment, they would be even happier. And it still works today. Countless people look around at their field and then at the field on the other side, and they decide its better over there, and I'd be happier over there, I'd finally be content if I was over there, and so they make up their mind to move even if it means going against what the Lord says is right. But then when they get there, they find that hey look at that, what you didn't notice was that Green was mostly weeds, and the place is crawling in fire-ants. And then they see another fence, another field, and they grow impatient to move again, and once you've started hopping fences of God's commandments, your inhibitions about doing it again just keep getting lower. I have never seen good come from those fence hopping exercises, and I've seen terrible sorrow and destruction.

I'll give you just one for instance from my time in Virginia. I saw a man in his forties with a wife and a family look at all those young single guys having so much "fun" in the world, whereas he was shackled to a "boring existence as husband and father." So he said, its time to hop the fence, so he got a divorce, ripped apart his family, and then began the painful process of learning how empty the life he had chosen is, and how the fun he expected never seemed to materialize. It remains forever one field away.

When God had chastened Israel by bringing famine to the land, Naomi and Elimelech had decided the grass was literally greener in the fields of Moab so they hopped the fence of God's commandments and moved there. Interestingly enough, the word translated "country" as in "country" of Moab in verse 1 is actually *sadah* – *field* it is the same word for instance that is used to describe the field belonging to Boaz it is literally, fields of Moab. Elimelech and Naomi went to the fields of Moab. But what they had discovered was that once they left the covenant community and the circle of God's blessings, that things didn't go well for them, and that they ended up unhappier than ever. In the end, like the prodigal Son in Christ's parable, it was only the realization that that the dream of greener fields was a fraud and returning that proved to be Naomi's salvation.

But you remember when the Prodigal Son came back, he didn't expect to be treated well, he expected his father to be furious and to treat him from that time on no better than a slave. Naomi comes back with the same mindset, *the Lord is furious at me, literally at war*. Her expectations therefore, are dreadfully low. She agrees to let Ruth go out and glean, perhaps she will bring back enough grain that they can survive another day.

What Naomi forgot though, was that the Lord doesn't chasten his children because he hates them, he does it because he loves them and desires that they would repent and return to the place where He has promised to bless them, that for instance, is the purpose of Church discipline, so the sinner would repent and return and be blessed instead of cursed. The only thing needed to end that discipline is repentance. So although she doesn't expect it, the Lord is going to begin showering the blessings of his *hesed* His faithful covenant love on His daughter who has returned from the far country, and He is going to do it through his other children, in this case Ruth and Boaz.

Now Ruth has already started to be blessed in her gleaning in Boaz's field and through his words, but now he invites her to eat with him, and gives her a portion of his own lunch that is so large, this starving woman is able to eat until she is satisfied and then keep some back for Naomi. Literally she had enough leftovers for a doggy bag, which was unheard of. Then in the gleaning, Boaz commands his men to allow her to take from amongst not only the scarce stuff they miss but directly from the harvest itself. And she does so well, that after a hard days work she as able to bring home not only a cooked dinner for Naomi, but an Ephah, that is somewhere between 29 and 50 pounds of Grain, which is enough to feed them both for two weeks.

Naomi, not surprisingly is amazed, she had expected a few handfuls of grain, whereas the Lord has literally opened the grain silo, so she asks where did you work today? And Ruth tells her it is the field of Boaz, and I believe it is at this point that Naomi's prior bitterness and belief that the Lord hates her fades away, she sees the Lord's hand in providentially bringing this foreigner to the one field in Bethlehem that can do her the most good. Because Boaz isn't just a good man, he is much more than that. Now in the NKJV in verse 20 Naomi calls him a close relative, but the word is actually *Go'el*, a Kinsman redeemer. And that is going to be one of the most important words for the rest of the story, I don't just mean of Ruth, I mean the story of redemption, the bible. You may not realize it, but the word

Go'el is just as important to you and me as it was to Ruth. I explain what I mean by that in a moment. No what was a *Go'el* anyway?

