

The Glory of our Kinsman Redeemer

Book of Ruth

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I ask you to turn with me in your Bibles to the third chapter, actually to the last verse in the third chapter and we're going to begin the fourth chapter, verse 18 of Ruth 3, the book of Ruth. Just after Judges and just before the books of Samuel and Kings in the little tiny book of Ruth. Our text this morning is Ruth 3:18 through chapter 4, verse 11, and the title of the message is, "The Glory of our Kinsman Redeemer." The glory of our Kinsman Redeemer. The title is based on one of the keywords in this tiny little book of Ruth and that is the word "kinsman redeemer." It's not always translated that way in your Bibles, in fact, we're going to see that in the New American Standard which I'm reading from, it's most often translated "close relative; closest relative; close relative." The NIV translates it "kinsman redeemer." The ESV translates it "redeemer." The King James translates it "kinsman." But the idea is they're trying to capture in English words the essential meaning of this Hebrew word that is not used that often in Scripture. In fact, the greatest concentration of the word in the Bible is in Ruth but it is not one that is exclusively in Ruth. We are introduced to this concept of kinsman redeemer way back in Leviticus 25 and we see it in other places as well but primarily here in Ruth. So "kinsman redeemer" I think is the best translation of the phrase because it speaks to two different components: relationship and function, relationship and responsibility, that in the Old Testament at this time in redemptive history, God had ordained that his people care for one another through this vehicle, the vehicle of the kinsman redeemer.

So what we're going to see though, what I want to propose to you today, that this key word which is used a total of 22 times in Ruth, it's not just kinsman redeemer, it's also the word "redeem." Eight times we have the word "kinsman redeemer, close relative," in the NASB; that's the noun, "the kinsman redeemer." Twelve times you have the verb, "redeemed," in Ruth. Redeem. Redeem. Redeem. Twice you have the noun "redemption," the right of redemption, but all of those come from this one Hebrew word, "gaal," or the noun form, "goel," which is "kinsman redeemer." G-o-e-l. And what I want to suggest to you is that this is a key part of the portrait of our Savior that is being painted in the Old Testament and one of the ways that we need to understand in reading the Bible is to read the Bible in its context and to see that God as we do that carefully, when we look at the Old Testament, we see that the Lord throughout the history of the nation of Israel is painting a portrait; he is painting a portrait of the Savior to come.

Have you ever seen one of those chalk drawings that people sometimes do and I've been to Bible studies where someone was teaching the Scriptures and they'll draw or give a testimony or something and they'll draw on a big pad in pastels and stuff and they do it in such a way that you don't really know what they're doing at first. They're drawing the filling around it as they're talking and so you're sitting there listening to the talk and kind of wondering what's coming next. Then they'll get to the end and it begins to take shape. As it goes along, you begin to see, "Oh, now I understand what they're drawing." And then finally at the very end, usually they'll have like a light they put onto the picture that brings out in some powerful way some of the translucent chalk they have been drawing with or something like that, and you see the message fully.

I would suggest to you that the Old Testament, into the New Testament, there is that sort of thing going on. God is painting for us what the Messiah will be. Starting in Genesis and all the way through Malachi, he continues to fill in the portrait and then finally when the light comes on when Jesus is born, we see the glory of our Messiah. We see the greatness of our Savior and so that the entire Old Testament points to this. This is why Jesus could say to the apostles on the road to Emmaus or to those men on the road to Emmaus, the disciples on the road to Emmaus, "Did you not understand?" in Luke 24. "Did you not understand all that was written of Me in the law and the prophets and the writings? How could you have missed the Messiah?" It's all there. It was pointing to Christ.

Now, let's read these verses and we're going to look at how the kinsman redeemer adds to this glorious portrait of our Savior. We'll start at verse 18 and I'll remind you that at this point Ruth has just come back from her meeting with Boaz on the threshing floor in which she proposed marriage to Boaz and he has tentatively agreed pending the searching out of whether or not he really is the one in line to marry her; he realizes there is one in front of him, a kinsman who is closer and has the first right of redemption. And Ruth comes back home to her mother-in-law, laden down with some 60 pounds of grain and shows her mother-in-law this incredible gift and her mother-in-law interprets that and knows that the man is determined to settle the matter and that's where we are right now. Verse 18 of chapter 3, Naomi,

18 Then she said, "Wait, my daughter, until you know how the matter turns out; for the man will not rest until he has settled it today."

