

[Ruth 4:17](#) - "And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he [is] the father of Jesse, the father of David."

Review: Back in chapter one, Ruth seemed to be giving up on her best chance of marriage by leaving her native land of Moab and giving her heart and life to the God of Israel. Ruth turns to Yahweh God in the lowest point of her life. She turns to God in spite of what she could have contrived as Yahweh God's doing in her life, and God honors her before the book is done. The last chapter of the book, which should have been sad ending, is about a new beginning. Book of Ruth is not of fate, but of faith; not of purposeless misery, but of providential mercies; not of bitterness, but of blessing. The joy we have is that there is nothing you as His child can do to thwart His purposes for you. Our choices may lead to terrible consequences and circumstances on the way, however, in the end He will conform us to the image of His Son. We understand this as the truth that is foundational to the Sanctification process.

We are now moving to the last chapter of Ruth, where Boaz becomes God's answer to his own earlier prayer for [Ruth 2:12](#) -

"May the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge, reward you fully for what you have done."

[Ruth 4:1](#) - "*Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down.*"

Right at the beginning, some things become abundantly clear.

First, the close comparison of Boaz to Christ:

- Boaz compares with Christ in that he was willing to redeem
- Boaz overcame a rival when redeeming his bride
- Boaz overcame justly and by fulfilling the law

Second, while there are comparisons, there are tremendous points of contrasts.

- **Gate:** We see that Boaz is seated at the gate, while Christ went outside the gate (reproach and shame)
- **Prerogative:** He sat down taking on the authority of his position to talk to the rival, while Christ humbled himself in laying aside his prerogatives. And by doing that He demonstrates His power and authority.
- **Virtuous woman:** Boaz was aware of Ruth's character as a 'virtuous woman'. The same could not be said of the Bride of Christ. She was made spotless and without blemish in Christ.
- **Two People Imagery:** We will also see later in this chapter that Boaz could not fully represent Christ as the Redeemer. In fact, there is a third redeemer spoken about in this last chapter. Holy Spirit in narrating the incident uses the imagery of two people to represent the picture of Christ as the Perfect Redeemer.

No Name. Speaking about the Redeemers in this chapter, the first redeemer is not even mentioned by name. **vs 1.** "...*Ho, such a one*".

Ho, Ho, Ho. It wasn't Christmas yet in Bethlehem, nor was Boaz the Santa Claus that year.

As Poole, so beautifully puts it:

“Doubtless Boaz both knew his name, and called him by it; but it is omitted by the holy writer, partly because it was unnecessary to know it; and principally in way of contempt, as is usual, and a just punishment upon him, that he who would not preserve his brother’s name might lose his own, and lie buried in the grave of perpetual oblivion.”

Another great contrast we have is from [Deut 25:9](#), where the kinsman redeemer who refuses to redeem must have his shoe removed and then be spat upon the face. However, the nameless redeemer is spared the spit, but it wasn’t so with the willing Christ, our perfect redeemer. The one who took on the form of man to become the near kinsman, pays the ultimate price and beyond for the redemption of a bride not known for her virtue.

[Is. 53:8](#), says *“judgement was taken away from him’. They were unjust in all the ways they treated Him.”*

Marring of the inheritance: Not just not get back the investment in Naomi’s property, for it will go to keep the legacy of Elimelech, the Jews also believed in the prophecy that the Messiah would be born. Every man’s hope and every woman’s desire was that the Messiah would be born through their lineage. They would therefore never think of losing an opportunity by marrying a stranger. In preserving his right the nameless redeemer forgets to do what is right.

So what are the qualifications of a redeemer?

1. Legally worthy: Near kinsman
2. Lavishly wealthy: Able to redeem
3. Lovingly willing: Willing to redeem

[Ruth 4:6](#) - The nameless redeemer fall prey to the last two conditions. “...*I cannot redeem it*”. He was not just not willing, but there is evidence in the construction of the sentence that he is also not able.

