

You Are My Redeemer

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[0 : 00] Turn with me please to the passage that we read in Ruth chapter 3.

Ruth chapter 3. And reading again verses 8 and 9. Ruth chapter 3 from verse 8.

At midnight the man was startled and turned over and behold a woman lay at his feet. He said, Who are you? And she answered, I am your servant Ruth. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer.

Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer. The Bible frequently portrays the relationship between Jesus and the Christian as being like a marriage, as being a union, where Jesus is the groom and where the Christian is his bride.

The church is his bride. And the story of Ruth and Boaz is essentially a prophetic foreshadowing, a prophetic portrait of that glorious reality.

[1 : 25] And tonight I want us to focus here on Ruth chapter 3 and what we might call the romance of redemption. The romance of redemption. And as we do so, I want us to see our great redeemer, Jesus Christ, and find ourselves able to say with Ruth on the eve of another communion, Spread your wings over me, for you are a redeemer.

Spread your wings over me, for you are a redeemer. The first thing we see in this passage is the request of the redeemer. The request of the redeemer. That's in verses 1 down to 9.

And we see in these verses that Ruth seeks security through Boaz. Ruth seeks security through Boaz. In verses 1 to 4 we read about Naomi's plan.

And Naomi expresses her great desire for Ruth where she says in verse 1, My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you. This word rest here refers to security.

It refers to peace. Naomi's great desire is that her widowed, childless, foreign, impoverished daughter-in-law, Ruth, find a home, find a husband, find a place among God's covenant people, among God's covenant family.

[2 : 42] Naomi wants Ruth to know the security, the rest, the peace of being in the family of God. And you know, at the heart of the gospel lies this theme of rest.

Matthew 11 verse 28 that we read a few moments ago. Jesus says, come to me, you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Jesus is speaking to those who are laboring under their own morality as they try to make themselves right with God.

Jesus is speaking to those who are wearied by trying to live a good life in order to be right with God. Jesus is speaking to those who are burdened by the religious rules given to them by others in order to be right with God.

Jesus is speaking to those who are weighed down by their past sins, weighed down by their present sins, weighed down by their future sins, and are dismaying, wondering, will they ever be right with God?

And Jesus says, come to me, and I'll give you a free and full salvation. Jesus is saying, come to me. I've dealt with your past sins, your present sins, your future sins, 2,000 years ago on a cross in Jerusalem.

[3 : 55] Come to me, and I will give you rest. Now, Naomi then points Ruth and Boaz's direction in verse 2, where she says, is not Boaz our relative with whose young women you were?

Now, God's law stated that a close relative could act as a redeemer. They could act as a protector and defender for a family if the husband had died.

And not only that, God's law also stated that if a husband died, leaving his wife childless, the husband's next of kin could marry her, and she would find security in him.

Naomi is saying that Boaz is a close relative. And if anyone could redeem Ruth, if anyone could provide Ruth with security and rest, it's this man, Boaz.

And in verses 3 and 4, Naomi directs Ruth what to do about Boaz. You see, Ruth can't simply text Boaz or Facebook Boaz saying, I really like you, don't eat up for coffee.

[4 : 56] Ruth can't put an advert in the Bethlehem Times saying, single Moabite woman seeks a single Israelite man, must be willing to take on a mother-in-law. Ruth can't simply wander down to the grain field, drop to her knees and say, Boaz, would you marry me?

Because men and women in that culture rarely spoke together, never mind we're alone together if they weren't married. And in Ruth chapter 2, we see that Ruth has been working in the fields of Boaz for about six months.

And there's no sign of any relationship. And Naomi now decides, well, it's time for action. And she says in verses 2 to 4, Naomi is saying to Ruth, Naomi is saying to Ruth, Get yourself looking nice and go to Boaz at night, when it's dark, when it's pride, when you won't be interrupted, and see what Boaz does.

And see what Boaz says. A number of years ago, I had a friend and he really liked a particular girl. He was always texting her. He was always talking about her. Anytime you'd mention her name, he would smile.

But he was too scared to do anything about it. And I said to him, You're going to need to define the relationship. You're going to need to tell her how you feel. And here's Naomi and she's saying to Ruth, You and Boaz need to define this relationship.

[6 : 40] Are you just his servant girl, whom he shows kindness to, whom he's got a bit of affection for, or is there something more? Is he going to take you on as his wife?

And verses 5 down to 9 go on to record Ruth's actions. Look at Ruth's response to Naomi's plan in verses 5 and 6. Naomi's put Ruth in a horrendous situation.