1 Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there, and behold, the close relative [that's the kinsman redeemer] of whom Boaz spoke was passing by, so he said, "Turn aside, friend, sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down. 2 He took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. 3 Then he said to the closest relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the land of Moab, has to sell the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. 4 So I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy it before those who are sitting here, and before the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if not, tell me that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am after you.'" And

he said, "I will redeem it." 5 Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the deceased, in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance." 6 The closest relative said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, because I would jeopardize my own inheritance. Redeem it for yourself; you may have my right of redemption, for I cannot redeem it." 7 Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange of land to confirm any matter: a man removed his sandal and gave it to another; and this was the manner of attestation in Israel. 8 So the closest relative said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself." And he removed his sandal. 9 Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses today that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon. 10 Moreover, I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, to be my wife in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance, so that the name of the deceased will not be cut off from his brothers or from the court of his birth place; you are witnesses today." 11 All the people who were in the court, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses."

Let's pray together.

Our Father, we come to you and we ask for your blessing upon us. We acknowledge the poverty that we are apart from your grace. Lord, we truly are empty, we need you to fill us. Our minds are weak. Our affections are disordered. Our wills are so easily bound in sin and we need your grace, the power of your Spirit, and the power of your word to liberate us and to help us to love our great Redeemer. We pray in his name. Amen.

Now, what we're looking at today is how this really interesting, in some ways beautiful, in other ways somewhat perplexing story, that of true events that happened was orchestrated by God to be a part of the portrait of Christ that he was painting, and understanding that helps us immensely in appreciating the glory of his work, loving him more, but it also helps us to deal with some of the more difficult elements in Scripture, some of the times that we struggle with what God is doing, and when we understand the way that the Lord uses typology and the way he is teaching us through the Old Testament, that essentially the Bible is all answering the question, this is the one question that Scripture is attempting to answer: how can sinful people come to dwell in the presence of a holy God? Is it possible, and if so, how? That is the question that drives the Bible. That is what God is revealing. He is revealing the way back to him. Humanity is lost and in the dark spiritually and the Lord in Scripture is progressively painting this portrait of the Messiah who is the way and the truth and the life. He's the way back to God. But it's answering that question: how can sinners come to dwell in the presence of a holy God? And in doing that it shows us that through the typological really unfolding of God's way he dealt with Israel, he's teaching us. He is, as Calvin said, prattling with us. He is baby talking. He is giving us pictures that are teaching us profound truths. The way that he deals with Israel is a picture of how we come to know him.

Now, understanding that helps us deal with the difficult questions. One of the difficult questions that is in this passage is this whole issue of Levirate marriage. Levirate marriage which was at this time in history and only at this time in redemptive history, God's plan for how we were to deal with widows. And the plan was that, at this point in history when God's people are in his land, that when a man died without a male heir, that it was the duty of his brother or his uncle or his cousin, the nearest kinsman, to take this woman as his wife, often additional wife, so that he could then parent a child with this woman, parent a son so that there would be a male heir for that family and that ancestral land would stay in the family in Israel.

You see in the passage we read that the first kinsman redeemer says no. Remember he says it first, "I will redeem the land." Then Boaz, we're going to talk more about this next time but it's going to take us two weeks to cover this passage, I'm sure, so we're going to do what we can today to lay the groundwork and then start unpacking it. But Boaz says, "If you want to redeem the land, redeem it." He says, "I'll redeem it." Then he says, "Well, let me just point out when you redeem the land, you have to also take Ruth the Moabitess as your wife to raise up a child with her, a son with her, to carry on this land under the name of Elimelech and Mahlon." And when he hears that, he says, "I can't do it." Why? Because he already has a wife and he has children. Now, he could do it and the Scripture actually exhorts him to do it and if he were being godly at this point in time, he would do it, but he doesn't trust the Lord enough. He's thinking, "I don't have enough money to care for another wife and another child. I know I have to care for Naomi, I'm giving her money for her land and I'd have to look after her and I'm okay with that because I can take the land and I can farm it and it will be valuable. But another wife? That's difficult. What's my wife going to think about that?" Do you see the problems this creates?

