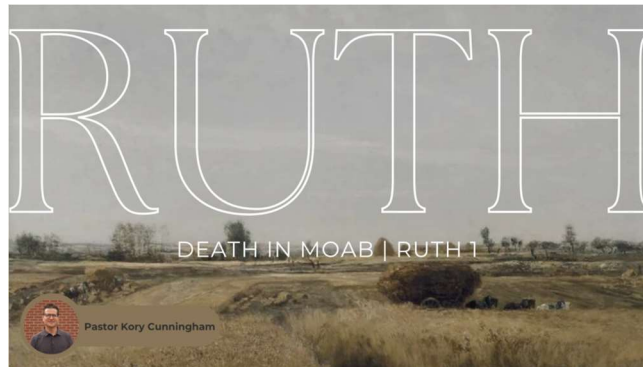


A Needy Girl Meets a Worthy Man

Death in Moab



Bro. Kory Cunningham
Ruth 2:1-23

We got to do "Helping His Kids" yesterday and it was fantastic! To those of you who came, volunteered, and helped, thank you so much for helping put that on. We had over 500 families that came through. There will be 1,000+ kids that will have presents Christmas morning, which is such an amazing thing so thank you for helping with that. Christmas is just an awesome season! On Friday, Garnett and I are going to fly to Arizona to do "Christmas in the Village" and you guys have basically paid for and bought 700 to 800 toys for us to host a block party in a village. People are going to come there who might not be able to get present on their own. They will get to come there and shop for their kids so they can have Christmas and we will get to tell them the gospel, too. It's just an amazing thing! When you help with something like "Helping His Kids" or "Christmas in the Village" you are always blessed by it. If you came and helped you were definitely blessed, but for me I'm always blessed but I'm also broken because you hear story after story. I talked to one couple who walked through and shared that they were homeless. A tornado took out their home, they're living in a hotel, and their car broke down and they can't get

to work so they're unemployed and don't have money. They were literally destitute and had nowhere to go. They were very grateful and thankful that they were able to come here and at least have Christmas presents for their kids, but honestly, their need is much deeper than that.

There are some heavy stories out there, and some of you might be a part of some of those heavy stories. What is significant is that I went home and went to bed thinking about that couple and some of the other people that came through who were going through some real hardships. I began to think about how that was Ruth. Ruth would have been one who would have probably come yesterday and stood in line early in the morning because she wouldn't have had a way to get Christmas presents any other way. She was destitute. She was needy. She was unable to probably even get basic provisions. She would have probably been in the same place. So what I realized last night was that if you're the one in the soup kitchen who is serving the soup and never the person who holds the bowl and gets soup, then it might be hard to understand that we are spiritually just like Ruth in this scenario. Spiritually, we come to Jesus not as those who have it together, but we come to Jesus as those who are needy and broken. We come to Jesus on the other end of the soup line as those who have nothing. All we bring to Him is our sin, but we need a redeemer. What we find is that the story of Ruth is about a woman who is destitute and needy and finds provision in a man named Boaz. This morning, we will see who connects us to the gospel story, which is what Christmas is all about. You and I have a desperate need. We are sinners in need of a savior. So, I hope you see yourself as Ruth in chapter 2. I hope you see that you are needy, broken, and hopeless and you're casting yourself on the mercy of another. I hope that you would also see Boaz as a type of Christ, one who is a worthy man who has the provision, protection, and ability to meet your need with his provision. I hope you see Boaz as a type of Jesus and yourself as a type of Ruth.

Scripture

"Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz."

