

Ruth 3 (Ephesians 1:3-14)

We left off with Ruth seeking fullness for Naomi and finding kindness in Boaz. This kindness from Boaz not only led to an abundance of grain to fill Naomi and Ruth to keep them from starving, it also opened the door to a new hope and an even greater fullness for Naomi. That Boaz was a close kinsman to Naomi reveals the possibility that Boaz, in his kindness (his loyal love), could redeem Naomi's property, deliver her and Ruth from poverty, and grant an heir to Naomi. This would be a greater familial fullness for Naomi. In light of this new hope of redemption through Boaz's kindness, Naomi now sees God's continual kindness toward her as well as toward her deceased husband and sons. Through Ruth's unappreciated kindness to Naomi, Naomi finally sees God's kindness, and she, subsequently, has hope in Boaz's kindness fulfilled through redemption. In this lies Naomi's greatest spiritual fullness, which also will fulfill God's plans of salvation through His promised King.

In Chapter 3, the Hope of Rest for Ruth and Fullness for Naomi are Sought through the Kind Redemption of Boaz. **“Rest and Fullness through Redemption”**

1. The Plan (Verses 1-6) **Rest (Security/Home)**

- a. “Home” = Rest, Security and Provision
- b. “Wash, Put on Perfume, and Dress in Nice Clothes” = If Ruth was wearing widow's garments, Naomi instructs her to remove them and mark the potential end of her widowhood.
 - i. If it seems as though Naomi is sending Ruth off to seduce Boaz, you probably understand this scene properly. That takes us into the next part of Naomi's plan that really provides a possible sexual subtext for the following encounter.
- c. “Then go and uncover his feet and lie down.” = This would probably be occurring after a harvest celebration at the threshing floor, a joyful occasion. What would you expect to happen? We are left with suspense.
- d. “He will tell you what to do.” = reveals Naomi's trust of Boaz to act with integrity toward Ruth in a very vulnerable situation.

- e. “I will do whatever you say.” = reveals Ruth’s unreserved trust of Naomi.
2. The Execution (Verses 7-15) **A Pledge**
- a. “Uncovering Feet” - Ruth
 - i. What precisely is happening here is somewhat ambiguous.
 - 1. “Feet” = Could be a euphemism for the pubic area, but it seems to communicate “the place of the feet” where Ruth was to lie down.
 - 2. “to Lie Down” = This phrase, which translates one Hebrew word and is often used as a euphemism for sex, occurs 8 times in verses 4-14.
 - 3. If uncovering Boaz’s feet was literal, this may have been to wake him up by making his feet cold. This literal act of uncovering his feet would also set the stage for Ruth’s request that Boaz “spread the corner of his garment over” her. While there is some sexual imagery and tension in this scene, we know that...
 - ii. ...Boaz is “a man of standing” (Ruth 2:1), and...
 - iii. ...Ruth is “a woman of noble character (verse 11)
 - 1. Regardless of what Naomi (or you) thought might happen between Ruth and Boaz in this encounter, sexual activity outside of marriage would be completely contrary to the character of these two.
 - 2. Nevertheless, it does not mean there was no attraction between them.
 - a. (Verse 10) Boaz considers this to be Ruth’s continuing “kindness” (loyal love) toward Naomi. In Ruth 2:11, Boaz was impressed with Ruth’s willingness to leave her homeland out of loyalty to Naomi. Here, Boaz acknowledges that, instead of pursuing marriage with other younger men, Ruth seeks a marriage that would benefit Naomi through a kinsman redeemer. How many marry today, if they even marry, in order to benefit their family? This is further evidence of Ruth’s “noble character”; something Boaz must have found attractive in this loyal Moabite widow.