Now, this is where so often we run into things in Scripture that trouble us and what we need to do is stay in the Scripture until we understand because God's word is always better than anything you can imagine. And when we are unsettled and when we are troubled and I remember talking to a young teenage girl who had come to Christ, this has been years back, she is now a wonderful Christian lady with four or five kids. And I remember when she came to Christ and we were talking, she asked to meet with me because she was troubled by the sacrificial system. She was like 16 years old and she sat down in my office and she, her mom and me, sat down and we talked about the sacrificial system and she just could not imagine why all these animals had to die and so I had to spend some time talking to her about that. And, you know, when you really look at it, it is quite profound. You know, Josephus reported that in the years around 70 A.D. before the temple was destroyed, somewhere like between 66 and 70 A.D., that on Passover there were 265,500 lambs killed on a single day, more than 1/4 of a million. That was a process where they were basically like an incredible assembly line to kill that many lambs in one day over basically a six hour period. Probably 144 priests lined up with men helping to make sure, inspecting each lamb, bringing the lamb forward, and the priest himself that is ordained by God to do it, simply slitting the throat, taking some of the blood, sprinkling it accordingly and moving it on. They would have had to kill like one every 10 seconds if

you had only 144 priests. If you had more, then that would take that number down a little bit. So that the temple was a slaughterhouse.

And then add to that, that was just Passover, every day of the year as the sun came up in the east, they set things up so that there was a priest on a high point in the temple who would relay word down to another priest and there was another priest who had the morning sacrifice, had the lamb by the head ready to slit its throat. When the word came, "The sun has crested," immediate death for that morning sacrifice. And then in the evening sacrifice, the same way. The temple worship began and ended with the death of an animal.

And then all throughout the day, probably I did some work on this so it's estimating, guesstimating, probably there were 120-150 animals killed per hour throughout the day on an average day in the temple when you add up all the different sacrifices because in Leviticus the people were given five sacrifices and four of them required the death of an animal: the sin offering, the burnt offering, the peace offering, the trespass offering all required the death of an animal so that the temple was a place of foul smells, blood. Why? And this little young lady didn't understand about how bad it was. She just knew enough and she had a real sensitive heart, you know, had caught a lot of the cultural things that animals are people too. So I had to help her. She didn't eat meat at that time. She does now. I won a convert. No. God does will that we, you can do what you want to do about how much meat you want to eat but the Lord makes clear in Genesis 9 that meat is now for us to eat. It wasn't originally. It is a symptom of the fall, yes, but it is now God's will.

And the reason that so many animals died, that's the question. The event itself, Passover and every day of offering after offering after offering, was a picture that was intended to cause the people to ask, "Why?" Because your sin is so foul it takes this to bring you into the presence of a holy God. It takes something appalling to bring you into the presence of a holy God. That's how bad our sin is. And it was only a faint shadow of the truly appalling event that must happen when God would take his own precious holy Son, place upon him the sins of all who would ever believe, and pour out his wrath, unleashed fury, upon his Son. That's what it takes for sinners to enter into the presence of God. So all of the Bible is teaching things like that, profound truths that together form this glorious picture that when you see them, Jesus is the picture. He is what it has all been pointing toward all along.

Now back to the question of Levirate marriage because the Bible is clear that God's intention is for one man and one woman for life, it is Genesis 2:24, 25; that he made marriage as a picture ultimately of his relationship, the relationship between Jesus Christ and his bride, the church. So at this point in redemptive history though, and we see this other places, you know, you have Jacob and Leah and Rachel and Zilpah and Bilhah, right? You had these places where things are not quite like we expect and we understand that God is doing something in those places, the exception actually proves the rule, but it also shows us the priority of God and the principle of Levirate marriage shows us something about the Lord.

