

# Real Love Redeems

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Good, good, good. Like Lisa said, my name is Jesse, and welcome. All those listening online, hey, happy Thanksgiving. We miss you. Those of you who are new, we're glad you're with us, and I just have to say we're coming near to the end of our series in Ruth. This is the penultimate sermon, which is a really just pretentious way of saying this is the second to last sermon in our series in Ruth, so I don't know why I said that. That's not the kind of guy I am, but anyways, so we're almost there. We're almost done. If you were here last week, or even if you weren't here last week, I just want to let you know it's kind of we ended on this cliffhanger, right?

Boaz and Ruth basically got engaged, kind of, sort of, but their ability to get married hinges on what happens next with Boaz going to the city gates in Bethlehem, and this is what makes this story so powerful, though. Not that it has these amazing cliffhangers, and it keeps us on edge, but it's this story that is, it's redemptive. It starts with tragedy. These two ladies we see, Naomi and Ruth, they lose everything, sons and husbands and wealth, and now they're on the verge of all of that changing, right? And we love those kind of stories. We love redemptive stories, right? Shawshank Redemption, it's amazing. It's why, what's the, like USA, they always show it, like, every single week of the year. It's like you can always catch it on cable, but it's great. We love to see these things go from, like, really bad to really good. Not like Legends of the Fall, where everything bad happens to everybody in the story, and it kind of just ends that way, and then you leave, and you want to eat your feelings, and you, like, sulk for a week, right? Maybe that's just me, but that's what happened when I saw that movie. What we want is, we want the redemptive thing, man. We want happily ever after. We want to believe that it's possible for that, to go from bad to good, because we live in a world where we do rarely, if ever, see that or experience it for ourselves, and so here we are in Ruth's story, wondering what is going to happen next. Will this guy, Boaz, be successful? Will they all get there happily ever after? But it all hinges on this idea of Boaz being a kinsman redeemer. Now, if you just said to yourself, a kinsman what? That is okay. Don't worry. You're in good company. Like, my dad was a pastor. I grew up in church, and it wasn't until well into my 20s that I even knew this was a thing, this kinsman redeemer thing, and it was explained to me, but once I heard it, it was an amazing picture of the gospel, and that's why it's like what I love about how God uses the Old

Testament. He gives us all these pictures that point to who Jesus is, and so when we see like the sacrificial lamb and the temple stuff that happened, the temple worship that happened, all those things pointed to what Jesus was going to accomplish for us, and so we can look back and see this better picture of what the cross and the resurrection accomplished, right? But also, we see this in the kinsman redeemer. It gives us this kind of similar but different picture, a more fully orged picture of what it means for us to be redeemed through Jesus, his life and death and resurrection, and that's what today's passage is all about, this unpacking of this picture of kinsman redeemer, and as we do that, I want you to pay attention and look how it points to Jesus. So, we're in Ruth chapter 4 and verses 1 to 12 is what we're going to read and then work from today. It says this, 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, friends, sit down here, and he turned aside and sat down, and he took 10 men of the elders of the city and said, sit down here. So, they sat down. Then he said to the redeemer, this other guy that was like closer and kin than Boaz was, 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, this is like Boaz's worst nightmare, right? He's just like, man, I love Ruth, and like, I

needed this whole thing not to go this way so I can marry her. Now, this guy's saying, I'm going to redeem it. Then Boaz said, and he's all slick here because he doesn't like, he doesn't give the whole plot, right? He's just said, there's this field, you could redeem it. Then Boaz said, oh, by the way, 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, oh, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it. Thank goodness. 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. 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 Malon. That was Elimelech and Naomi's sons who died.

[ 5 : 35 ] Also, Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Malon, 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. Then all the people who are 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. 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. This is God's word.

