



ENTER God's presence

Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

– Isaiah 40:30-31

Lord God, as we gather again today to hear your word and to be renewed by the hope that comes from faith in you, may your word be for us like the wind which holds the eagle in the air, may it uphold us through all that life brings us this week. Amen.



SHARE life together

1. **Where have you seen God's power at work in your life this last week?**
2. **Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?**
3. **Have a think through your prayer life. What is the most surprising way that God has answered one of your prayers?**
4. **What is the most ridiculous favour you have ever done for someone? Why did you do it?**

“Swipe right.” In the code language of dating apps, that means “I’m interested!” or “I approve”. It’s the preferred mode of putting yourself out there for many Australians wanting to look for a partner, a relationship, fulfilment in life. It requires vulnerability, an openness to the future and hopefulness rather than despair. There’s a whole lot of swiping right in Ruth 3 as we see the mood change, hopefulness return, and the willingness to be vulnerable in order to receive the greatest promise and blessing of all - Redemption; a new beginning and a new future. We’ll explore that same ‘Sweetness of Redemption’ in this study!

Week beginning:
Sunday 28th June 2020

Worship series:

The Sweetness of Redemption



VERSE for the week

But if he is not willing, as surely as the Lord lives I will do it.

Ruth 3:13c



REMEMBER this week

Jesus is willing to redeem, protect and clothe with righteousness all who are willing to lay their lives at his feet.



LISTEN attentively

Read Ruth Chapter 3

5. **What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?**
6. **What do you hear this scripture saying to you right now?**
7. **What do you make of Naomi and Ruth's plan?**

Chapter 3 begins with the words, 'one day'. This suggests that some time has passed since Ruth began gleaning in Boaz's fields. Naomi knew that Boaz was in a position to redeem not only the lands and property of Elimilech and his sons, but also to redeem and marry Ruth; however, up until now, other than being more generous to Ruth than the law required, he does not seem to have made any move to do so. In Chapter 2, his invitation for Ruth to join him for a meal of bread dipped in vinegar might have been a way for him to show some interest, but it seems he has not taken things any further since.

8. **What reasons can you think of that might be holding Boaz back from redeeming Ruth?**



GROW deeper

This particular passage of Ruth is a very interesting section full of what we might describe as 'Hebrew innuendo'. For example, the 'threshing floor' was a common term for a brothel; the Hebrew word used for 'making yourself known' was also used for having intercourse, and to 'uncover the feet' of someone was a Hebrew euphemism for uncovering the genitals. It can be difficult in a situation like this to know whether to treat the text at face value with a literal interpretation or to assume the author intended the reader to read between the lines and draw a very different picture of events. But perhaps in the richness of God's Word, both interpretations have something to teach us. If we take the story at face value and interpret things literally, then we see Ruth placing herself in a vulnerable position, seeking more care and protection from Boaz than what he has shown so far. She is seeking the fullness of what he can offer as her redeemer and places her life at his feet, herself at his mercy.

9. **If we take the literal approach, what can we learn from Ruth's humility and vulnerability at the feet of her redeemer which might help us in our lives when we come to Jesus our redeemer?**
10. **How willing are you to lay everything in your life at the feet of Jesus who is willing to redeem you? What holds you back?**

Ruth and Naomi were surviving. The kindness that Boaz had shown had been above and beyond what was strictly required by the law. We know that at least in part, Boaz's generosity was a response to Ruth's faithfulness to Naomi and her reputation. Regardless of how we approach the text, what Naomi asked Ruth to do was a risk. The reputation that we hear of in chapter 2 and also again now chapter 3, verse 11, is put on the line by following this course of action. For a woman to be found on the threshing floor at all, let alone in the evening or night time would certainly have started rumors and ruined that reputation, regardless of what may or may not have actually happened. However, they were prepared to risk that to receive the full redemption that Boaz could offer. When we come to Jesus as our lord and Saviour, our salvation is assured. Eternal life is ours at the moment we come to trust that his death and resurrection save us from our sins. Like Ruth and Naomi survived by gleaning in the fields, we can survive like that. Yet there is more to the promise that Jesus offers. He wants to offer us a redeemed life right now. Sometimes that involves risk.

11. **What are some risks, or leaps of faith, that you believe God might be asking you to take in your life at the moment?**

Remember, the word 'redeem' means to be restored to a former state or position. God created us to be in a relationship with him, and Jesus has restored that relationship to us through his death on the cross. That redemption is available right now, it is not just waiting for you when your earthly life comes to an end, it is ours when we lay our lives at Jesus' feet and ask him to cover us with his wings.



LIVE purposefully

The great thing for Ruth and Naomi about the kind of redemption that Boaz could offer was that it afforded them a greater level of safety and protection. No longer did they have to spend all their time and energy working in the fields just to survive, they could rely on Boaz to meet their needs and to protect them from danger. We often spend a lot of time 'taking care' of ourselves. How much more freedom might we feel if we actually and completely relied on God to provide for us and protect us. If we could do that, then our fears about taking risks for the gospel or 'stepping out in faith' might not hold us back so often.

- 12. How much time of the day do you think you spend worrying about yourself, and your health, finances, and reputation? How much time do you work at ensuring these things are secure?**
- 13. What are two things that you find it hard to trust God with? What is one thing you can do with each of these things to exercise more trust in God with those areas of your life?**
- 14. If you did not have to worry about money or security for yourself or your family, what would you want to do to advance the kingdom of God? Pray this week that God might provide opportunities for you to do something like this.**



PRAY intentionally

- Praise God for his steadfast love and faithfulness, for redeeming us from our sin and restoring us to abundant life.
- Ask God to help you trust that he will supply everything we need to do the things he has planned and asks for us to do.
- Ask God to be at work in you and your LifeGroup, to be an answer to the prayers and needs of others, that His redeeming love might be at work through you.



BLESS one another

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross in the air as you say...

[Name], God has and is blessing you. Amen