Now, first of all, Levirate marriage had a practical historical benefit, it provided for the care of widows. If a widow had a daughter, the Levirate marriage would allow a son to be born so that that son could then care for his mother and his sister until she was married. So it had a practical benefit but the ultimate spiritual benefit we see hinted at in our text when it says in verse 5, when Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field," this is Ruth 4:5, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the deceased, in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance." That same phrase is repeated in verse 10. After he announces, he's got everybody to agree, "You are witnesses." He says, "Moreover, I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, to be my wife in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance," look at this, "so that the name of the deceased will not be cut off from his brothers or from the court of his birth place; you are witnesses today." What's going on is that at that point in redemptive history, the Lord is painting a picture and he's using the land of Israel and the people of Israel to teach us something about what it means to dwell in his presence.

And what Levirate marriage, I'm going to explain this a little more as we go along but I'm going to tell you right now where we're going. What we're going to see is that Levirate marriage basically proves to us that even as important as the sanctity of marriage is, that the eternal possession of salvation is even greater than that and that God was willing to set aside the one man/one woman rule so that he could establish the principle of how you lay hold of heaven. So important that he set aside that, he didn't totally set it aside because, I mean, a good situation, the man would do what he needed to do and then not live with that woman as his wife in the same way all the time, he would just raise up the name and then focus back on his own wife, just caring for them, right? But still you see this profound perplexing situation but it has an ultimate spiritual purpose that in the same way as we talked about with the sacrificial system is good and right and beautiful.

Now, to help us understand it, what we want to do, we're going to consider, there are two points to the message but we are going to spend a lot of time on the first and a little bit of time on the second and the second point is our main point next week, and the first point is the place of the kinsman redeemer in redemptive history here. The place of the kinsman redeemer in redemptive history. What I'm suggesting to you is that this whole idea of Levirate marriage, that God didn't make it up as he went along, but that he planned to use this vehicle to teach us about the coming Messiah, and that what Levirate marriage is itself, that when a woman is helpless and hopeless, remember, a woman without a husband, without a man, is without a future at that point in time, and since the inheritance, the right to the land passes through the male, then she has no place in the land. That is a type of heaven so she has no place in God's kingdom, in God's presence. And the way God made a way for that was through the kinsman redeemer and so the kinsman redeemer dealing with the physical realities is actually ultimately there to be a picture of the Kinsman Redeemer to come, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, I want to show you this hermeneutic, the way of interpreting the Bible is hermeneutics, is valid and right because you ought to be wanting to make sure it is and

not just take my word for anything I say. So turn with me to Hebrews 11:8-10, "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God." God goes to Abraham, Abram, before he is named Abraham, and he says, "Go to the land I will show you. I'm going to make of you a great nation." And God is entering into a covenant relationship with Abram. He's bringing him to himself and he says, "Listen." And so what he's doing is he is teaching us something about salvation. He's teaching us some of the answer to how can a sinful human being like you or me come to know and dwell in the presence of a holy God.

So he says, "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob went into the land of Canaan and they lived in tents throughout their whole lives." Abraham was in the land for about 75 years and he lived in tents the whole time. He did not possess the land. He only owned, remember, the cave of Machpelah in the field of, I forget, near the Oak of Mamre he bought to bury Sarah. That's all he owned when he died. Isaac got that, lived in a tent his whole life and when he died all he owned of the Promised Land was that same field with that cave as a burial plot. Jacob lived in the land almost all his life and what did he own? He owned the same plot of land and that is it. No more. And he had to leave and go to Egypt, remember? And what he's saying is, the author of Hebrews is saying that the Lord was teaching them something. He was prattling with them. He was showing them, "Listen, you go to the land I will show you and that land is a land that is precious. It's a land of My presence. You'll dwell in My presence there." Canaan is a type of heaven. Canaan is a shadow of the substance which is heaven and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob began to understand it because they never got the land as their possession. God didn't give them the land as their possession and so they wondered, "Hey, You said You were going to give us the land. Oh, this is a type." This is what he's saying in verse 10, "for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God." He was looking for the heavenly city.