So it is important to remind ourselves, right, why all this had to take place. Like that is a big old ceremony and kind of everything that happened. Boaz had to redeem this land for the sake of Naomi and for Ruth's sake because they were in dire straits. They weren't in a place where they had the power to make this happen themselves, right? They were stuck in poverty and they were stuck in this place of being poor and powerless. And that's exactly who needs a redeemer. It's not like the powerful and the capable and all that that need redemption. It's actually the hopeless and the helpless. They're the ones that need a redeemer to save them. And to appreciate what Boaz is doing, we have to understand why this custom existed in the first place and why it is so important to the Israelites. And we can sometimes struggle looking back kind of chronologically so removed from this and wonder like, man, this is such a weird thing. We don't do anything like that today. And even the sense of like not just buying land, but it says like he bought Ruth. We can kind of look back on that with some chronological snobbery and be like, whoa, whoa, whoa, what are they buying people? What's going on here? This is a little bit weird.

But I would just say like, hey, this is how things were done back then. And it's part of the necessary part of the story and actually points to a more beautiful picture. And so I would say step back from like looking back and saying like, oh, we're too much refined for those things now. We can do things way better and say, no, no, this is how they did it. And it's for good reason. God has it in the Bible for a good reason. So let's lean in. Let's see what this is all about. But also I think we can, a big part of where we struggle is we don't really understand how significant owning a piece of property and keeping that land in the family was to an Israelite. See, back then they didn't like, when they possessed the land and they got it, they didn't move around like we do today. Like current stats, I looked it up, current stats say that like most, the average person today is going to live in 11 different homes in their lifetime. I mean, that's a lot of moving around. And I think for you Marines, you're probably like, yeah, probably double that, right? You just live in a lot of different places.

We all do. We live in a lot of different places. I know me and Hales, I think our first eight years of our lives, we counted like seven different homes that we had moved into in that time span. We just, we don't have this kind of sentiment to a particular place and say, man, I'm going to put down roots here. I'm going to live here. I'm going to die here. I'm never going to leave this house ever, never again. But Israelites didn't see land that way, man. It was very different for them. It was more than just a place to eat and sleep. It was a piece of property given to them by God. It was his inheritance. When they possessed the land, he apportioned it out to every tribe. And then every family got a piece of this land, this promised land that they came into. And it was a gift from God.

It was his inheritance to their household and their children and their children's children. And they didn't sell property for the sake of moving on up. Like, oh, you know what? Man, there's a better place over on the hill over there. It's got a better view. We can maybe put a bigger house in, you

know, fill it with more kids and more furniture and bigger TVs. They didn't think that way at all. They were like, man, this is the spot we were given. This is our, this is us. This is who we are. Our name is tied to this land. Like the perpetuation of our name is tied to this land.

[ 9 : 43 ] They lived on it until they died and they passed it on to their kids and their children, their sons to keep it in the family. But there's even more importance to the land. They, they not only saw the land as God's blessing, it was God's means of provision for them. He could bless the land.

God, when they would, when they would, you know, sow and then reap and harvest time, they saw that as God blessing the land that he had given them and providing for them and perpetuating their existence and blessing them in the land. It was a, it was a family's place in Israel, not only for, for their name to perpetuate, but also fellowship with God. All that was tied to the land that they were given. So remember the beginning of Ruth. Now think about this. Remember the beginning of going all the way back, Naomi's husband, Elimelech, he made this decision that proved catastrophic to take them away and move to Moab during a famine. So he leaves his inheritance. He says, okay, I'm going to walk away from this. I'm going to go to Moab and try to like, you know, keep providing for my family during this hard time. But then over there, all his, he died and all his offspring died. And Naomi's back, but man, she's too old to pop another son out. She, she can't hold on to the property herself and Ruth can't because she's a Moabite, like Boaz points out here. She's not an Israelite.

And this means that once Naomi and Ruth die, that land will pass on to another family. Someone else with another name is going to snatch that up. That's what's going to happen. And then the clan of Elimelech, the family of Elimelech is going to be cut off from memory and therefore cut off from existence. They're going to be remembered no more. And as much as we've seen God's provision, right?

This, this is a story of real love. It's a story of God's chesed. We talk about like, whenever you come across in the Bible, steadfast love, that's the word chesed. And, and we're seeing that throughout. And so we see like God's chesed love being given to Naomi and Ruth through this, through people like Boaz, where they're provided for in their hunger. So they're not like living famished. They're actually being poured out like so much grain that they're not hungry. But we see another problem here, right?