- b. “Spreading Wing” – Boaz
 - i. (Verse 9) The Hebrew word translated here as “corner of a garment” also literally means “wing.” This is an insightful play on words since it was Boaz who previously prayed for Yahweh to bless Ruth; because, she had taken refuge under God’s wings (Ruth 2:12). Under God’s providence, Boaz, himself, will be able to fulfill his own appeal to the Lord on behalf of Ruth who is now seeking shelter under his wings. Additionally, placing the corner of a garment over a woman symbolized taking her in marriage.
 - 1. Naomi’s hunches about Boaz and his integrity prove to be accurate. Even now, Boaz takes measures to assure the protection of Ruth’s integrity (Verse 14).
 - ii. Now we come to the Critical Component in the Execution of Naomi’s plan. This is the goal. This is the desired outcome. This is how Boaz will be able to “spread the corner of his garment over Ruth”; through Redemption (Verse 13) but there’s a catch! (Verses 12-13)
 - 1. “As surely as the Lord lives, I will do it.” = “The Pledge”
 - c. “Measuring Barley” – Naomi’s ‘down payment’ toward fulfillment.
 - i. This is an expression of Boaz’s loyal love toward Naomi through Ruth and an expression of the earnestness of his pledge.
 - ii. Rest comes with Fullness, but there is no Rest without Redemption.
3. The Report (Verses 16-18) **No Rest (Wait/Settle)**
- a. The seriousness Boaz takes his pledge in the Name of the Lord is what will drive him to fulfill his vow.
 - i. The Lord has been on Boaz’s lips since we first met him in Ruth 2:4.
 - ii. Once again, Naomi trusts that Boaz will act quickly to fulfill his oath; because, he is “a man of standing.” This far, Naomi’s presumption has served Ruth well. Not only that, but it is almost as though Boaz heard Naomi’s “Critical Assessment” of her condition back in Ruth 1:21 that the Lord

had brought her back empty. Here Boaz shows his loyal love toward Naomi by filling her physically with barely as an earnest down payment on his pledge to fill her with familial and spiritual blessings.

Here is the Gospel, the Good News, of “Redemption” by Boaz who is a type, or foreshadow, of Christ in Whom we have rest and fullness. Boaz is like Jesus in his role as a Redeemer and a Bridegroom. Boaz, as “a man of standing”, does for a foreigner and widow what she is unable to do for herself. Boaz enables Naomi to receive an inheritance through Ruth in their covenantal union with one another. In this, Boaz shows his loyal love, his kindness, to both Ruth and Naomi. His kindness is none other than a reflection of God’s kindness toward us through His Son Jesus Who did for us what we, in our spiritual deadness, cannot do for ourselves. Boaz, like Jesus, is both a law-keeper and a willing redeemer who fulfills both the spirit and the letter of the law; beautifully displayed in his loyal love toward a Moabite foreigner, and this loyal love will redeem Naomi’s property and preserve Elimelek’s family line. Boaz’s kind redemption of Naomi through Ruth is not only intertwined with God’s plan of salvation through His promised King, it is the human means by which God brings forth His Saving King. What an amazing revelation of God’s sovereignty kindly displayed through human activity!

Naomi, after seeing the Lord’s kindness (His “loyal love”) at work that brought Ruth to Boaz’s barely field, now takes the initiative to find rest for Ruth. So, Naomi devises “The Plan” that Ruth faithfully “Executes” and “Reports” back to Naomi. Naomi’s familial fullness has an intimate connection to Ruth’s rest, and this can only come about through Boaz’s role as redeemer. Naomi trusts that Boaz will not rest himself until he obtains rest for Ruth. The potential that the threshing floor has for a harvest of grain also serves as the foundation of potential fullness for Naomi and rest for Ruth.

As Christians, Redeemed by our Bridegroom Jesus, we enjoy the firstfruits of our redemption and freedom because of the down payment, the guarantee of the Holy Spirit. As Ephesians 1:14 states, the Holy Spirit is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance that, one day, God will fully complete His redemption when His Son Jesus Returns; because, we are God’s holy possession bought by the Blood of Jesus, our Redeemer. The gift of the Holy Spirit, Who is Jesus’ pledge to us, is our engagement ring Who empowers us to live holy lives that reflect the loyal love of Jesus toward God and others. The Holy Spirit prepares us for our inheritance, Rest and Fullness through Redemption in Christ Jesus our Lord. AMEN.