Watch him explain this even more clearly in verses 13 through 16, "All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth." Do you see that? They realize that, "Hey, this isn't our home. This isn't the real Canaan. We're strangers and exiles here."

Read on, verse 14, "For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them." Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were saved by grace, through faith, looking ahead to Christ, but what they wanted was to dwell in God's land. Canaan was a type of God's land and God's presence. The author of Hebrews is making this emphatically clear.

The passage that Jess read earlier in the service does exactly the same thing. Turn back to chapter 3, verses 7 to 11, he quotes from the Psalmist who's talking about the Holy Spirit giving this word about what was happening at a point in time when after the exodus when the people of Israel left the land of Egypt, God delivered them through the great exodus, the great deliverance, the Passover lamb. They go out, they are delivered through the Red Sea, the Lord gives them water, he gives them bread, and he takes them to a place where they are ready to go into the land and he says, "Go on in and possess it." And remember how they sent the spies in, they send in 12 spies and 10 of the spies don't believe. They point out, they all agree the land is a good land, it's a wonderful land, it's a place that is flowing with milk and honey. They bring back grapes and the fruit of the land but 10 of them say, point out, and they all agree with this part that, "They have many walled cities. The walls reach up to the heavens," basically they would say. There was a little hyperbole going on. "And there are giants there. We cannot take the land." Ten of them said that. Two of them, Joshua and Caleb, said, "Yes, we can because the Lord is with us." What this passage is talking about is when they did not possess the land, they were not believing in God to get them into the land, they were rejecting him and he's using this as a type to say, "This is what happens to people who hear the Gospel but don't really believe it and press on into heaven"; that this whole idea of what was going on with Canaan was a type of heaven.

In fact, he goes on to say, "Take care, brethren," verse 12, "that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another." Basically, it's easy to be around the things of God and yet not truly love God and give yourself to him and press on into heaven. This is the warning and he uses the actual events of what God was doing with the people of Israel as a type and so this was typological, learn from it.

Now, I want to show you how this works out. This is really something to think about. So Canaan is a type of heaven and so the question remember is: how can sinners like you and me come to dwell in God's presence? How can sinners like you and me come to dwell in heaven? That's the question and it is pictured through: how can Israel, how can this people who were sinful, come to live and dwell in Canaan? That's the picture. The spiritual reality is how can sinners come to dwell in the presence of God and we're seeing it through the history of Israel.

Now, let me show you this. Jacob, remember he has to go down into Egypt and the deliverance that happens through Joseph and all of that, then they stay 400 years. Why is it that God allows them to become enslaved? We are not told they did anything wrong down there. Why does God allow them to be enslaved for 400 years? Because he's teaching us something about salvation. He's answering the question: how can you and I come to dwell in God's land, in Canaan, in heaven? And what he's teaching us is we must be delivered from slavery. He lets them become slaves so that he can accomplish a great deliverance so that it will be a type of the salvation that is going to come through the true Passover Lamb. This is why in 1 Corinthians 5:7, Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed. That whole thing was a picture. How can you and I come to dwell in God's presence? We have to be delivered from the domination of the kingdom of darkness. This

is what Jesus was saying essentially to the Jews in John 8 when he said, "You are of your father the devil. You are slaves but if you will look to the Son, if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." They say, "We've never been slaves." "You are slaves to sin. You need to be delivered." And Exodus was teaching that.

Leviticus, I just mentioned earlier about all the sacrifices. What is that saying? God brings his presence down in a manifest form of the cloud of glory by day, the pillar of fire by night on top of the tabernacle, remember? He's teaching how can you dwell in God's land around God's presence? How do you dwell close to the Lord? You'd better sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice. That's how. That's what Leviticus is teaching. Without the shedding of blood there is no hope. And all of this points toward Christ. This is why John the Baptist when he sees Jesus, what does he say? "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." You see, that is what the Old Testament was teaching us.