[ 11 : 51 ] We see another problem beyond the food for, for Naomi and Ruth. This unresolved issue, this land issue, this, them having no children, no heir to pass this land onto. And their future is still hopeless. And they're helpless to change it. They need someone to save them. And that is what Boaz is doing here. In verse three, then he said to the redeemer, this other guy, 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 not redeem it, or if you will redeem it, redeem it. But if not, if you will not tell me that I may know, for there is one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you. And he said, I will redeem it. Then Boaz said, the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also require Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance. And then we know the redeemer replied, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it.

And I just want to compare the differences here between the two guys, right? This unknown redeemer and Boaz. The first, he's interested from the get-go because there's something in it for him, right? He can get more land for himself. It's basically like, hey, I could like come into like more wealth, like I can make my name even greater and established here amongst my people. And he's all for the deal until it finds out it comes with an old widow and her Moabite daughter-in-law. And that means that his redemption for this land comes with a lot of bills to pay and some mouths to feed. So it's not all gain for him. It's going to cost him too. He's going to have to become the provider and caretaker for these ladies. And so he backs out. But that's how counterfeit love acts.

[ 13 : 53 ] Counterfeit love is never much for redemption because redemption costs too much. And redemption demands too much. So counterfeit love, it looks at people through the lens of a cost-benefit analysis.

What will this relationship cost me? What do I get out of it? And am I going to end up ahead at the end? But Boaz shows us how real love works. He isn't redeeming to pad his real estate portfolio. He isn't after more wealth. He is doing this for love. And that's what real love does. Real love pays the price to be with those it loves. And that's a big part of redemption and the story of redemption that God has worked out. Now in this story, a part of what is driving Boaz is romantic love for sure. I mean, remember last week, he is definitely digging on Ruth. If you were here for last week's sermon, you know that like sparks were flying in the cold desert night, right? I mean, they kept it pure, but there was a lot of heat out there in the cold. And Boaz, he is motivated here. Man, he is so motivated to have Ruth for his wife. And we get that. Romantic love drives us to do crazy things. I know guys that have driven like every weekend, you know, for the girl they love until they married her, like, man, like hundreds of miles to spend time. When me and Hales were dating, she went up to Washington on a vacation and we talked like into the night, you know, it was like, no, you hang up, no, you hang up, no, you hang up. And it was a long distance call. And I ended up with an \$800 cell phone bill that month, you know, for that one week. But it was worth it. I would totally do it again, like no problem. And then I went up and visited her while she was up there for like, I went, flew up, stayed there a day and then came back. But it was like, man, we do that, right? We want to be with the people we love.

It makes sense. And that's what Jesus' desire is for us. He has this real love. Now, it's not a romantic love, but it's that kind of love that desires that intimacy. It desires that togetherness. It desires to be with us. But he's like that even more so than we could ever be. Because when we were far away from him, he did whatever it took to be with us, right? He moved out of heaven and came to us.

[16:10] He came to earth. He shed his glory. He shed his invincibility. And he took on our flesh, our weak flesh, all for the sake of redemption. And Boaz is willing to give up the security of his current position of wealth. He's willing to buy the land. He's willing to take on the responsibility of providing for Ruth and Naomi. And the only benefit he gets in return is them. But that's all he wants. That's what he really wants. That's what he's really after. And real love pays any price to be with those they love. And that's what we see in Jesus. Didn't he pay the ultimate price, right? To overcome the sin that separated us from God, that separated us from him. Boaz's love shows us that kind of love as a kinsman redeemer. And it's the kind of love we see in Jesus, our kinsman redeemer too. And this love is more than a romantic love that is driving him. He wants what is best for Naomi and Ruth.

But also, and this is very strange, he is caring for a dead man as well. He cares that the name of Elimelech is in danger of vanishing into non-existence. Real love pays the price to redeem what was lost, to redeem what's been lost. Now, what Boaz is doing for Elimelech is pretty foreign to us, I'm sure. I mean, think about this. When is the last time you thought twice about a distant uncle who's been dead for 10 years, right? Not too often. And you definitely wouldn't go through the effort and expense to start a foundation in his honor that would carry his name on so people wouldn't forget, right? You just, you wouldn't care enough about that person to do that. But that's kind of what Boaz is doing here for Elimelech. He cares enough about Elimelech, this dead guy, to do that. In verse 9, it says, 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 Chileon and to Malon. I don't know if I'm saying their names right, but let's just assume that I am.