I doubt whether Naomi would put herself in this situation. Ruth's reputation could be destroyed if word got out that she'd been seen alone with a man at night. She could be stoned to death in that culture for adultery.

It's a scenario that is fraught with potential disaster. But Ruth wants a home. And she wants rest. And she wants safety. And she wants security.

She wants a place in God's covenant family. And she desires to obey her mother-in-law, whom she pledged to be faithful to, back in chapter 1. And so we read in verses 5 and 6.

[7 : 40] She said, All that you say, I will do. So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her. And the scene then shifts to Boaz in verses 7 down to 9.

We're told Boaz finished eating. He finished drinking. He was in good spirits. And he goes to lie down for the night. And as Boaz falls asleep, we're told that Ruth creeps over, uncovers the blanket at his feet, and lies down.

Now, if you've ever shared a bed with someone, you'll know what it's like to wake up cold at night because they've taken the duvet. When my brother and I had to step our grandos, we had to share his double bed.

And you'd wake up at 2 or 3 in the morning, and your feet would be frozen because David had taken the duvet during the night. And you'd wrestle the duvet bad often. And here in verse 8, we're told that Boaz was startled.

More literally, he shivered because someone has taken his blanket, and he turns, fumbling around for the blanket. And what does he find? A woman at the end of the bed.

[8 : 45] This is a socially awkward situation for Boaz, who we're told in chapter 2, had a reputation for being righteous, and being beyond rumor, beyond reproach.

And he hisses in verse 9, Who are you? And listen to Ruth's words. Verse 9, I'm your servant, Ruth. Now, there's a great deal of humility here.

Ruth knows that Boaz is legally permitted to be her redeemer. He's legally permitted to marry her. But he's not obligated to do so. Boaz could marry Ruth.

He could redeem Ruth. He could save Ruth. But only if he was willing. And the gospel tells us, doesn't it? That Jesus saved us.

Not because he had to. He saved us because he wanted to. He was willing to do so. There's a world of difference between a man who buys his wife a bunch of flowers and says to her, You mean the world to me.

[9 : 44] And this bunch of flowers is a tiny token of how much I love you and how much you mean to me. And the man who thrusts a pile of old crummy flowers in his wife's face and says, I was told

to give you these.

Jesus himself said, Greater love has no one than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Jesus saved his people, laid down his life for them, because he wanted to.

Because he loves them. Because they're precious to him. Because they're the apple of his eye. He was willing and able to save. And Ruth can't stop at this moment.

And she pours out her heart to Boaz, saying in verse 9, Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer. Ruth's expressing her great desire to be enveloped within Boaz's loving embrace.

She's effectively saying, Please give me an engagement ring. Please marry me. Please claim me. Please pledge your faithfulness and commitment to me. You're my only hope.

[10:50] You're the only one who can help me. You're the only one who can save me. You're the only one who can redeem me. Please spread your wings over your servant.

So Ruth, we see, seeks security through Boaz in verses 1 to 9. And today we're reminded in this passage that Jesus is the true redeemer. He's the one who provides true security, true salvation, true rest, true redemption for his weary people.

He's the one to whom Peter said, Lord, to whom else can we go? You have the words of eternal life. And today, like Ruth, we must all come to the threshing floor.

You see, in the Bible, the threshing floor is the place of decision. It's the place of action. The threshing floor was the place where Gideon decided to serve the living and true God.

The threshing floor was the place where David decided to cast himself on the mercy of God after his senseless senses. The threshing floor is the place where God decides what to do with the righteous, whom he likens to wheat, and the unrighteous, whom he likens to chaff.

[12:04] And the threshing floor that you and I come to is the cross and the empty tomb. The gospel, the good news concerning Jesus, the Jesus who is offered to us in that gospel.

And we say to ourselves, what shall I do with this Jesus? What shall I do with him? Shall I seek security? Shall I seek rest?

Shall I seek salvation in him? Or shall I seek it through some other means? Shall I seek it through some other person? And there's a risk when we come to Jesus.

Just as Ruth risked her reputation when she came to Boaz at night. You see, you might lose your status or standing among people when they find out you've become religious. When they find out you're going to church.

When they find out that you started going to the prayer meeting. When they find out you've gone forward. And you might think, what's going to happen to me? What's my family going to say? What's my husband?

[13:04] What's my wife? What are my children? What are my parents? What are my colleagues? What are they going to say about me? But friends, what does risk and reputation matter? When Jesus is our only hope.

And this Sunday's communion service is simply our public and corporate recognition of the fact that we have sought security, salvation, rest, in no other name, in no other place, in no other person, but Jesus.

