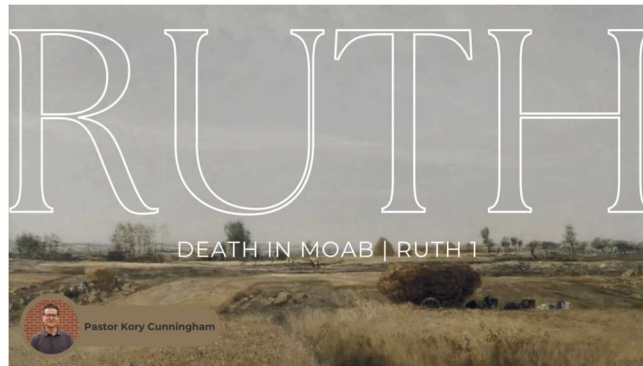


A Willing and Able Redeemer



Bro. Kory Cunningham Ruth 4

I'm going to give you the spoiler—Boaz is going to be an able and willing redeemer of Ruth—but I want you to see the big picture is that Jesus Christ is an able and willing redeemer for you. He is able because He became a man so that He could live the life you couldn't and died the death you deserve. But He's not only able He is actually willing. He wants to redeem you this morning. Jesus is your able and willing redeemer, and that will make more sense as we walk through our text in Ruth chapter 4. I want to read a verse from the New Testament just to keep in your mind as we walk through this. *Ephesians chapter 1:7 says this, "In Him, [that's Jesus] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace."* That verse says that Jesus is your redeemer. He redeemed you and He bought you with His blood. The problem was your trespasses, your sins. Some of you are in those this morning; you have a debt that you can't pay and I want you to hear about a redeemer who is able and willing to pay your debt to bring you back to God. That is the best news on the planet. So we're going to see this lived out vividly through a man named Boaz.

I need to just do quick recap on who Ruth is. Ruth is not from Israel, she's from Moab. Now, there was a couple, Naomi and Elimelech, who moved to Moab to find bread because there was a famine in Bethlehem where they were from. They had two sons and they married Moabite women, one

named Ruth, so Ruth is a daughter-in-law of Naomi. A lot of bad things happened in chapter 1. The husband and the two sons die, so Naomi and Ruth are both widows. Naomi goes back to Bethlehem and Ruth goes with her, hoping to find bread. But what they really need even more than just bread is they need a redeemer, so they're on the search for a redeemer. Last week in chapter 3, we saw Ruth, who was told by Naomi to go and propose to Boaz. She proposed to Boaz, and now Boaz has a few things to work out before he is to marry this girl. You're caught up. So now, Boaz is pursuing Ruth to be his wife and what we find is a man who won't rest. If you remember from last week, he's not resting until he has worked everything out to marry this girl, and here's where we pick up in verse 1 of chapter 4.

Scripture

"Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, 'Turn aside, friend; sit down here.' And he turned aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, 'Sit down here.' So they sat down."Verses 1-2

So a lot of sitting down in the beginning, but they're at this gate. Now, why are they at the gate? Well, that's where commerce happened. That's where legal transaction was made during this time. Today, it would be like we went to the courthouse with papers and we're going before a judge to rule over something to legally transact something. So Boaz goes and sits at the gate and he's looking for a redeemer. Now, some of your bibles (if you have an NIV) say "kinsman redeemer," because a kinsman redeemer is someone who's a family member. He's looking for a family member to help this process of redemption, which we're going to talk about in just a moment. So he is looking for a certain man in this huge town and it just so happens the guy comes by and he is like, *...Oh hey dude, I've been for you; how about you come sit down.* So again, we find the sovereignty of God playing in the background of this whole story. Nothing is happening by coincidence; it's all by providence. And guess what? The same is true for you. God is working in the background of your story in ways you can't even imagine.

So Boaz sits down, he has ten elders, he has the redeemer, and now Boaz is going to talk to the redeemer about a potentially redeeming some land. He's going to the guy about a piece of land. Here's what we see in verses 3–4, "Then he said to the redeemer, 'Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. So I thought I would tell you of it and say, 'Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people.' If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you.' And he said, 'I will redeem it.'" Now, we need to talk about a few things here because we're thousands of years away from this story. Some of the things that might be in our mind are like, why is there land, why do they have to redeem, what's going on?