If you haven't been with us, let's recap just a little bit. In chapter 1, there is a famine in Bethlehem and it pushes a family out. Naomi, her husband, and her two sons go to seek bread in the land of Moab. The two sons marry two Moabite girls. The father dies and then the two sons die. Now Naomi is a widow and Ruth (one of the sons' wives) is a widow, and they really don't know what to do so they decide to go back to Bethlehem because they hear there is bread in Bethlehem. That is chapter 1. Now we have Ruth, a Moabite, who is a widow and who is in dire need. She can't provide for herself. She has to go find provisions so they make their way back to Bethlehem. Then we pick up with our reading in chapter 2, verse 1, "Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's..." When we watch a commercial for The Bachelor, we know what's happening—somebody is trying to find love and marriage. Well, the reader just heard that there is a woman who is a widow and there is a man who is a relative, who is a kinsman redeemer (as we are going to see throughout this story). There was someone from their clan, the clan of Elimelech, and he is a worthy man. So just as we know what's happening when we see a commercial for The Bachelor, they just heard there is a woman who needs a man. There is a bachelor! The story is getting good and it's only chapter 2! So, we are going to see this story play out and I want us to notice that throughout the story of Ruth, Boaz in this story is a type of Christ. In fact, Mitchell Chase says there are actually seven ways that Boaz is a type of Christ. He wrote an article on Southern Baptist Seminary's website and I found it really helpful. He connects seven different ways where Boaz is like Jesus.

1. Boaz is from the tribe of Judah

First, he is from the tribe of Judah. We see in this text that this man, Boaz, is from the clan of Elimelech. We were told in chapter 1 that Elimelech is from the clan of Judah.

2. Boaz is from Bethlehem

Then Micah 5:2 tells us this, "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days." That is one of our key Christmas texts and it's all about one

coming from Bethlehem who is of the tribe of Judah, that's Jesus. Secondly, we see in our text this morning we have a man who is from Bethlehem and he is also in the tribe of Judah.

3. Boaz plays the role of a redeemer

Third, he plays the role of a redeemer. We are going to see that especially in chapters 3 and 4. He's going to play this role of a redeemer, which is what Jesus does for us.

4. Boaz takes a bride from the nations

He's going to take a bride from the nations. Think about Jesus. What does He do? He takes a bride from not just Israel, but of all nations. That's you and me, the Gentiles. That is who Ruth is, a Gentile, an outsider, but Boaz takes a bride from the nations just as Jesus does with us.

5. Boaz shows constant acts of kindness

Next, he shows constant acts of kindness. We are going to see Boaz show constant acts of kindness, which is what Jesus does with us.

6. Boaz is a keeper of the law and then some

We are going to see all throughout this text how Boaz keeps the law, but he goes above and beyond the law, which is what Jesus does for us. Jesus doesn't just give us the law. He goes above and beyond through grace.

7. Boaz is an abundant provider

Lastly, he is an abundant provider. That is who Boaz is, which clearly is who Jesus is.

So, we're going to see that Boaz throughout this entire story is really a type of Jesus. He is a worthy man from Judah, from Bethlehem. He is providing, he is a redeemer, and he has all these qualities that link him to Jesus. But if you're going to get Jesus, then you have to see yourself as Ruth. So notice, as we see in this text, that we meet Boaz and he is a worthy man. Now, this could mean that he's rich and has a lot of means, and it does mean that, but it also means he's a man of good character. We

see that he is a man of character all throughout the story. So he is able to provide, but he's also the kind of man that you want to end up with and we find Jesus in the same way. He's not only able to provide, but he is a worthy man who perfectly meets the law and exceeds the law for us.

We see next starting in verse 2, "And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, 'Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor.'" So, again, Ruth is a widow. She's alone. Naomi is a widow. She is alone. They don't have any income. They don't have a job. They don't have any means. So Ruth says to Naomi, let me go and glean among the fields. The reason she's appealing to this is because Naomi has probably told her about the laws of God and one of the laws of God allowed for the poor or the sojourner to get the leftovers of harvest. It says in Deuteronomy 24 verse 19, "When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands." God has made a provision that says when you're harvesting your field and there are leftovers or things fall to the ground, don't pick it up. Leave it because there are poor among you who don't have fields, there are the poor among you who don't have a way to get income. So God in His generosity, in His provision, has made a way for the poor to walk behind and get the leftovers. This would be our modern day clothing closet, soup kitchen, or food bank. There is provision for those who are poor, needy, and need a handout. This is the same in Israel. So for the sojourner and for the poor, by the way, Ruth is both of those, she is poor and she is a sojourner so she says let me fulfill the law. Let me go and see *if I can find favor in somebody's eyes*. In other words, let me go and see if somebody will take pity on me. Let me see if somebody will show mercy on me and let me walk behind the field and get the leftovers. That is her expectation that maybe she can get enough leftovers to feed herself and her mother-in-law.