[Ruth 4:8](#) - Here is another interesting twist. [Deut 25:9](#) says, “*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.*” Naomi should have been the person who should have taken the shoe out. However, here it is the man who takes off his shoe. This redeemer is not even shamed for his refusal.

Compare this to what Boaz does for Ruth (and don’t forget her state).

- Her past ‘shameful’ – a Moabitish woman
- Her present state ‘stranger’ – no rights
- Her future ‘scornful’ – no hope.

It is about this woman that Boaz makes a public declaration in ch 4:9-10. And in that one declaration, the tag “**Ruth the Moabitess**” falls off like straw singed by grace. No more is she a stranger, and more facing a hopeless future.

So the leaders at the gate respond in vs.11 & 12.

- [Ruth 4:11](#) - She has a Family. “***come into your house...***”
- [Ruth 4:11](#) - She has Fortune. “***Worthy in Ephratah...***”
- [Ruth 4:11](#) - She is made Famous. “***... famous in Bethlehem***”

- [Ruth 4:12](#) - She has a Future. "...*like the house of Pharez*". One of the largest of the families in Israel.

In chapter 4:13, a new phase begins – Obed is born. Don't miss the emphatic statement – "*the LORD gave her conception*". The LORD gave a strong rejoinder to our modern day mindset. Birth is not just a co-mingling amalgamation of random chemicals but is a gift from God.

Here the third redeemer is revealed.

[Ruth 4:14-15](#) - "*Then the women of the town said to Naomi, "Praise the LORD, who has now provided a redeemer for your family! May this child be famous in Israel. May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been better to you than seven sons!" May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been better to you than seven sons!"*"

Two questions that must be asked on the basis of these verses.

Q: Who is the one who is redeemed?

Q: Who is the redeemer who is referred to here?

First it is Naomi. Though she would want to be called 'Mara', the grace of God will always call her 'Naomi'. God thankfully doesn't give us what we deserve but rewards us according to His measure of grace, to all who come to Him for solace. Just like Ruth who came to the LORD God of Israel under whose wings she had come to trust. ([Ruth 2:12](#))

"Mercy there was great, and grace was free; Pardon there was multiplied to me; There my burdened soul found liberty, At Calvary."

come there is grace to be found, and redemption to be had. You might be a Naomi at heart. You have known the Lord and are now bitter at the turn of events.

Second, it is Obed who is referred to here.

The echo of this verse is picked up by Isaiah in [Isaiah 9:6](#) as he writes about the perfect redeemer, “*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given...*”

The story now moves to the son. The focus is on the Son. And it just gets more exciting.

[Ruth 4:10](#) - “*And with the land I have acquired Ruth, the Moabite widow of Mahlon, to be my wife. This way she can have a son to carry on the family name of her dead husband and to inherit the family property here in his hometown. You are all witnesses today.*”

Traditionally, the child should have been named ‘Mahlon’, but in [Ruth 4:17](#), the neighbours call him ‘Obed’.

Remember, [Luke 1:59-61](#). Again it was the ‘*meddlesome*’ neighbours (actually a birth was a social event and participative) who wanted to name John the Baptist, ‘Zacharias’ after the name of his father and were surprised since there was none named John in their family.

But *this son* could not be called Mahlon, for Mahlon means ‘sickly’. And by definition, sick means unable, unhealthy, and lacking. This son is the redeemer, and he could only be called

Obed, which means to 'serve'. Every time we say Obed, we must remember to hear what our perfect redeemer said while on this earth, "I came to serve and not to be served..."

Obed was able in that he was not 'Mahlon', and willing in that he served. Obed is the servant redeemer, and what a great picture of Christ that is.

Next, notice:

[Ruth 4:18-22](#) - *"It should have been the genealogy of Elimelech through Mahlon...but we see it is that of Boaz. One of the greatest mysteries in the book of Ruth is this bit of genealogy. Boaz in his willingness to serve as the redeemer does not lose his inheritance but gains it a hundred fold."*

Notice again that the branch of genealogy begins with Pharez, and *not* one of the Patriarchs as is usually the case.

