



ENTER God's presence

⁷ **Israel, put your hope in the Lord,
for with the Lord is unfailing love
and with him is full redemption.**

⁸ **He himself will redeem Israel
from all their sins – Psalm 130:7-8**

God of our redemption, thank you for the investment of love you made in our lives through your Son Jesus, willingly offering him up to redeem a lost and broken people. As we see your fingerprints all over the story of Ruth, let your fingerprints be over all our lives that your authorship may be evident in our story, your leading in our journey, and your blessing shared with all. Bless this time that we spend together growing in your grace. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.



SHARE life together

1. **Share your highs, lows and where you saw God's presence at work in your life in the last week?**
2. **Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?**
3. **"They all lived happily ever after" is the way nearly every fairytale ends! What was your favourite fairytale growing up and to what degree would you say your life has been a fairytale or something other to this point?**
4. **What do you do when God's plans for your life take an unexpected or strange turn? Do you trust him, question him or respond in another way?**

'There's a plan in everything, and I love it when a plan comes together.' So said Colonel John "Hannibal" Smith, a fictional television and movie character in the 'A Team'. Throughout the book of Ruth, a rescue mission has been underway, lives were at risk. Names were in danger of being lost. But God was putting together a local rescue effort that would be crucial in his global rescue operation to save the world he loves. We'll explore that today as we conclude the story of Ruth and see God bring blessing from bitterness and fulfilment from emptiness; it's a story of loving kindness that is repeated in your life and then continues through you.

Week beginning:
Sunday 5th July 2020

Worship series:

The Sweetness of Redemption



VERSE for the week

**"Praise be to the Lord, who
this day has not left you
without a guardian-
redeemer".**

Ruth 4:14a



REMEMBER this week

It takes a child to renew a life, to open the future and join past and future together to make sense of the present. That child is Jesus and he alone can transform bitterness to blessing and emptiness to fulfilment in your life. He invites you to be part of his Kingdom plan coming together for the world, to reclaim and bring blessing to every lost, bitter and empty life.



LISTEN attentively

Read Ruth Chapter 4:1-10

5. What questions/observations arise as you hear this text?
6. What do you hear this scripture saying to you right now? What does it mean for you?
7. Why do you think we are never told the name of the nearest relative.
8. What role does joy play in this chapter?

Chapter 4 picks up where chapter 3 finished off. We know there is a nearer relative to Naomi than Boaz, we also know that Boaz is willing to redeem Ruth and Naomi, should this relative be unwilling. But as soon as we launch into chapter 4, there is a chance (or God ordained) meeting at the gate in front of witnesses with the nearest relative. The Hebrew at this point is interesting. "Come over here and sit down 'you-whom-I-will-not-name.'" When the guy thinks he might gain from this transaction, he is willing. But when he finds that it comes with baggage, and that the land will have to be given back, this guardian redeemer is quick to take off his sandal, which is an ancient custom of legalising a transaction, and say: '*Buy it yourself!*' What we don't pick up is the racist and prejudiced overtones that are present in this guardian redeemer. The original Hebrew says he thinks that his inheritance will be 'perverted, spoiled, or corrupted' if he takes Ruth. He was so willing to agree until a Moabite woman was part of it all. It is interesting that Ruth is now a worshipper of the God of Israel, but this other redeemer can't seem to see beyond her Moabite origins. Boaz then makes it public and official in front of the elders that he will redeem the land, Naomi, and make Ruth his wife. It's all a relief and great news. The nearest relative sought to preserve his reputation and his legacy remains unknown...we never know his name. In that moment when he does what seems right in his own eyes he forfeits that which was most precious to him...his name. And Boaz, who does both what is costly and obedient, we remember forever. Who here has paid the higher price? Gained less? When you say "yes" to God you become part of his eternal plan and who knows what might result in you!