Also, Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Malon. I have bought to be my wife. Why? 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. What? Boaz is caring about a dead man's name and reputation. We don't even know how close he was to this guy, but he still, he wants to make sure Elimelech's name isn't cut off and removed from the land of the living. So he buys the land, not for himself, for Elimelech's sake. That's what we see here in this passage. But his commitment to Elimelech goes even further. He says in verse 10, his marriage to Ruth is going to serve a noble purpose, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance so that Elimelech's name will not be cut off from among his brother, his brothers. We see here this important role of the kinsman redeemer.

His job is to restore what was lost. But in that restoration comes something powerful, something that we all need. Jesus's redeeming love restores and heals our broken past. And that's kind of what Boaz is doing here. Elimelech's a dead man. Dead men don't do much, right? They don't talk

back. They don't give back. They don't show up at your birthday and give you a present. And if they did, that would freak us all out. If ever there's a picture of grace, this is it. Dear dead Elimelech is experiencing restoration, and he's done nothing to earn it. He has done nothing to earn Boaz's kindness toward him.

The inheritance that he lost through his own decisions is being given back to him by a living redeemer. This is what God's has said love, his real love, his faithful love, his steadfast love is all about. Can you see the parallels to Jesus here, right? They're starting to become very clear. [ 20 : 21 ] He's doing this to let Elimelech's name will not be cut off from his brothers. We see here the important role. Oh, sorry, I didn't move on. Sorry, Ephesians 2 verse 1, it says this, And you were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind. And we're by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. We too are dead, just like Elimelech.

We are dead in our sins. We are dead in our trespasses. We need Jesus to be our redeemer. And that is exactly what God did. Why? It says because he loved us. His chesed love, his steadfast love, his real love, is a redeeming love. And though we were dead, he saves us, makes us alive with Christ, and raises us up with him. You don't have to be defined and chained to the sin and brokenness of your past. Man, Jesus redeems us from that, right? And so shame and brokenness of the past, we tend to live in that in the present because it comes back from the past and invades us into our lives right now. Like, we think of those things that we're ashamed of. We think of the things that we've done wrong and how we've wronged people and how we sinned, and those things are constantly being brought back up into our minds in the here and now. And we kind of live, like, imprisoned to that. But this redemption is saying, no, no, no. You can be healed from that. Jesus, our Redeemer, heals it through his redeeming love. And what this does, what this means for you and me, it's we're moving. We have to move into this new freedom, freedom from guilt and shame. Our past through Christ and what he's done for us in redeeming us has been sanctified. It's been made clean. It's been purified. It's been healed in Christ. That's an incredible salvation, guys. That is an incredible promise that we have through what God has done, what Jesus has done. But here's the thing. As amazing as that is, is that we get to live free from the guilt and shame of our past. Like, it heals us of that. You know what else it does? It heals our future, too. Jesus' redeeming love heals our future. And the people in Bethlehem, they recognize this as part of the kinsman, redeemer, redemptive thing. They dare to believe that the future of Boaz and Ruth and Naomi is now bright and beautiful, full of redemptive possibilities.

And look at what real love calls us into. Ruth 4, verse 11, 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. 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. Redemption always leads to celebration. But the celebration is in part because your past is healed, but it's also something else. The joy, the celebration comes through looking to the future with fearless hope. This scene of celebration, what I love about this is like the town is now celebrating and saying this beautiful blessing over Boaz and Ruth and Naomi. Remember when they came in, Naomi and Ruth came in first to Bethlehem? It wasn't like that, right? They came in mourning. They came in with lament. And that's what redemption does. Redemption turns our mourning into rejoicing.

Isn't that an amazing thing? What they started in with mourning, man, God is working out in his redemptive love and his said love. And now there's this beautiful new hope. There's this bright future that they are living towards and moving towards. And there's celebration and good for good cause, good cause to rejoice. Man, first they say, may you be, may your house be like Rachel and Leah.