Picking back up in verse 2, "...and she said to her, "Go, my daughter." 3 So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of

the clan of Elimelech." I love the way it says that! Here's Ruth. She says...*Naomi, I'm going to go and try to just get the leftovers. I'm going to try to glean behind the workers.* So there would have probably been one large field that a lot of people owned different parts of. So you'd go to the part that you owned and reaped what you owned and you'd be getting bread and provisions for your family and for your workers.

Now, the Bible says Ruth set out and it just so happens that she went to the part of the field that belonged to a guy named Boaz, who we've just been introduced to as the bachelor, as a possible kinsman redeemer, as a relative, and it just so happens that Ruth landed in the right place at the right time. I think the Bible is being sarcastic here. It's being ironic here. The narrator wants us to say...*umm, that doesn't look like it just happened. That doesn't look like Ruth just happened to go to the right field. That feels a lot like providence.* That feels like a lot like God just did this and that is supposed to be our response. It wasn't that it just so happened. This is the sovereign hand of God putting Ruth in the exact place that she needs to be to meet her redeemer. So we see in this story, and it's going to lead all the way through Ruth, this ordinary story of Ruth and Boaz but the extraordinary story of God, that God is in the background the whole time. God's sovereignty is playing out in every step that they take though they don't know it. Ruth doesn't say she's going to go to Boaz's field and try to seek him out. She just says she's going to try to go somewhere to try and get some food, but it just so happened that she's exactly where God wants her to be. And I just want to remind you that you as a believer, you live your life under the sovereign hand of God and the steps you take are not just coincidence, but they are providence. That is what is happening in her life. This isn't just coincidence; this is providence. She is in the right place. She is exactly where she needs to be. See, what we forget a lot of times is that in our story God is always in the background. God is always moving and doing for our good and His glory. See, Ruth is clueless to that! We as the readers and hearers know that. We see it, but she doesn't know it. She's just trying to make ends meet, but God is richly providing for her as we're going to soon find.

So, I just want to remind us that we live our lives not by coincidence, but by providence. God is working in the background of YOUR life and YOUR story. Things are happening around you that you might not even be aware of and I want to give you just a really simple example that happened just this week. Tuesday night Shelley texted me and said, "Hey, can you do a 15 minute devo for the 5th graders about advent reading?" I didn't even answer her. I was doing some things and I forgot to answer her back so Wednesday morning at about 10:00 or 11:00 she texted me again and said, "Hey, did you get my text? I really need you to teach Wednesday!" I was like, "Ok, sure. I can do that!" But, I wasn't really thinking about my Wednesday because I had already committed with a group of Hardin guys that were going to move all of the tables from the pavilion to the sanctuary for "Helping His Kids," and I had a meeting with a guy that was supposed to be in between that, so I had just overbooked but told myself I'd just make it work. So needless to say, I didn't have a lot of time to put into a 15 minute devotional for 5th graders, but I thought I could wing it because it's about reading their Bibles and it would be fine. I was down at the pavilion putting up tables, I was looking at my watch, and I had to be there at 6:45. At 6:40 I left the pavilion, rolled in on two tires, jumped out, and was out of breathe. I walk into this classroom and I really had no idea what I was going to say to those kids. I started with something like, "Hey, a lot of you don't put Jesus first through Christmas just like a lot of adults and we get Christmas backwards. It's about toys, it's about this, it's about that, and what we need to do is put Jesus first in our lives and especially during Christmas." Then I began to teach them how to study the Bible, how to do their advent, and not thinking a thing about it. So I do that in 15 minutes and go home. On Friday, I get here early for "Helping His Kids," set up, and I was putting up a little camera to do the time lapse videos and this was about 7:00 am. Christina Clark comes in and says, "Did you not get my email Wednesday night?" I said, "No, I didn't." She said, "Well, that makes sense because I was wondering why you ghosted us. Zorabelle got saved last night after your talk." Honestly when she said that, I was like... *What talk?! I don't even remember what you're talking about!* Because in my head, there was no gospel talk with a response to come to Jesus. There was nothing like that! It was just, put Jesus first. Well, what I