We have come to Jesus and they're seeking salvation in the garments of his righteousness. We have come to Jesus and we're seeking refuge in the shadow of his wings.

The safest place to be, friends, is to be found hidden in Christ. Where you're united to him. Where you're married to him by faith.

And where everything that is true of him, God counts as being true of you. That is the safest place to be. In fact, it's the only safe place to be.

[14:09] The glorious truth the Bible shouts is that when you're holding on to Jesus, God doesn't look on your failures. God doesn't look on your sins. God doesn't look at your backslidings.

He looks at his son and what he sees is his son's perfection. And he sees his son's perfection as being your perfection. And he looks at you and says of you, as he says of his son, this is my child whom I love, with them I am well pleased.

That is the glorious reality of union with Christ. Union in Christ. Being under the wings of Christ. Being in the garments of Christ.

It's the safest place to be. To be hidden in Christ. And the only question is, friend, have you made that request of the Redeemer?

Have you said of this Jesus, I am your servant. Spread your wings over me. Since you are the only Redeemer.

[15:14] Well this brings us to the response of the Redeemer in verses 10 down to 18. And we see that Boaz begins the relentless task of redeeming Ruth.

Listen to the words of Boaz in verses 10 down to 13. Boaz gives a positive response in verses 10 and 11. You know, I don't know about you, but if I were Boaz and found myself in this situation, I'd be close to throttling Ruth before going off to throttle Naomi.

I don't know about you, but I'd be yelling at Ruth, don't you ever put me in that kind of position again. I don't know about you, but I'd be telling Ruth in one certain terms that she put my righteous reputation on the line and exposed me to the rumours of the Bethlehem Gossips.

But Boaz turns to me, says in verses 10 and 11, may you be blessed by the Lord my daughter. You have made the last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich, and then my daughter, do not fear.

I will do for you all that you ask. For all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. Now let's note a few things here. Boaz has taken aback that Ruth is interested in him rather than the younger men.

[16:29] Now Ruth's an impoverished, childless, foreign widow who's put Boaz in this compromising position and Boaz is thrilled, he's ecstatic that she's shown an interest in him.

And doesn't it remind us of Jesus' words that there's rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents and comes to him. When we run to Jesus for that security, for that rest, for that salvation, for that redemption, he doesn't regard us with coldness or indifference.

He doesn't greet us with a shrug of the shoulders saying, oh well, big deal, I expected that anyway. Not at all. He says, you've captivated my heart. You overwhelm me.

Jesus is overjoyed when we come to him. And Boaz tells Ruth that he'll do all that he can for her, though he's under no obligation to do so. And then he tells Ruth that he and everyone in Bethlehem consider her to be a worthy woman, a virtuous woman, a Proverbs 31 woman, a God-centered woman.

And that God-centeredness attracts Boaz to her. That God-centeredness woos Boaz to her. And then Boaz proceeds to give a negative response to Ruth's proposal in verse 12.

[17:46] Ruth's about to get out her diary, phone the minister, send out the invitations, pick a wedding dress, decide whether she wants a fruitcake or an icing cake at the wedding.

And suddenly Boaz reigns on the parade saying in verse 12, now it is true that I am a redeemer, yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. Boaz is saying there's someone who's legally got first pick on Ruth.

And we can imagine the fear that would have flooded Ruth's heart at that moment in time. Will she have to go to another threshing floor? Will she have to put her reputation on the line again?

Will she ever be part of God's covenant people, covenant family? Will she ever know rest? Will she ever know security? Will she ever know salvation? Will she ever know redemption? We know the story.

We've read it countless times, dozens of times. You probably know the story of my heart, but imagine reading it for the first time. Put yourself in Ruth's shoes and she's thinking, what's going to become of me?

[18:48] But Boaz isn't finished because he makes a pledge in verse 13. He says, remain here. Now you think Boaz would send Ruth home. But you see, there's reputations to be preserved.

There's rumors to be avoided. But let's consider a few things. If Ruth goes home alone at night, she'd be attacked by thieves or drunkards. Because the Bible says those are the people who do their business at night.

Not only that, if Ruth goes home at night, she could be mistaken for a prostitute. Her reputation destroyed beyond redemption, we might say. Furthermore, if Ruth goes home at night with Boaz, then Bethlehem gossips really will gossip.

And in actuality, Ruth can't go home at night with Boaz because he's been charged with sleeping next to the grain so that it won't be stolen. And so Boaz says to her, wait here.

Giving us a further insight into this heart that's so concerned for this woman's well-being. And Boaz then states that if the other kinsman wishes to redeem Ruth, he won't stand in his way.