Numbers, I was just basically telling you about what Hebrews is talking about is what Numbers is trying to teach us. In Numbers is the story of when they come out of the land and they are about to go in and they send the spies out and then they reject God and don't go in. And what is Numbers teaching you? How do you lay hold of God's land, of God's country? By faith in the promise, not in your own resources. You see how he's adding, like that chalk drawing? There are things that are coming into sight, becoming clearer.

Deuteronomy, you need a prophet like Moses. Joshua, for you to dwell in God's land is going to require the exercise of God's wrath in a way that is revolting even. Judges, what's the message of Judges? Here they are in the land and what we watch as God's dealing with them and what is the message of Judges? The people because they have no king, they do what's right in their own eyes. To dwell in God's land in his presence, you need God's king. It's adding to the picture, the portrait. We need a king. 1 Samuel comes along and says we need a king not like Saul, we need a king like David. To dwell in God's land, we need a king, a king like David. 2 Samuel adds to that and says we need a king better than David. What happens in 2 Samuel? The sin of Bathsheba. The numbering of Israel. David is not the one. David is not the Messiah we're looking for. We are looking for one greater than David. Like David, greater than David, the son of David. You see, the portrait is filling in.

And this is what's happening with Ruth. We need a king. We need a priest like Aaron. There are so many different elements. We could spend all day talking about this. A prophet like Moses. A priest like Aaron, the high priest. A king like David. But what's happening here is the king and the priest and the prophet that is coming must be a near kinsman and he must come and pay the redemption price and lovingly take you for his own. That's what's going on. That's what makes sense of this. It is coloring in a beautiful part of that portrait of the coming Christ and that portrait just keeps getting more and more beautiful all through the Old Testament, all the way to Malachi, and that's why Jesus could say to the men on the road to Emmaus, "You foolish and slow of heart to believe all that was written by Moses and the prophets. Do you not see? I am the one who comes. I am the one that fits into that outline, that sketch." Jesus makes sense of it all. It all converges on him. In this wonderful story of a woman who really was in dire straits,

Naomi, along with another woman who was in dire straits, Ruth, who meet a wonderful man named Boaz, this story is a part of God's brushstrokes painting the picture of Jesus. How glorious a God we have that does things like this, that puts together a plan of salvation that is so wonderful. So that's the place of Ruth or the place of our kinsman redeemer in redemptive history, it's a part of that larger picture and it's showing us this aspect of our Savior.

Now, the greatness of our kinsman redeemer. Now we're going to look at what it's actually saying about him by looking at what it's saying about Boaz because Boaz is a type of Christ. A close relative. The close relative. I mentioned that 22 times the word is used in Ruth. Close relative. Close relative. Kinsman redeemer. Kinsman redeemer. Kinsman redeemer. I wish it was translated that way. Kinsman redeemer. Kinsman redeemer. Kinsman redeemer. Redeem. Redeem. Redeem. And what we are to identify with is the need of Naomi, she is empty. She needs to experience the blessing of redemption and at the end she does receive that through this wonderful act of this man Boaz. So we want to look at the greatness now of our Kinsman Redeemer and we're going to look at one point, one subpoint here and this is where we'll end today and we'll pick up where we left off, Lord willing, next week.

The greatness of our Kinsman Redeemer. What I'm going to do now is focus on Boaz and look at how the Scripture paints him and see from that this is picturing Jesus, okay? So we are first introduced to Boaz in chapter 2, verse 1, and we noted how it was interesting in the flow of the narrative way back when we were in chapter 2, that really chapter 2, verse 1 is like a big parenthesis because the narrative flows much better from the last verse of chapter 1 to chapter 2, verse 2, because at the end of chapter 1, verse 22, "they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest," chapter 2, verse 2, "And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, 'Please let me go to the field and glean among the ears,'" we've just been introduced to Naomi and Ruth.