didn't know was that Zorabelle went home and lost sleep because Jesus wasn't first in her life and it broke her. It was just that little line thrown out, but I didn't realize God was in the background that whole time. God had a plan for that exact moment and I was just one person who was used in the sovereign plan of God to bring life to a little girl. And, do you know what? That's true for all of us. For every one of you, you're taking steps, doing things, and walking and through being faithful and obedient to the Lord. He's using you to execute His sovereign plan for the universe. He's working in the background. Don't forget this! Ruth didn't just happen to be in a field. God put her there. You don't just happen to be at work. You don't just happen to be in your family. You don't just happen to be at that place. God might have a reason for you there so be open to all that He's doing around you.

Here we see Ruth in the exact place that she's needs to be. Then we're going to find that Boaz meets Ruth. So look with me in verse 4, "And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem..." I don't know how much more redundant the story could be. There is so much about Judah, Bethlehem, and David is born at the end. I think Ruth is all about Christmas. So here you have a worthy man coming from Bethlehem and then notice this, "...And he said to the reapers, "The Lord be with you!" And they answered, "The Lord bless you." First, we see that Boaz is a worthy man. He is a worthy employer. He is speaking good to his employees, to his workers, to the people laboring in his fields. He is speaking blessings and he wants them to have the favor of the Lord. So he's a guy that when hardly anyone is following the Lord, he is. Remember, this is the time of the judges. Everyone is doing what's right in their own eyes, but not Boaz. He is following the Lord and he's ensuring that other people follow the Lord. He is a worthy man.

Then it says this, "Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?" Here Boaz notices Ruth. This is that moment in the movie where it all of a sudden slows down, the music amps up, and you have a girl who looks up, her hair flies back in the wind, and the lighting hits her just right. It's like there is nobody else around and

here is Boaz just like... *WHO IS THIS?* It's that moment in the story! Boaz is noticing her and no one else. It is her and her only and his question is... *Umm, she's not one of my laborers. I didn't hire her. Who's is she?* Because she's working in the field, there have been other people, and he's asking who is this girl. So, Boaz notices Ruth and then verse 6 says this, "And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, "She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. 7 She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.' So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest." Boaz is noticing her. He is saying who is this girl? Who is this Ruth? She had been working. He can tell she is a hard worker. She had been laboring and had only rested for just a little bit. She's getting after it and she's putting herself in a place where she can hopefully meet her own needs, but she is having to rely on the mercy of another. She has to be allowed to do this so we see the servant of Boaz has allowed her to do this, but notice twice it says that she is a Moabite. She's from Moab so she's not one of the people from Israel. She is an outsider. She's not a part of the family. We're going to see all throughout this text that she is an outsider and that she a gentile. She's not a part of God's people and that's going to be important because Ruth is going to be shocked when she's brought into the family.

So we see Boaz now is going to pursue Ruth. Verse 8 says this, "Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women." Now, the words "keep close" can also be translated as "cling" and I think that would be better because in chapter 1 Ruth clings to Naomi and Naomi is God. Now she is told to cling to Boaz's servant and to stay with his young women, to not go to another field, but to stay in his field, to stay under his provision and protection. Notice what we see in verse 9, "Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you?" Now, you might wonder why is he having to tell guys to do that? Remember, everyone is doing what is right in their own eyes. It is a wicked time in Israel. So if you have a woman who is a widow, who is poor and needy, and comes into a field needing provisions,

that would have made it really easy for a guy to take advantage of Ruth, but here you have Boaz protecting Ruth. He tells his guys not to mess with Ruth so he's putting his protection over this very vulnerable person.