First I think about redemption as a broad category, because redemption or to buy, or to purchase, is spoken fifteen times in this chapter. So redemption is the forefront of this part of the story. To redeem something...well, you kind of know...because you probably have a gift card, right? Somebody's going to get you a gift card for Christmas and you're going to have to redeem that gift card. So it has something to do with buying something. We are familiar with redeeming something. I got an email last night about some points I need to redeem, but to redeem them I need to buy something. So redemption has to do with buying. If you think about it in the biblical context, this idea of redemption is buying something back that you previously owned. So this redemption, you own something, you lost it, and now you're going to have to buy it back. That's what is being asked of this relative, this cousin of Boaz, if they will buy this piece of land that belongs to Naomi. That's what redemption is about. It's about buying something, which by the way, I'll just go ahead and spoil it a little bit, that's what Jesus does for us. Jesus buys us back, not with gold or silver; He buys us back with His own blood. Jesus is your able and willing redeemer, and He buys you from your sin and from your death. He buys you with His blood to reconnect you with God. That's what Jesus does. So when you hear this story about Boaz and Ruth, it's ultimately a story about you and the Lord Jesus. So see it and feel it.

The next question we have to ask is why, exactly, does Naomi need this land redeemed? Why does the land need to be bought? Now, there are a couple of options. We're not told in the Scripture why exactly it needs to be bought back, but perhaps number one is she owns the land, it belonged to her husband, and she's hungry and she doesn't have cash. She doesn't have anything to let go to Dollar General with. So when it comes to land versus food, you want food more than land. If you have a relative that dies and leaves you a big fancy mansion but you're too poor to eat, you're not going to keep the mansion; you're going to do what? You're going to sell it to get money so you can eat, because at the end of the day, food and water are really the most important if you are dying. So perhaps Naomi needs somebody to buy it from her so she'll have some cash to actually live out her life. But she can't have just anybody buy it; she needs someone in the family to buy it because the land needs to stay in the family. That's the first option.

I think it's more likely this second option. When the famine happened, Elimelech, her husband, was hungry, the kids were hungry, the wife was hungry, and I think he sold the family farm in order to get some money to go to Moab to try to make a new life. So now, Naomi comes back and she knows the family farm belongs to somebody else, and what she desperately needs is the family farm back so that she can have some revenue and she can survive. The reason I think that is because in Leviticus there is a provision for selling the family farm and then also getting it back. It says in verse 13 of chapter 25 that if your brother becomes poor and sells part of his property, then his nearest redeemer shall come and redeem what his brother has sold. So there's a provision if you are broke and you need to sell the family farm for some money, there's a provision that somebody in your family can go and buy that land back so the land stays in the family.

Now, why is the land such a big deal? I mean, some of you guys have moved many houses in the last three years. You don't even care because for you it's just a house and it doesn't bother you move somewhere else. But some of you live on a family farm that's been generations, and you plan to die there. So, some of us have different relationships with land. But

I want us think through land as an Israelite for a moment. The Israelites land wasn't just where they stood; it was who they were. This is part of the Promised Land given to them through Joshua by God. They are in the tribe of Judah and Judah had a certain arrangement of land, and a Elimelech had a parcel of that land that belonged to Judah. This is who they were. This is part of their very bones. Yet now, it's sold to someone outside the family and it needs to be back in the family because that land is their past, present, and also their future. So land is important. So we need to think about land like an Israelite or maybe even like a Native American.

I went to some of the reservations in Arizona just last week, and met and talked with the Native Americans there. I love talking with those people they're such amazing people. I was on the T.O. Nation or the Gila River, and it's just this beautiful land. There used to be rivers that flowed through it, but now they've been damned up so the land in some way is bare. These villages have sort of dried up and it's hard to make it and survive. Some of them don't even have running water so some of them are using outhouses. But just ten miles up the road is Casa Grande...civilization, opportunity, and they could just go there and get a job to better themselves, at least in my mind. But then you talk to the people, it isn't just a village for them, this isn't just land, they're a native from the T.O. Nation; this is who they are. This was the land of their grandparents and their great-grandparents. It goes back thousands of years, so they can't just move, they can't just get off the land; land is different if you talk to a Native American living on a reservation.