[ 25 : 16 ] And for those of you who are new to the Bible, it's like, you know, this guy, Jacob became Israel and he married these two sisters, which is never a good idea. And anyways, God worked it out and he redeemed it. And, uh, and they had 12 kids. And you know what those 12 kids became? They came, they became the tribes of Israel. And so like, they're saying, man, may God build up your house like he did with the nation of Israel. Wow. That's amazing. And then they hone into like more local, like, okay, let's go into our particular tribe, Judah, right? Let's go into, let's go into our local little Bethlehem folks, right? Not only may your house be built up like that, may your house also be built up like Tamar's house, right? And Perez that was born to her made that happen.

And you may think like, okay, that that's, that's interesting. But I think God put this in for a good reason. Like if you read the story of Tamar, if you're thinking your past is too broken to have any hope for the future, this is going to give you some hope. All right. Tamar's story happened back in Genesis 38, hundreds of years before Ruth. So she's Judah's daughter, a daughter-in-law, and she was a foreigner like Ruth. So Judah's son, Judah's son took a foreign woman to, to marry, but he was an evil guy, really bad. So God killed him. And that means she, her husband died and she was childless. She's childless like Ruth. And she was promised by Judah, her father-in-law, that she'd get to marry the other son so that she could have a son, right? He's meant to be this kinsman redeemer like Boaz is going to be. And this is kind of where the story stops being like Ruth. See, Judah didn't keep his promise to her, basically forgets about her. Then she disguises herself because she's getting like, man, I'm not going to have any kids. And I'm like, my biological clock's ticking.

We got to make this happen soon. I need some, I need a son. I need some kids. Then she disguises herself as a prostitute. And yeah, Judah, Judah pays for her. Fast forward, when Tamar is revealed as being pregnant by prostitution, Judah's really mad, doesn't know he's the dad, gives orders to burn her.

But at the last second, she's like, surprise, you're the dad, Judah, right? This is like Jerry Springer crazy, right? This is what's going on here. Like, you can't make this up. But this is the story they choose to bring up in this moment. Like, right, like in Ruth, they're like, man, can you, may you be like Tamar? Like, what? Seriously? I mean, they rejoiced at what Boaz just did. And it's saying, man, may your house be like that. That woman was left alone in the world, destined to suffer and died. But then at the last second, she was given a husband and two sons. That's how it worked out for Tamar. She ended up with twins. And that's a messed up story. It's a painful past, but God healed that past. But look what he did with Tamar's future. He healed that too.

Like, through Perez. Perez, he became this, like, mighty family of all the families of Judah. Like, his was renowned and known for whatever reason. God elevated. He built up. He gave Tamar a better future. He healed her future as much as he healed her past. And that's what they're saying here. And God came through for her. And you know what? He's going to come through for you. He put her into his big story. He's going to put you into his big story. Boaz's future, Naomi and Ruth's futures, are built on that same redemption. They have nothing to fear, nothing to be anxious about anymore.

[ 28 : 56 ] And that's the thing. As much as we need our past healed from guilt and shame invading it, you know what? We also need our future healed because what comes from the future and invades our presence, our present life, is usually fear and anxiety, right? But man, when we live with the knowledge of the healing, the redemptive healing of our future, man, we get to live free of those things. We get to live free from guilt and shame. We get to live free from fear and anxiety. We get to live free. That's real freedom. Real freedom isn't, I get to do whatever I want. Man, real freedom is living free of those things, guys. And that is a beautiful thing. And that is the redemption that we are offered in Jesus Christ. Colossians 1.12 says, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light future. He has delivered us now from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son. If you believe in Jesus, your future is not built on your past failure or past successes. It's not dependent on how well you could do in getting it right. Your future inheritance is built on the riches of God's immeasurable grace.

And it is guaranteed and it is waiting for us. Nothing can take that away. The band can come up. I want to say this to all of us in the room. Whether or not you are a Christian, you can never live free of guilt and shame. You can never live free of fear and anxiety apart from God's redemption. You can never live free from sin's power and sin's control of you apart from God's redemption. You can