Then, it says this, "And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn." So not only has Boaz told his guys that they are to protect her, but now Boaz tells Ruth when she's thirsty to go to their water coolers. She is to drink from their springs. This would have been something that the law didn't require. The law required to leave your leftovers in your field so the poor and sojourner could pick them up. The law never said you had to allow the poor or the sojourner to come into your camp and drink your water. That was not a provision that you had to provide, but we're going to see over and over that Boaz goes way above the law. He goes abundantly above the law. He shows her grace, not just what she deserves, but what she doesn't deserve. He tells her to come and drink with us, drink the water with us, but notice her response in verse 10. Verse 10 says this, "Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?" Here we see that Ruth knows her place. She knows she doesn't belong to the clan of Elimelech. She knows she doesn't belong to the people of God. She is a sojourner and the only thing that she's really required to get is the leftovers so that she can live, but Boaz is giving her way more than she could ever deserve. He is showing her extravagant grace, generosity, mercy, and love. And her response is... *Why are you showing me favor? I don't deserve this. I am not your people. I shouldn't be getting what I'm getting.* Her posture towards him is humble gratefulness and I think in this we see a little picture of what we experience in the gospel because what we experience in the gospel is that we don't get what we deserve. What we deserve is hell forever because of our sins. We get what we don't deserve. In the gospel, we are actually treated unfairly.

See, to be treated fair is to be given what you deserve. If God treated you fairly then you would get death. God treats you unfairly. He treats you with grace. He gives you way more than you deserve so your posture towards

God and the gospel should be... *Why are you doing this, God? I don't deserve this! I don't deserve your favor. I don't deserve your mercy. I don't deserve your grace.* See, that posture means you actually get the gospel. If in your mind you think... *Well, of course God did that for me. Of course he sent Jesus to the cross. Of course he died and rose again because I'm awesome, I'm great and God is really happy to have me because I'm amazing.* Then you believe you're entitled to His salvation. Ruth was not entitled. Ruth was grateful. When it comes to salvation, we need to remember that we're not entitled to salvation. God is not owed to give us life, but instead we get grace. Therefore, we shouldn't be entitled, but we should be grateful. We should have this response... *Who am? Why did you take notice of me? Why did you show favor to me?* The answer is because God loved you. The answer is because Boaz loves her. It's not because she's this or because she's that. It's because he loves her so she is blown away that he would show her favor.

Now we're going to see that Boaz is going to bless Ruth. Notice what it says in verse 11, "But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. 12 The Lord repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!" 13 Then she said, "I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants." So, one of the things that draws Boaz to Ruth is her character. It's not where she's from, but it's her character. It's what she's done because in a real way she's exemplified faith. She has linked herself to Naomi and Naomi is God, the God of Israel. She has taken refuge under God's wings as Boaz says and that is really what salvation is. Salvation is that you realize that you have no refuge outside of God. You can't pull it together, you can't fix your own problems, you're in big trouble, and what you need is to come under the wings of God and that is what Ruth did. She came under the wings of God. Boaz says he knows that she cared for Naomi and that she decided to leave her people, her mother, her place, and really her whole

life to come after a people and a God, the God of Israel. She completely turned, completely embraced, and put herself under the wings of God; therefore, He blesses her and prays that the Lord would reward her for what she had done. That's really a little picture of what our salvation looks like. We, just like Ruth, leave a place to come under the wings of God. We leave who we were, our sin, and our beginnings...we leave those things and we come and cling to God. We come under His wings and under His blessings. We say the only refuge we have is God. We can't fix ourselves; we can't help ourselves, and we can't make it except for putting ourselves under the very wings of God.

Again, Ruth's response was I can't believe you found favor in me because I'm an outsider. Again, that language hits us because most of us aren't the people of Israel. Most of us are Gentiles. Most of us are outsiders. America would be like Moab. We're not with God. We're not in God's place. We are Gentiles, but what we find is that Jesus takes a bride from the nations. Jesus came and even though we weren't a people, He makes us His people. We see the grace of God—what we don't deserve we ultimately get.