Land is different if you talk to an Israelite who's standing on their plot. Land is a big deal, and that's why they're trying to find a redeemer, somebody in the family who will buy this land so that Naomi can have some cash, she and Ruth can survive, and that the land will still be in the family. That's why it had to be a kinsman, had to be someone from Judah, a close of kin. To redeem the land there are two requirements. In other words, they have to be able and here are the requirements—they have to be a kinfolk (which is of Judah, the clan of Elimelech) but they also then also they have to have the money to buy the land. If you need some money, you don't go to your broke cousin. You go to your rich uncle, right?

You have to pick the right person. And Boaz found this person, this redeemer, and he says, "I will redeem it." He is able and he is willing. He says yes give me the land. I'll buy it, I'll bring it into to my inheritance, and we'll keep it in the family.

Now, I can just imagine at that moment Boaz's heart probably sunk a little bit because he doesn't want him buying the land because the land is attached to a girl, as we're going to find out in a minute. Guys will do a lot of crazy things for a girl, right? Most of our stories are crazy things we've done for a girl; Boaz is going to do crazy things for a girl. So his heart sinks because the guy is willing and able to redeem the land. He's going to buy it, and therefore he's going to have Ruth attached to it. This marriage that he's longing for is all but over.

So now, Boaz brings Ruth into the story. Notice what it says in verses 5–6, now it's about redeeming Ruth. Here's what it says, "Then Boaz said, 'The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance.' Then the redeemer said, 'I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it.'" So he wants to redeem the land, he wants the asset. Then Boaz says there's a girl attached to it, and if you buy the land, you have to also have Ruth as your wife because Ruth is a widow and she and her husband don't have any sons. In other words, Naomi's sons died, and they didn't have any sons, so the line has been cut off the family tree of Judah. There's a branch that's been cut off unless there's a baby born to Ruth, Elimelech's widow. So he says if you buy this land, then you also have the duty of marrying Ruth and giving her a child to continue the line of Elimelech and Mahlon. When the guy hears there's more to the story, all of a sudden he is unwilling. So he's able, he's got the money, got the means, he's the right person, he's in line, but now he's not willing.

Now, this whole thing about perpetuating the line might seem a little strange to us, but there's provision, because again, for Israel names, families, and land are very important. The tribes of Judah need to stay preserved. Deuteronomy 25, verse 6 says if brothers dwell together and one of them dies and has no sons, the wife of the dead man shall not be

married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go into her, take her as a wife, and perform the duty of a brother's husband. And the first son whom she bears shall succeed the name of the dead brother that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. So if Ruth doesn't bear a child, if Naomi doesn't bear a child, then Elimelech's name is cut off of Judah. So if somehow a widow doesn't have a son, there is a provision for the nearest kin or the brother to marry her to have a son so that her dead husband's name can carry on. That's the provision here and that's what the redeemer must do so Elimelech's name will carry on and not be blotted out. This was a provision because land's a big deal and family's a big deal in this time of Israel's history. To Naomi and Ruth, a child means everything. It means their future, it means their security, but we live in a culture where it is actually really neat to not have kids.

Now I don't have TikTok, but apparently, I was listening to a podcast and heard there are Dinks on TikTok, which means 'Dual Income, No Kids,' and they are going on TikTok and making videos saying how great it is to be a Dink. Because if you have dual income and no kids, you can literally do anything you want. Even I sort of daydream about what would that be like. I could just like get up tomorrow and be like, "Hey, let's fly somewhere." We could do whatever we want because you would have plenty of money, plenty of means. You're not changing diapers, you're not coming to hear these kids sing; you can do whatever you want. That is foreign to Naomi and Ruth, to that culture. They could not even imagine someone not wanting kids because kids meant future, kids meant inheritance. And in fact, even though we live that, we sort of know because John Stonestreet on the podcast said, "You know, I wonder what those TikTok videos will look like when those Dinks are 80 and all of a sudden they've got everything but no one to come visit, no one to be around, no legacy." So even though we would say man, it'd be like the dream, maybe it's not really the dream, and it's certainly not Naomi and Ruth's dream. They need a child to carry on the name.