Well you know that God had promised the land of Canaan to his people Israel to be their dwelling place on earth, and had delivered on that promise apportioned it fairly to each of the 12 tribes. Well the Lord did not intend for it to be sold away, so he put in a clause in Lev. 25:23 that if it was sold a kinsman should redeem it for them, so it would stay in the family. It was also never his intention that his people should remain slaves, so if a person was sold into slavery a kinsman should redeem them from that bondage, also it was his intention that each of the tribes should continue so if a man should die without producing offspring, his brother would marry the widow and their first child would become the heir of the dead brother's name and estate. All of these duties were to be performed by the *Go'el* the kinsman redeemer.

Now because of the decision to go to the fields of Moab, Mahlon the son of Naomi and husband of Ruth had lost his land and died childless. But now Naomi recognizes that Boaz can fulfill the role of the *Go'el* in respect both to land and children. She has seen that all is not lost, there is hope and that the Lord has given concrete evidence that it is His desire to bless her and not curse her. So she commands Ruth in verse 22, not to repeat the terrible mistake she made. ***Don't go into another field, don't leave the place where you are being blessed.*** Now we could say that it is common sense not to go into another field where she might be assaulted or where she might be seen and cause Boaz to become offended at being snubbed, but I really think there is an element of personal repentance here and an acknowledgment that this is the field of the *Go'el* is the place where redemption and blessing are to be found. Ruth feels the same way, because she continues to glean there till the end of the harvest.

Well, we can see why the idea of the *Go'el* is important to Ruth and Naomi. I said I would mention why this idea of a *Go'el* is important to you as well. It is because sinners need a *Go'el*, Naomi and Elimelech were not the first of God's people to sin and fall into a dire condition. As Isaiah 53:6 ***All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way.*** We have all "hopped the fence of the Lord's Commandments" and become poor, blind, beggars, slaves to sin, we have lost all title to heaven, and cannot win it back ourselves. Who will be *our Go'el*?

Well in Isaiah, we read again and again, that the LORD is the Redeemer, and the word is *Go'el*, of his people. He will buy them back.

God our Goel: ***Is. 49:7 Thus says the LORD, The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One, To Him whom man despises, To Him whom the nation abhors, To the Servant of rulers: "Kings shall see and arise, Princes also shall worship, Because of the LORD who is faithful, The Holy One of Israel; And He has chosen You."***

8 Thus says the LORD: "In an acceptable time I have heard You, And in the day of salvation I have helped You; I will preserve You and give You As a covenant to the people, To restore the earth, To cause them to inherit the desolate heritages;

9 That You may say to the prisoners, 'Go forth,' To those who are in darkness, 'Show yourselves.' "They shall feed along the roads, And their pastures shall be on all desolate heights.

Is. 59:16 He saw that there was no man, And wondered that there was no intercessor; Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; And His own righteousness, it sustained Him.

17 For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, And a helmet of salvation on His head; He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, And was clad with zeal as a cloak.

18 According to their deeds, accordingly He will repay, Fury to His adversaries, Recompense to His enemies; The coastlands He will fully repay.

19 So shall they fear The name of the LORD from the west, And His glory from the rising of the sun; When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him.

20 " The Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," Says the LORD.

NKJ Isaiah 61:1 "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;

2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,

3 To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."

And so it is appropriate that the descendent of Boaz the Go'el of Naomi and Ruth, would be the great Go'el – the Kinsman redeemer of his people:

Christ our Goel: Luke 4:17 And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

18 "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;

19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

And so we must go to him, and once we have we must cling to him. So many of you, are in danger of wandering from his field, you look over the fences, but hear the words of Matthew Henry:

Our blessed Saviour is our Goel; it is he that has a right to redeem. If we expect to receive benefit by him, let us closely adhere to him, and his fields, and his family; let us not go to the world and its fields for that which is to be had with him only, and which he has encouraged us to expect from him. Has the Lord dealt bountifully with us? Let us not be found in any other field, nor seek for happiness and satisfaction in the creature. Tradesmen take it ill if those that are in their books go to another shop. We lose divine favours if we slight them.

Don't repeat the error of Elimelech, Stay in the Field of Your Redeemer