Then, I love this next scene. Ruth shares a meal with the redeemer. So, who is Boaz? He's a potential kinsman redeemer. He's a potential person who is related and who can redeem her. Now, if you're a little fuzzy about what "kinsman redeemer" means and what that implies, then come next week because that is what chapter 3 is about, and I don't want to spoil it, but just know that there is a redeemer. Boaz is a redeemer but the question is will he redeem Ruth. We're not sure, but now Ruth is going to share a meal with a redeemer. Notice what it says in verse 14, "And at mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine." Now, this could be just a random...*Hey, we just worked. Let's have a meal together.* But I think when you look at the narrative, how it's going down, how there is a potential redeemer, and how she is a needy person who has nothing and has cast herself on the protection of what this person can offer her, and now there is this meal, he sets down with her as a potential redeemer and they break bread and drink wine together, does that not sound like an echo of what is to come? Does

that not sound like something that happens in the gospels when our Lord Jesus sits down with His disciples and they have a meal with THE redeemer? He takes the bread, He takes the cup, and that is what we get to do tonight. We get to come back at 5:00 o'clock and we get to have a meal with a redeemer, not just A redeemer, but THE redeemer, the one who has redeemed us from our sins. So I think this is a little picture of what THE redeemer is going to do in the future when he has a meal with us and shows us our redemption is through his body and blood, the true redemption of the world.

Not only do they share a meal, but notice what it said about this meal, "So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over." Now, in this meal, she is satisfied and there are leftovers, which I don't know about you, but takes me to John's gospel where at another meal, our true redeemer does what? He has a miracle, changes a couple of loaves of fish and bread, into a meal for 5,000. Then what happened? It says all of them went home satisfied and there were leftovers. So I think this meal is pointing to the meals that we're going to have with Jesus. Through His body and through His blood we eat, we are satisfied, and there is more than enough left over.

So we see a meal with a redeemer, but notice even in this meal Boaz is going above and beyond what the law requires. Here is what it says in verse 15, "When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. 16 And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her." So the law says to let the sojourner and the poor walk behind you and pick up the leftovers. Boaz says... *Umm Ruth, you come up here. You come with the workers. You take part in what we're doing. You're now IN the family, not outside of the family. Come into what we're doing.* Also, he tells his men when they're cutting the sheaves just give some to her. This is way above and beyond what the law required. He is not treating her fairly; he is treating her extravagantly. He's not giving her what she deserves; he's giving her what she does NOT deserve.

He's treating her like I treat Evie Kate in my house—not like those boys. Those boys get food, a bed, and basic provisions. Evie gets whatever she wants, right? It's above and beyond, she's clearly the favorite, and clearly, she has Dad's heart. Whatever she wants, she gets above and beyond and this is how Boaz is treating Ruth. It's above and beyond. It's extras lavished on her and what we see is the little picture of what Jesus does with us. Jesus doesn't give us what the law requires. Do you know what would happen if He did? That would be giving us death. Jesus gives us above and beyond what the law requires. He gives us what we don't deserve. He gives us His abundant grace. He gives us MORE. He gives us abundantly. He blesses us. He spoils us as His children. We get His life, we get His righteousness, we get the new kingdom to come, and we get so much more than what we deserve which is what Ruth is experiencing. Ruth is a needy outsider who comes in and gets way more than she could ever expect which is the story of the gospel.

Then, notice what we see. We see God's kindness unfolding. Verse 17 says this, "So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. 18 And she took it up and went into the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied. 19 And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz." 20 And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed by the Lord..." Notice, Naomi, the bitter woman is now blessing Boaz. Notice how the Lord's kindness is changing her heart. A woman who comes in bitter is now a woman who is blessing Boaz. She's speaking blessing on him and then she says, "...whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!"

Now, it's a little hard to know who the 'whose' are there. If you read it, it says "may he be blessed by the Lord" and that he is Boaz, but then it says, "whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!" So, who is the 'whose?' Is the who Boaz or is the who God? Is it God's kindness that has