So the question is will this guy be a willing and able redeemer of the land, and Ruth? When it came to Ruth, he says no. He doesn't want to impair his inheritance; he doesn't want to impair his name. He says...*Look, I already*

got enough kids to buy Christmas presents for, I don't want to add another to my family. Nope, just keep her. I'm going to stay with mine. It is interesting that here's a guy who doesn't want to impair his inheritance, his name, his legacy, and we don't even know his name! He's just called the redeemer. He's a guy who wanted to protect his name so much but is completely forgotten in history. I think the writer intentionally left it out like...*Hey, way to go guy. Guess what, you impaired your inheritance. You didn't make the right move. You should have gone with Ruth.* So sometimes protecting our lives and protecting our name and doing everything we can actually means we get forgotten because we miss what God has for us.

So this redeemer says no, and then we're going to see this sort of removal of a sandal, which sounds weird to us. It was also kind of weird to them. Verses 7-8 explains, "Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel. So when the redeemer said to Boaz, 'Buy it for yourself,' he drew off his sandal." So both the guys who had sandals on whenever the redeemer decided I don't want to redeem this I want you to, he took off his sandal and he handed his sandal to the guy. And all the readers have been like, why did he do that? I'm going to explain it. This is how they used to do things, not today. It would be like us shaking on it...like let's shake on it, put it in writing, let's stamp the contract. It is in stone. That's what's happening here.

So now, Boaz is the new redeemer and what we're going to see is he's different than the unnamed redeemer. He is both able and he's willing. Notice what it says in verses 9–10, "Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon. Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife..." Now when it says, "bought to be my wife," I don't think he's cutting a separate check for her because in the deal in buying the land, he has also got Ruth. So it's not buying a bride, she is with this deal. "...I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his

inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day.” Boaz is a man who is able to redeem, he's a close kin, he's got money, he's got resources, and he's able to pay the price. He's just like the other guy, the difference is he's not just able, he's also willing, he also wants to because if we peel back the story, we know how the story's been going, right? He likes this girl; he loves this girl. This is a sweet deal! He doesn't care about the land. The land is the liability; Ruth is his asset. Ruth is the one that he's going for; he just gets the land with her. He's going all in because he wants her to be his wife. He is in love with a girl. He is able and he is willing to redeem her.

So what does that have to do with us? I think the reason the story is in Scripture is to show us this interaction of redemption between Boaz and Ruth because we are supposed to feel ourselves as Naomi and Ruth, and we are supposed to see Jesus as our kinsman redeemer. He is the one who comes, He's the one who loves us, and He is the one who is able and also willing to redeem us. See, Jesus has to be able and He also has to be willing to redeem us. And what I want you to feel is that Jesus is both those things. He has the right to redeem you. He's gone through the legal requirements to redeem you. He can write the check that can more than cover your debt. And He's not just able; He's also willing. He wants to because He loves you. I know some of you are saying, “I don't know about that. I see the people around me, and maybe them but not me. You don't know what I've done. You don't know who I am. You don't know where I come from.” That's why this story is about a Moabite who's not in the people of God. It's about people who have fled the presence of God, have run into a far country, and went after other gods...and it is your story. You are one who went into a far country away from God. See, the truth is that you're not a widow from Moab; you are a sinner who's run away from God. But you're just like them, desperately needy for someone to buy you back, desperately needy for someone to redeem you, like that day of redemption. Like all of a sudden you had grandma's ring and you needed a little money. So you took it to a pawn shop and you got some cash. You spent the cash and now what you want is not the cash, what you want is the ring, but the ring is in somebody else's hands. It belongs to you, but

you don't have rights to it, and then somebody comes along and says, "Hey, I'll pay the price for that ring." and they give it back to you. That's a beautiful picture of redemption. That's what Christ does for you. That you have run, sold yourself into sin and slavery, and now you are living in that. You can't get out of that and you can't buy yourself out of that, and Jesus comes and says I will pay your price in full with my death. You can go free. That's what Jesus does, our able and willing redeemer.