9. When has the fear of ruining your reputation or having to pay a cost, stopped you acting in a loving way to others? (In other words, where are your racist blindspots that subconsciously exclude others from receiving the grace of God?)
10. What do we learn about Boaz through the "sandal-gate affair" (verses 1-10)? How is Boaz (towards Ruth) like Jesus (towards us)?



GROW deeper

Read Ruth Chapter 4:11-16

Why was Boaz, willing to love Ruth, despite her baggage? Verse 10-11 give us some insight. Think through the OT names mentioned in vv10-11. Rachel & Leah were sisters who were the wives of Jacob the father of the 12 tribes of Israel. Jacob was tricked into marrying Leah the older sister when he had worked 7 years to marry Rachel the woman he truly loved. That led to a baby-making rivalry between the 2 women. Trickery. Betrayal. Rivalry. Competing for love. Who wants that in their family tree? Who sees that as a "blessing" to offer a couple about to be married? It gets worse. Tamar was Judah's daughter-in-law. Her husband died and the family redeemer next son Onan, refused to raise up a family in the name of his deceased brother and Judah failed to offer her to the next youngest. So Tamar tricked Judah into an illicit relationship and bore Perez. In Matthew 1, further questionable characters appear in the family line in the genealogy of Jesus. 'Salmon was the father of Boaz (whose mother was Rahab)'. Rahab was a prostitute. Maybe that's why Boaz was so open to Ruth and Naomi. He knew what it was like to have a questionable background. He understood being an outsider. He knew how it felt to be noticed for something over which you had no control. The blessing that came from this obedience brings redemption to Naomi, to Ruth and to the whole world. Ruth is married to Boaz becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son which the community of Bethlehem name, Obed'. It means 'worshipper' or 'servant'. It is an amazing name because it reminds us

that all this family can do now is to worship the Lord with thanks and extreme gratitude for what he has done

11. How is Naomi's perspective at the beginning of the book (1:20-21) transformed by the end (4:14-15)?
12. Why might the women say that a son has been "born to Naomi" (4:17)?
13. How does Boaz's redemption of Ruth parallel Christ's redemption of us?

In the most unlikely ways through two of the most unlikely people, God launches his local rescue plan to continue Naomi's family name, but even more, God moves in grace and mercy and loving kindness for the good of his world and the glory of his name. In the baby born in Bethlehem, of questionable heritage, under dubious circumstances, Mary and Joseph name the child Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. It is through this child that God redeems the world, redeems you and gives you a future forever.



LIVE purposefully

Trickery. Betrayal. Rivalry. Competing for love. Illicit relationships. Ethical lapses. Moral collapses. Failure across generations. In a world that is messy and filled with darkness, God advances his rescue plan to restore rescue, redeem and recreate all things. He did it for Naomi, Ruth and Boaz. He has done it for you. What would ever make you think you could be excluded from God's saving love? No ethical lapse, moral collapse, betrayal, suffering, tragedy, trauma, trickery, or deceit will ever separate you from God's love. He wants to be a part of your life, and have you part of his life forever.

Read Titus 3:4-7; Romans 5:8ff; Galatians 4:4-7. Romans 8:31-39

14. When are the times that you tell yourself/believe the lie that you are beyond redeeming? What is one thing from the book of Ruth that you have learnt that can help you hold on to the truth of Jesus in these times?
15. What is one action that you can undertake, inspired by the story of Ruth to be an active participant in God's global rescue plan? It may be something small on a local level that God uses to be a blessing in ways you can never see.
16. How might God be turning the page on a new chapter of blessing in your life?



PRAY intentionally

- Praise God for his saving purpose for you. Thank Jesus for being your Redeemer. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you can be part of his rescue plan of redemption in someone's life.
- Pray for the [Vision2030 Beyond Limits](#) plan here at LifeWay. Ask God to reveal which journey he is asking you to go on and how he can use you to fulfil this plan.
- Pray for the State of Victoria struggling to get on top of the Coronavirus and for all those struggling in this time to move forward in their life.
- Praise God for the blessings he gives because his rescue plan was fulfilled.



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.