not forsaken the living or the dead or is it Boaz's kindness that has not forsaken the living or the dead? The answer is we don't know. It's ambiguous. We're not sure and I think that's the point. The point is this is God's kindness through Boaz. See, we often forget the sovereignty of God works through the faithfulness of his people. It's Boaz being kind. It's Boaz doing what the law requires and then some. It's Boaz being a worthy man and we see the sovereignty of God. He is showing the kindness that he has towards Naomi and Ruth through the kindness of Boaz. Remember, God's sovereignty doesn't work against your faithfulness. Your faithfulness works in harmony with God's sovereignty. So, be faithful! Move! Do! Obey! Because under that is God's sovereign hand working and moving and blessing those around you. The truth is Naomi, who thought she was forsaken, now sees God's kindness has not forsaken her. God had not forsaken her family. Some of you need to hear that this morning; God has not forsaken you because it sure feels like it especially this Christmas season when you have suffered loss, regret, guilt, shame, isolation, and emptiness. You feel a lot like Ruth and you're saying...*I'm just forsaken and no one loves me*. God is showing his kindness to you in ways you can't even imagine because he has not forsaken you. In Ruth's case, her redeemer was near, and in your case, your redeemer is near.

Then notice what we see, Ruth clings to Boaz. It says this in verse 21, "And Ruth the Moabite..." Notice that language. It's like she's always called "Ruth the Moabite." Over half the time, we're told that she is a Moabite. She's an outsider. She's a gentile. She doesn't belong here, but yes, she belongs here. I want you to know that some of you feel right now that you don't belong here. You're sitting in church but you believe you don't belong in church. This text couldn't be clearer to say that, that is kind of right. You don't belong here, but do you know what? Neither do any of us. None of us belongs here because if we were on our own, none of us would be here and that's why it's based on grace. All of us belong here because the gospel is to ALL people, ALL sinners who repent. So if you feel like an outsider, then see yourself as Ruth. And guess what? Outsiders get a redeemer and that is what Ruth needs to see. So she is the Moabite and it says this, "And Ruth the Moabite said, "Besides, he said to me, "You shall

keep close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.” 22 And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, “It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, lest in another field you be assaulted.” 23 So she kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law.” So it ends with her clinging to Boaz’s people.

So, let’s recap the story. It starts with a worthy man named Boaz who is a redeemer and a girl who is very needy. She’s broken, she’s destitute, and she can’t make it on her own so she clings and casts herself on the mercy of another. She just takes a step, tries to make something happen, and it just so happens that she lands herself right in the path of her redeemer and we see the beautiful sovereignty of God. It ends with that redeemer sharing a meal with her where they break bread, drink wine, she is satisfied, and there are leftovers. She is given way above and beyond the law. She gets grace. She gets what she doesn’t deserve. She gets a redeemer. And, that is our story. But, see, in order to get a redeemer you have to understand that you are like Ruth. You are needy. You are broken. You are destitute. When it comes to your spiritual life, you’re bankrupt. You’re not the one on the side of the soup kitchen giving out the soup. You’re the one on the other side coming with an empty bowl saying...*I have nothing. I have absolutely nothing. I can’t fix it on my own. I am completely dependent on someone else.* That is how we come to Christ-needy and dependent. We come with our hands open with nothing to give. We come to the field empty and guess what? In the field, we meet our redeemer who has more than enough to provide for us, to satisfy us, and to have leftovers for us to take home. He goes way above and beyond anything we could ever dream of. See, as we come as needy sinners to Jesus, we don’t get what we deserve. We get more. We get grace. This is our story. But, if you’re going to get a savior, if you’re going to get a redeemer then you have to first know your need. You have to know that you’re Ruth. You have to know that you have nothing to give and nothing to offer. You come with empty hands ready to receive the gift of salvation and the gift is not something you deserve, but it’s something that God gives for his glory and your good.

See, some of you this morning have maybe realized that you're a lot like Ruth. You're broken, needy, and you have no way to fix yourself. You can't bring yourself back to God. So, you're wandering into this field just needing some answers. Do you know what? It just so happens you came to the right place because it just so happens you heard the gospel this morning. There is a redeemer who lived the life you couldn't and died the death you deserve. He rose on the third day and He's coming back to get His people and if you trust and believe in Him, if you turn and leave Moab, if you leave yourself and your sin and cling to Jesus you will have life! You will have a redeemer! He's more than able to provide, He's more than able to protect, and He's more than able to redeem, but you have to come to Him as a sinner with nothing to offer and everything to gain.

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