

"Rest for Ruth"

Ruth 3

Part 1

Introduction: Today we return again to our study of the book of Ruth and as we do we have come today to Ruth 3. As we have been working our way through this book we have been looking at practical lessons from the events which are recorded here. This morning we are going to continue along the same lines as we step into chapter 3.

Background:

In Ruth 2 we followed along as God directed the steps of Ruth into the field of Boaz. Ruth and Naomi had traveled from the land of Moab and were in need of provisions. God had established a welfare program in Israel and in that He had commanded that when the fields were harvested they were to let the corners stand and what was in the corners was for the poor, widows, fatherless and the strangers. It would not be handed to them however for they would need to go into the field and harvest what had been left for them.

When Ruth went out to the fields God directed her into the fields of Boaz. Now Boaz was a relative of Elimelech and this was very important. Boaz was a kinsman redeemer. Let me explain who kinsman redeemer was and his importance.

Elimelech had owned property in Bethlehem but had lost it somewhere along the line due to debt. He had taken his family and they went to Moab and while they were there Elimelech and both of his sons had died. When Naomi returned back to Bethlehem with Ruth they had nothing. They were bankrupt. This is where the kinsman redeemer comes in. He had to be a relative of Elimelech and if he was then he could perform the duties of the kinsman redeemer. He also had to be unmarried. It would be the kinsman's responsibility to buy back the land of Elimelech and then it would be his responsibility to marry the widow of Elimelech, father children, and establish the name of the deceased in Israel.

Some of this is spelled out in Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 25:5-10

⁵ If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her.

⁶ *And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.*

⁷ *And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.*

⁸ *Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her;*

⁹ *Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house.*

¹⁰ *And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.*

Back to Ruth: Boaz was the kinsman redeemer for he was a relative of Elimelech.

Now before we go any further let me also explain that Boaz is a picture of Jesus Christ for Jesus is our Kinsman Redeemer. This we shall see as we move deeper into the letter at another time.

I. Rest for Ruth

Notice Ruth 3:1

The harvest is over and it is at this time that Naomi desires to seek out rest for Ruth. Now this makes me ask a question, "What is the rest Naomi desires for Ruth?"

It would be a life of peace and security. Let us remember that the events which are unfolding here are taking place in the days when the Judges ruled.

Judges 21:25

²⁵ *In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*

These were days of lawlessness in the Nation of Israel. Ruth was a young widow and for a young widow or any single lady in those days life would have been difficult and dangerous. She needed safety and security. But the question is, "Where could it be found?"

This rest which Naomi desired for Ruth would be found in a marriage. Boaz qualified to be the kinsman-redeemer for Elimelech's family. If he was willing he could marry Ruth and provide the rest which Ruth sought for her life.

Notice Ruth 3:2

The harvest was over and the barley would be taken to the threshing floor to separate the chaff.

Now the threshing floor was outside in the fields. There would be a large circle made from stones and the barley would be placed within the circle. It was then tramped to break the husks and then it would be tossed in the air a shovel full at a time. The wind would carry away the chaff. When the barley was finished the owner would spend the night with the barley until the next day when it would be packaged up. The winnowing would be done in the evening because of the movement of the wind.

These threshing floors would be large enough for an entire village to gather and use. This would provide protection for any thieves who desired to steal the barley or wheat.

Notice Ruth 3:3-5

Naomi instructed Ruth to put on her best and to anoint herself with the best oil and go down to the threshing floor. She was to watch the process from a distance. When Boaz laid down to sleep by the barley Ruth was to slip under his outer cover down at his feet and he would know this was an open invitation to perform the part of the kinsman-redeemer.

Ruth agreed to do everything which she was instructed to do.

Let me just say that in Ruth here we see one of the steps to "rest" and that is obedience to the Word of God.

James 1:19a

¹⁹ *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak...*

But there is more and we shall see this shortly.

Notice Ruth 3:6-7

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Ruth follows through with the instructions of Naomi and she slips in and lies at the feet of Boaz. This position at his feet shows her willingness to submit to him as her husband. This was her proposal to Boaz.

Some believe this had to be initiated by Ruth because she was younger than Boaz. There was nothing immoral which took place here as often set forth by Bible teachers.

Notice Ruth 3:8-9

The request to spread the skirt over her was a request to marry her.

Ezekiel 16:8

⁸ Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.

Notice Ruth 3:10-12

Boaz was willing to perform the duty of the kinsman-redeemer but there was a kinsman nearer than he was.

We will pursue this further next week. Right now there is an application in all of this that I want you to see.

II. The "Rest" that is Desired.

Ruth lived in a very difficult time and she needed rest, security and peace. The rest which Naomi desired for Ruth was found in a man whose name was Boaz.

Application:

We too live in a day of trouble and turmoil. There are many people who have no security or peace within their lives. They search in many different places but if the truth be told they still live in fear.

The rest which people are searching for today is found not in STUFF nor is it found in anything this world has to offer. The rest which is longed for by so many is found in a Man and His name is Jesus Christ. When you come to Jesus Christ and you accept Him as your Savior He offers to you rest and peace.

Matthew 11:28-29

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²⁸ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

I want to share with you how we can have this rest which Jesus speaks of in our lives at all times. There are many people who know Jesus Christ as their Savior but they do not experience much of the rest which Jesus offers to them. This "rest" comes by walking in faith.

It is possible in the midst of the darkness of our world to live in the "rest" which Jesus speaks of and have that deep inward peace.

Let me explain:

1. The faith

When we come to Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin we are admitting we cannot save ourselves and therefore we fully trust Him to save us from the penalty of sin. We come to the place where we completely trust Jesus with the salvation of our soul.

To enter into the "rest" which Jesus has for us takes the very same faith focused in a different direction.

✓ **It is trusting Jesus for the everyday needs.**

Matthew 6:28-33

²⁸ And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

²⁹ And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

³⁰ Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

³¹ Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

³² (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

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³³ *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

✓ **It is trusting Him for strength and grace for the trials.**

Deuteronomy 33:25-26

²⁵ *Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.*

²⁶ *There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun/Israel, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.*

2 Corinthians 12:7-9

⁷ *And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

⁸ *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*

⁹ *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

✓ **It is trusting Him for the power to resist temptation.**

2 Peter 1:3-4

³ *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*

⁴ *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

This FAITH in God will bring you into the REST which God has all His children.

Let me give you a Biblical picture of this rest. When God brought Israel out of Egypt He had promised them the land of Canaan. When they arrived at the land Moses sent out 12 spies and they returned 40 days later with a report of the land. Ten had a negative report and 2 had a positive report. Now God had promised to Israel the victories in the land. But the ten spies with the negative report were afraid when they saw the people in the land.

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Joshua and Caleb however believed God and encouraged the people to follow God into the land. The people chose to believe the report of the ten spies who were afraid and so they did not enter the land. The entire Nation of Israel then wandered in the wilderness for the next 38 years. That generation never entered into Canaan which was a picture of the rest which God had for them.

Hebrews 3:17-19

¹⁷ But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

¹⁸ And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Conclusion;

Hebrews 4:9-11

⁹ There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

¹⁰ For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

¹¹ Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

There is a rest for us but it is not in a place but it is in a Person, Jesus Christ. It is only available when we walk by faith.