There are three lessons to be learned:

1. The genealogy stops at David. While it may be true that the book of Ruth may have been written during the reign of David or immediately after, the implications are tremendous.

It is a testament to the nameless redeemer and in a way to all of us who work so hard to protect our inheritance, treasures, property, finance, health, family at the expense of God's call on your life. The nameless redeemer worked to preserve his inheritance and lost the opportunity to be in the genealogy of David and thereby the genealogy of David's greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Notice that the number of names in the genealogy is ten, from Pharez to David. Pharez as we know is the illegitimate son of Judah and [Deut 23:2](#) - "*One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his [descendants] shall enter the assembly of the LORD*", prevented that line to enter into the assembly of the LORD.

David is the tenth, and he is the anointed King of Israel. God was preparing His king and Saul was forty years too early for God's time. Saul was given as a king because Israel rejected God as their King and desired a king like their neighbours.

However, of David we read,

[Acts 13:22](#) - "*But God removed Saul and replaced him with David, a man about whom God said, 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do.'*"

3. [Mathew 1:5](#) - "*And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;*"

Boaz's mother was Rachab, the harlot saved from the ruins of Jericho. Tradition has it that Salmon was one of the two spies who spied out Jericho. Whether that be true or not, the implication is that Boaz has had a firsthand experience of grace; and as a recipient of that wonderful acceptance, he extends the same when it was his turn.

I remind us of this truth at the expense of embarrassing ourselves because of our spiritual apathy. We have often

received but never given. We get, get, and get and forget, but God teaches us to give, give, give and forgive.

In Closing

I want us to imagine as we come to the end of this book that we are walking into a conference room. There at the registration table are some name tags, and you have to pick one. The names you see are: Elimelech; Mahlon; Chilhon; Naomi; Ruth; Boaz; Obed; and one with 'no name' written on the tag (you now know who that represents).

Be honest with yourself as you pick up and name tag, the one that you feel best suits you. Which will you pick?

- **Elimelech:** when the going gets tough, will you be found going...going the way that God has explicitly said you will not return this way again. Make your bed among the enemies of God; the place that God calls His wash pot, His garbage can.
- **Mahlon and Chilhon:** Sick and Weak.

At a time when you should be teachers and leaders you have need for someone to care for you. The Christian cry baby. Great potential, but wasted possibilities and lost opportunities. Oh to God that none of us have to wear that name tag.

- **Naomi:** Would we choose to be bitter, instead of broken. Be a Mara instead of a blessing. Truth is, we will be if unlike Ruth, we do not come under the wings of the Almighty for protection.
- **Ruth:** A stranger; no standing; no hope; no people to call her own. She had every right to turn against Yahweh God and blame Him for all her loss, and yet willing to

come to that very LORD for protection knowing the truth of who He is and knowing:

[Ps. 16:11](#) - *"You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever."*

- **Nameless Redeemer:** Is this the tag that fits your behaviour? If the shoe fits, you don't have to necessarily wear it, there is grace to be found at the throne. Step up and fess up, get back to God repenting for the times you have lived for yourselves. God offers a new life even in the last chapter of the book.

We saw previously that the book of Ruth is extremely relevant to us, 'doing what each man thought was right'. Forgetting that the giver of Life and the director of our Path, is also the Truth, the absolute truth.

Just like Ruth who came under the wings of the Almighty, we must come realizing there is no other place for us besides Him. His **Handfuls of Purpose** for you is more than sufficient for all our cares.

When you find your path
laden with plenty, and ([Ruth 3:17](#))
have eaten and sufficed; ([Ruth 2:14](#))
or you find your life
adrift, and has lost its sail, ([Ruth 1:3](#))
and toil and tears mingle ([Ruth 2:14](#));
Know that His hands full of purpose ([Ruth 2:16](#))
will sustain, and provide ([Ruth 2:18](#)).

Not just grace, but ([Ruth 2:10](#))

favor, comfort, and friendship ([Ruth 2:13](#))

(Viji Roberts. 1 April 2012.)