



ENTER God's presence

**They remembered that God was their Rock,
that God Most High was their Redeemer.**

– Psalm 78:35

Lord God, as we walk together through the story of Ruth, open our eyes and ears to see and hear again a story of redeeming love and faithfulness, the kind of love which you have given us through your Son Jesus Christ, 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. **What do the words 'redeem' or 'redemption' mean to you?**
4. **What does it mean to have Jesus as your Redeemer?**

Filthy Rich & Homeless – it's a televised social experiment where some wealthy people give up their luxury cars, expensive clothes and big safe secure mansions to live for 10 days among the homeless. While it opens eyes/hearts/wallets on behalf of the homeless among us; for the well-heeled "reality" participants, it's a short-term gig. They eventually go back to where they came from...high-paying work, expansive lifestyles, filthy rich & privileged. But for Ruth & Naomi, there was no such luxury. Every day was a new risk. Every day was a struggle to find food, shelter, and safety. Every day their future was a wager between life and death. But every day was also a new opportunity in God's grace. That's what we'll discover today – an extravagant kindness shown to us in the most desperate times that brings fullness from our desolation and blessing from our bitterness

Week beginning:
Sunday 21st June 2020

Worship series:

The Sweetness of Redemption



VERSE for the week

**"Why have I found such favour
in your eyes that you notice
me—a foreigner?"**

Ruth 2:10



REMEMBER this week

**Grace is restorative.
Every act of grace in
community, brings people
to an awareness and
experience of the blessing
of God.**



LISTEN attentively

Read Ruth Chapter 2

- 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. This passage introduces a new character, Boaz, to the story. What kind of picture of Boaz do you get from reading this passage? What details does the text give you directly?**

The most important details of a new character are often the first to be detailed in a story. In this case, what we need to know about Boaz, first and foremost, is that he was one of the closest living relatives of Naomi's late husband Elimelek. This is important because of the rules and laws that existed in Israel concerning the care and 'redemption' of widows and children and property. These kinds of arrangements seem foreign to us today, but through the laws God established with Moses, he put in place the guidelines to ensure that those who fell on bad times would be cared for and supported by their families and communities.



GROW deeper

Read Leviticus 19:9-10, 25:25-28 and Deuteronomy 25:5-6

These three passages go some way towards explaining what is happening in Ruth chapter 2. Naomi and Ruth are simply availing themselves of the rights reserved for the poor and widowed members of the community. To 'glean' in the fields was to go behind the harvesting workers and pick up the grain that fell to the ground behind them as they worked and those who adhered to the Jewish laws were obliged to let them do it.

Together these passages explain the role of a kinsman redeemer (or guardian redeemer in the NIV). It was a legal role and responsibility of the closest living relative to redeem, or buy back, or make payment for, the lost property of their close kinsmen. Obviously in those times, all the property was officially owned by men, so this role was always carried out by the closest living male relative. We can be tempted or led to believe that some of these Old Testament laws were oppressive and are outdated and irrelevant to modern life, particularly in light of the forgiveness and salvation which is ours through faith in Jesus. We create a false tension between the Gospel (which literally means, 'good news') and the Law (which is typically understood to be bad news).

- 8. We see in the story of Ruth how God provides and protects through the law. Where do you see God's laws at work today and how do they still offer protection and provision? (perhaps consider 'The 10 Commandments', Exodus 20 if you need to look them up).**
- 9. However, laws only have their desired effect when people follow them. Boaz appears to be intent on following God's laws in this passage. How concerned are you about following God's laws?**

While the story of Ruth may not actively mention God, we begin to see how God can often be at work behind the scenes. Well before the events of this story, God established the rules and laws for the people of Israel that would ensure fair treatment for those who had come upon hard times. Of all the fields Ruth could have gleaned in she happened to find one of Boaz's fields, a clansman and relative of her late husband. Because of Boaz's faithfulness to God's laws and his care and concern for Ruth and Naomi, everything that was needed for their immediate needs was already in place.

- 10. In what ways might God be at work in your life behind the scenes that you have perhaps taken for granted or failed to notice until now?**
- 11. In what ways might God be able to use you and your life to work blessing and redemption to the lives of others?**

Faithfulness is another key them in this passage, Boaz is faithful to his obligation under the Law to care for Ruth and Naomi, yet he does this, at least in part, because he has heard of and recognises Ruth's faithfulness to Naomi. As we heard last week in chapter 1, Ruth and Naomi travelled back to Bethlehem because they heard that God had been faithful to his people by providing a harvest, ending the famine that had been experienced.

God's faithfulness is also extended to us through the redeeming acts of Jesus Christ. If you look all the way through Leviticus chapter 25, you will see the rules set out for redeeming slaves; which in many ways parallel the way that we have been redeemed from sin and death through Jesus. In short, we were slaves to sin and the price or cost of our sin was death. Jesus paid the cost by dying on the cross, and as a result, we have been redeemed or restored to our rightful place as children of God.



LIVE purposefully

Redemption in many ways is like a second chance. A second chance to be what we were created to be. A second chance at a full life, rather than a life perpetually clouded by death and judgement. God has always allowed and promoted the idea of redemption, of second chances. The question is, now that we have been freely given a second chance, what are we going to do with it?

- 12. Sometimes we fail to make the most of a second chance because we often need to start from scratch, to begin all over again. This takes time and effort. We want to be instantly restored to what we were before. Although Boaz was generous, Ruth still had to work hard in the fields to be able to glean enough for herself and Naomi. Where is God asking you to do some hard work to make the most of your second chances?**
- 13. Boaz's faithfulness to God's laws brought blessing and provision to Ruth and Naomi. While it may be true that some of the Old Testament laws seem out of place or incompatible with modern life, Jesus says in Matthew 22:34-40, that all the laws can be summed up in just these two, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and love your neighbour as yourself". Who is someone for whom you can act like Ruth to Naomi or Boaz to Ruth & demonstrate God's compassion & provision for those in difficult circumstances?**



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 understand the purpose of his law and to live it faithfully as you love and care for those around you.
- Ask God to be at work in you and through you to bring his blessing to others. Ask him to help you see him at work behind the scenes in your own life.



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