[19 : 54] Boaz would rather see Ruth find rest and security and redemption with someone else than not know it at all. That's a man who's clearly got Ruth's interests at heart. Not bothered about himself.

Not bothered about his feelings. He's concerned about Ruth. And concerned about her welfare. But if this man's not willing to redeem Ruth, Boaz swears in verse 13, asks the Lord, I will redeem you. Boaz says, may God strike me down if I don't redeem and marry you. Boaz is willing to subject himself to the curse of God if he doesn't take Ruth as his wife when he has the opportunity to do so. And in the gospel, we see something very similar, don't we? we see Jesus receiving the curse of God in order to take us to himself and present us before his Father holy and without spot. Verses 14 to 18 then go on to record Ruth's return to Naomi. In verse 14, Ruth reads, early in the morning, before the town gossips waken, Ruth gets up to walk the murky streets back home and she goes with a warning from Boaz in verse 14, let it not be known that a woman was at the threshing floor.

[21 : 18] But look also at the actions of Boaz in verse 15. We're told he pours grain into her shawl and there's so much grain that he has to lift it onto her back.

Ruth can't pick it up herself. Boaz needs to pick it up and put it on her. And Boaz does this to silence the town gossips. You see, if the people came asking Ruth where she's been, why she's coming from the direction of Boaz's threshing floor, she can honestly say, I was getting some grain and she's got the grain on her back to prove it.

Boaz is very strategic when it comes to preserving Ruth's righteousness, Ruth's reputation, Ruth's integrity. But Boaz is also sending a clear message to Naomi as he gives all this grain. Because in verse 17 we read these words, Ruth went to Naomi and said, these six measures of barley he gave to me for he said to me, you must not go back empty handed to your mother-in-law. Now that's significant because do you remember in Ruth chapter 1 when Naomi returns to Bethlehem, she says, don't call me Naomi, which means pleasant, call me Mara, which means bitter.

[22 : 31] And she says, the Lord has made my life very bitter. He has brought me back empty. Naomi was the empty woman. And Boaz is communicating to Naomi, I'm going to reverse the fortunes of you and your daughter-in-law.

I'm going to bring an end to your emptiness. I'm going to transform your present and your future. Again, that's a wonderful picture of the gospel, isn't it?

Because in the gospel we're told that we come to Jesus empty. We come to Jesus broken. We come to Jesus thirsty. And we receive grace upon grace from him.

We receive grace upon grace, super abundant grace from him. We are filled by him. And Ruth then returns to Naomi.

And after Naomi asks her how she got on, we're told in verses 16 and 17 that Ruth told her everything. And the narrative closes with some words of assurance from Naomi in verse 18.

[23 : 35] She replied, wait my daughter until you learn how the matter turns out. For the man will not rest but will settle the matter today. The man will not rest.

The man in whom Ruth is seeking rest is not going to rest. Boaz is not going to relax his efforts. Boaz is going to deny himself until he has this woman.

Naomi can offer Boaz no greater praise than this. That he has a dogged determination to save Ruth. He is a relentless redeemer. And in the gospel we see the one who promises rest refusing to rest for his people.

He is the relentless redeemer. Jesus has this dogged determination to save us. He is the one who sets his face as flint to go to Jerusalem and go to the cross.

And we simply wait on him and rest on him and rejoice in him and his redeeming grace. So Boaz we are told begins the relentless task of redeeming Ruth.

[24 : 51] Now today the story of Ruth is essentially a love story. but it's not the love story of Ruth and Boaz that Hollywood might make it out to be. It's the love story of God in love redeeming and saving his straying sheep.

The love that prevented him destroying the world when Adam Lee first sinned. The love that chose Abraham and persisted with his rebellious offspring. The love that wouldn't let his people go despite their rebellion and idolatry.

The love that said how can I give you up when his people forsook him for other gods. The love that took its fullest shape in the coming of Jesus who left the glories of heaven.

Who was born in a stable in Bethlehem. Who lived and resisted every temptation to avoid the cross and who went to that cross where he lovingly, sacrificially, obediently, willingly, offered himself as a sacrifice for the sins of his people in order to redeem them and purchase them and save them.

The apostle Paul writes, the son of God loved me and gave himself for me. And that's the truth that we celebrate tonight.

[26 : 09] All we can do is allow Jesus to be our redeemer and have his wings cover us. all we can do is rejoice that the gospel message isn't do this, but it is done.