That's what we're concerned about but he introduces, verse 1, "Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz." Now, the name is emphasized by it being the last word of the sentence and the way that even the buildup happens. He doesn't say, "Now there was a man named Boaz. He was a kinsman." It all the way builds up to the end. And the name Boaz we talked about a while back means, there is some lack of clarity about precisely what it means but most theologians tend to think it has something to do with strength and/or quickness, agility, speed, so that the name Boaz means like swift one, able one, mighty one, which is a great contrast to the names of the husbands that died, Mahlon and Chilion which both refer to weakness, impotence. And so this man, the kinsman redeemer, in the name itself pictures strength and then the next phrase, "a man of great wealth." So the greatness of our Redeemer is first of all seen in his ability. His ability to redeem.

This phrase, "a man of great wealth," a man of great wealth, it has this idea translated "wealth" has the idea of "capability; to be strong; to have resources and power." And it has the adjective before it, "great," so it really pictures, in fact, these words are often used together to speak of a war hero. Several times in Scripture it speaks of a war hero with

just these exact words. Now, Boaz, we don't have any indication he's a war hero but it's saying something like that. He's a man of power and a man of resources. He's a man of ability. So the author wants us to know right off the bat, we've been looking at Ruth and Naomi and how miserable their circumstances are, how hopeless they are in chapter 1. At the end of chapter 1, Naomi is saying, "Call me Marah. Call me Marah. My life is bitter. I'm hopeless." Enter Boaz, a man of great ability so that the reader automatically begins to think, "Here's someone who can address the problem." As bleak as the circumstances are, here is a man who is able to help if he's willing. His ability. He is able and that is a picture of the Kinsman Redeemer to come, the man Christ Jesus who was the man of preeminent ability. Think about the leper who came up to Jesus and said, "If You are willing, You can cleanse me." He had faith to understand, "You have the ability." Praise God he not only had the ability, he said, "I'm willing. Be cleansed."

But he has the ability. This is the message of the New Testament. The one has finally come who has the ability. Remember when he comes in and he's casting out demons everywhere, he's preaching the Gospel, he's casting out demons and they're marveling at his authority, his power. They had never heard someone speak like this man. Even his enemies. Remember when we were reading John, working through John a few years ago? Even his enemies said when they went to arrest him, they just got enamored with his teaching, went back to the Pharisees and the chief priest and the chief priest said, "Why haven't you arrested Him?" And they said, "Never did a man speak like this man speaks." There is something about this man, a man of incredible ability. In him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden, Paul tells us. In him God was pleased for the fullness of deity to dwell in bodily form.

The man, Christ Jesus, is able. He went around preaching and casting out demons and those who hated him could not deny his power but they questioned its source. They said, "Surely You cast out demons by the prince of demons." And Jesus said to them, "If a man is going to plunder someone's house, he must first bind the strongman and then he plunders his house." He's basically saying, "Look, I am plundering the strongman's house because I have bound the strongman." The strongman is Satan himself, had his house in order, all of his goods in well-keeping and Jesus has come on the scene, one greater than the strongman, "For greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world."

And this mighty man of God has come on the scene and he is taking charge. That is what we see in the New Testament, in the Gospels. Every disease that he encounters, he heals. Every need that he finds, he meets. The only requirement is that someone be willing and trust in him by faith because, remember, to enter into God's land, you must approach him with faith.

He is a great Savior. The "I Am" sayings that we worked through in the Gospel of John, think about what that's telling us about his ability. The very fact that he said, "I Am." Remember we saw that over 20 times Jesus uses the phrase translated into Greek, "Ego eimi." That's ego eimi in Greek. It means, "I Myself Am." It's an emphatic way of saying, "I Am," because eimi by itself says, "I Am." In Greek like many other languages, the pronoun is already present in the verb. In English you have to add it, don't you? But not

in Greek. It's already there. "I Am," and so ego in front of it, "I, I, Myself Am," what he's saying is he's claiming to be the great I Am. He's claiming to have all power and to be the independent, all-powerful God of the Old Testament, Yahweh himself. When he's walking on water and they say, they're frightened and he says, "Don't be afraid, ego eimi," translates it in the English, we have to say, "It is I," but he's basically saying, "Don't be afraid, I Am." He calms the seas and immediately they're where they were supposed to be. He rules over nature. That's right after he fed the 5,000 men, probably 20,000 people total, with five loaves and two fish. Later right before he heals a man born blind, he says, "I am the Light of the world." I forgot, right after he fed the 5,000, what did he say? "I am the bread of life." You see, what do you need? What does every person need? We need bread. We need physical sustenance to live. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. Not physical bread. I am the bread that will make you truly alive. You are hungry and I am what you need. I am what satisfies." He said, "You're in the dark. You're in the kingdom of darkness but I am the Light of the world," John 8:12. Then he proved it by healing a man born blind.