So here's what I want to show you. I want to show you, number one, that Jesus is able to redeem us. Remembering the story, not anybody can be a redeemer. It's like if you want to be the king of England, you can't just sign up. There are rules and regulations. You can't be the king or queen because guess your dad's not the king and your mom's not the queen. It's not going to happen for you. It's just reality. A redeemer in this story has to be someone that's nearest of kin. They have to be part of the family, part of Judah. They have to be one of the family members to actually redeem, so there are laws about it. How does Jesus redeem us? Well, Jesus redeems you because He becomes like you. Here's a big point this morning—Jesus Christ, in order to redeem you, became like you. That's what Christmas is about. God becomes a man. The little baby is Emmanuel, God with us, fully God-fully man, Jesus becomes like you so that you can become like Him. That's the story of Christmas. He is your kinsman redeemer.

I love Philippians chapter 2:5–8. It says, "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Jesus, who is fully God, didn't hold on to His prerogative of being God. He didn't stay in Heaven; instead, He emptied Himself and He took on the form of a servant. He was born in the likeness of men. He became like you and me. He became us. He became a man. He became our next of kin so that He could be like us so that He could pay our penalty. Because here's the penalty—the wages of sin is death. That's a penalty over all of us. So if

you haven't sinned, just tune out of this next part. Like, you're good. If you have sinned, you might want to listen because if you sinned then you have to pay something. You have earned something and the wage of that is death. That's the debt hanging over your head. You will die, and if you're in your sins, you will die for eternity. So your debt is you're going to die. So how do we have that paid? Well, somebody has to die for you and has to be a next of kin. It has to be someone who's like you. That's what Jesus did. He became like you so that He could die for you so that He could redeem you and bring you back in. But Jesus is not only like you; He's also unlike you in that He never sinned. He's perfect. He's sinless. He always did what's right when you always did what was wrong. That's what makes Him different. When He went to the cross, He wasn't dying for His sins; He was dying for yours and mine. He was our perfect sacrifice.

So notice, number one; He's able because He became a man. God became a man so that He could be able to redeem me. He could be a next of kin to you to redeem you. He's also able because He's a sinless Savior. But He's not just able; He's also willing. He wants to. He longs to. Like, husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. Jesus loves you. He gave Himself for you as an act of love to redeem you. He was more than willing to redeem you. So the redemption of the land, it was some money. We don't know how much it was. The redemption for you, it was Jesus' blood. You were actually bought with blood. But then, look at His provision. Here's the Lord's provision for you, 1st Peter 1, "...knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ..." That's your redemption price. Your redemption price is the blood of Jesus. It wasn't a certain amount for a piece of land, it was the Son of God came and suffered and died and poured out His blood for you. And you say why? Because He loves you. Because He wants you to be in relationship with Him. He knows what you've done. He knows where you've gone. He knows what you've thought. He knows everything, yet He loves you and died for you so that you could be redeemed.

See, Naomi and Ruth, they're cut off. They have no future because they have no present. But Boaz comes in and gives them a present and a future, and restores their past. That's what Jesus does with us. Those who are cut off from God, those who are not the people of God anymore, we get life with God through the redemption of Jesus Christ. And then the people there all shout this blessing, verses 11–12, "Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, 'We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. (Two ladies built up the house of Israel, and we're going to see that Ruth and Boaz are going to have a son who's not going to build up the house, but redeem the house) May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem, and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the LORD will give you by this young woman.'" Perez is one of the rulers in Judah. This offspring is not just going to be a ruler; He's going to have the ruler, who's David, who's ultimately King Jesus, who we're going to see next week.

Next week when we come back, we're going to see there is a wedding and there is a baby, and that baby is born in Bethlehem. What we're going to connect it to is another baby born in Bethlehem whose name is Jesus who leads us to a wedding with Him. And that is the good news of the gospel. Has Jesus redeemed you? Have you experienced the redemption of Jesus Christ? Have you come to Him with all of your sin and all of your mess as a needy, broken sinner and said, "Jesus, I have a debt I cannot pay" and you let him pay with His blood? That's why He came. That's what He did. He's your next of kin who is able and also willing to redeem you. How do I get redeemed? You say yes to Christ. You say yes to the gospel that He lived the life you couldn't. He died to death that you deserve. If you put your faith and trust in Him, you can have life. That's redemption. He buys you back. How does He buy you back with His blood? That's what you trust in coming to Jesus. You believe that His death, burial, and resurrection is enough to buy you out of your sin and to give you more righteousness than you could ever live in, and He gives you a relationship with God, an inheritance in a kingdom that is coming forevermore. That's redemption. Have you been redeemed?