And we can go to the Lord's table not saying I have done this, but rather saying Jesus has done this. We can go to the Lord's table gladdened that there is one who was born in Bethlehem who is greater than Boaz and didn't rest when it came to saving his people until he had settled the matter and cried once and for all from the cross, tetelestai, paid in full, it is finished.

This is our relentless redeemer. This is our Jesus. And we can hand everything over to him. This is our relentless redeemer.

This is our Jesus. And because he's come, because he's lived, because he's died, because he's risen, because he's reigning for his people, we are never without hope.

Because of Jesus. A few years ago, the Gospel Coalition produced an article which illustrates these glorious truths so well at so many levels.

[27 : 37] The writer says, today is the day of my wedding, and I'm not marrying the girl of my dreams. If you would have told me when I was a teenager that my wife would have seven tattoos, a history of drugs, alcohol, and attending heavy metal concerts, I would have laughed at you, given you one of my courtship books, and told you to take a hike.

My plans were different, much more nuanced, but careful planning, much more clean cut, and much more about me. Many wouldn't have put Taylor and I together.

In high school, we probably wouldn't have been friends. She'd have thought I was the nice, boring, judgmental Christian kid. I'd have thought she was the nice, lost, party-seen girl that guys like me are supposed to stay away from.

People like us with our backgrounds and histories aren't supposed to meet, fall in love, and covenant their lives together. But everything changes when people meet Jesus. Jesus takes people like rebellious teenage partiers and goody to shoot homeschoolers and puts them together in marriage to put something on display much bigger than their own hand-crafted, perfectly planned out love story.

Right in the middle of the mess of our life, Taylor met Jesus. And he planted his flag in her life, and she believed in him and he transformed her. The Taylor who spent her life living from one pleasure to the next died, and a new person was born.

[29 : 01] A new person with new desires, a new heart that longed to please God serve people and treasure Jesus above all other pleasure. And this is how I now see Taylor.

She is completely new, completely transformed, and completely clean. This is not because she's become a part of a helpful program, or because she's nearly pulled herself together.

It's because God in his incredible infinite kindness took Taylor's dark, crimson life and made her as white as snow. He took all her sins on, placed them on his son, and gave her Jesus' righteousness to wear like a perfect white wedding dress.

And in reality, Taylor's story is my story as well. As Taylor walks toward me today, I will be reminded of how much I don't deserve the precious gift she is to me.

I spent much of my life singing a self-centered siren song. Nothing about my life cries for blessings, it calls for curses forever. Yet God has dressed me in white, put my sin upon his son, and given me a heart that loves him.

[30 : 09] This is the God of redemption. And the only question is, friends, do we know that he has dressed us in white? Do we know that he has put our sin on his son?

Do we have those hearts that love him? And will we go to his table to celebrate the glory of our Redeemer this Sunday? Amen.

Let's close this time of worship by singing to God's place in the words of Psalm 63. Psalm 63, and singing verses 1 down to 8. We sing the Scottish Salter version on page 295.

Lord, be my God, I'll early seek my soul not thirst for thee. my flesh longs in the dry, harsh land wherein no waters be. And if you see verses 7 and 8, and shadow off thy wings of joy, for thou thine help is been.

Thy soul be follows hard in me. Thy right hand it doth sustain. We'll stand to sing Psalm 61 James rise to, La Universidade de OKCADUA

[32 : 15] I have seen thee here to form within thy holy place.

Since better is thy love than mine, my lips thee praise shall hear.

I have, I have, will lift my hands and bless thee while I live.

If not with marrow and with heart, my soul shall bear thee.

Then shall my love with joyful lips sing graces unto thee.

[33 : 47] When I to thee upon my bed remember with delight.

And when on the day I let it take, it forth cherished all the night.

In shadow of thy wings I joy. For thou my bed hast been.

My soul before those heart and me.

Thy right can't sustain. Amen. Amen.

[35 : 09] Amen. Our Father in heaven, we praise and we bless you this evening. We can take refuge in the shadow of your wings, knowing that you are the God who helps his people.

We praise and we bless you that your love is indeed better than life itself. And we pray that every one of us here in this room would know that you are our redeemer.

The one in whom there is safety. The one in whom there is safety. The one in whom there is security. The one in whom there is salvation, redemption. The one in whom there is rest. And we pray that thou go for our families, for our friends, for our loved ones.

That all those who we know and love would know the redeemer. Not simply about him, but we truly know him. And know the reality of being safe in him. And finding him to be their refuge, their strength and their present aid.

And we pray that thou go before us into the coming days we pray. And may we know your blessing.

May we know your smile. And may we know your love. For we pray in Jesus name and for his sake.

[36 : 13] Amen. Amen.