You can't find the way to God. He said, "I am the door." You don't know how to get there. He said, "I am the Good Shepherd. I guide you and I prove my love for you by giving my life for you. I lay down My life for you." You can't overcome death. You and I will die. There is nothing we can do to escape it unless Jesus comes back. But in the shadow of his dear friend Lazarus' tomb with his sister weeping, he said, "I am the resurrection and the life. I am the One that overcomes death." As he says in Revelation, "I am the One who was and is and is to come. I was alive and then I died and I'm alive forevermore." The man Christ Jesus. The man of ability.

Like Peter says in one of his sermons in Acts, "It was impossible for Him to be held in death's power." Death could not hold him because he had not sinned and so the mighty man of righteousness goes into death dying for our sins and the mighty man of righteousness, death tries to hold him and death cannot hold him because he has never sinned and we see that he's a great high priest, the author of Hebrews says, by the power of an indestructible life. The man of ability.

His last "I Am" saying in the Gospel with a predicate, "I am the true vine." First of all, "I am the way, the truth and the life." Then, "I am the true vine," John 15:5. "I am the true vine. He who abides in Me bears much fruit," but what? "Apart from Me you can do nothing. I am the man of ability," Jesus says. "I am what you need. I am everything that you need." The whole Old Testament was saying: one is coming who will be everything that you need. You need to hear from God. You need a prophet. One is coming who will be a greater prophet than Moses. That's what Deuteronomy 18 says. You need a priest. You need someone that can make an offering for your sins and bring you back to God.

You need someone greater than Aaron who offered the sacrifice on the day of redemption, the day of atonement. And Jesus is the one who went behind the veil to offer a sacrifice once for all of his blood and he says in Hebrews 8 and 9 that the temple system itself, all of the trappings of the temple, the offerings and the sacrifices, were just examples or types or shadows of the real reality in heaven. Jesus offers the true sacrifice.

He is everything that we need. He is our prophet, he is our priest, and he is our king. We need a king. Our great problem is our wayward hearts, we're just like the people of Judges in whom the days of Ruth and Naomi happened, in the period of the Judges. What was the period of the Judges like? Everyone did what was right in his own eyes because there was no, in those days there was no king, Judges 18:1, 19:1, 21:25. What do we need? We need a king. Our only hope to dwell in God's presence is a king, a king like David but better than David, and a king who is our near kinsman and who will offer the redemption price and take us who are as hopeless and helpless as a woman without a man in that day, we have no means, no help, and he comes and he purchases you and he brings you to himself and takes you as his own bride forever.

That's the way of salvation. The great man to come, the Kinsman Redeemer has come and the question is: have you yielded to him? Have you said yes to him? Are you trusting in him? Or are you trying to make it your own way, trusting in your own righteousness? Trying to be more religious? Are you casting all of your hope upon the finished work of the great man, Jesus Christ? He has done everything necessary by offering his blood as a sacrifice for the sins of everyone who would ever believe. He paid in full the redemption price and he is able to deliver you from sin and slavery. Let's run to him today.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, we thank you that you have revealed yourself in such wonderful and clear ways in the Scriptures. You have given such beautiful pictures of your heart and the way back to you. We pray for each person here today, that each one would deal directly with you in giving themselves again to you for those that already know you, and for those who don't, may today be the day they surrender to their Redeemer, to realize that his blood is able to pay the entire redemption price for all of our sins no matter how great, no matter how dark. He is able. Lord, be exalted in the hearts of people who know and love and treasure so great a Savior and we pray this in his name. Amen.