



Week 6: Love is a Verb

Opening.

Our world operates on several divine principles that impact our lives daily. And understanding these realities will help us build lasting and more meaningful relationships. The first of these virtuous realities is simple: Your obedience to God's plan opens his provision for your life. In this sermon and text we observe a beautiful picture of this truth. This passage illuminates the relationship between our actions and the providence of God.

Scripture. Ruth 3 (*read the whole chapter*)

Observation.

- **Love acts out of great concern. Verses 1-4.** Naomi, while glad of Ruth's company, felt a little bad that Ruth did not return home as Naomi had urged. She likely feels responsible for Ruth's well-being, and might even feel a little guilty Ruth's commitment to her will doom her to singlehood for life. Naomi also knew that Boaz has been treating her favorably! Many Hebrew scholars debate whether this act was moral or not, but we see that Naomi's concern for Ruth was genuine. What do you think— was it right for Naomi to that?
- **Love obeys courageously and willingly but not blindly.** Ruth went alone at night to the threshing floor, a place where women should not be. How do you think she was feeling when she did this? What does this chapter show you about Ruth's obedience and boldness?
- **Love redeems and not condemns.** Given the culture back then, Boaz could have lashed out and condemned Ruth. Instead, he twice refers to Ruth as "my daughter" and blesses her for not choosing to marry a young man. He says this act shows even stronger family loyalty to Naomi and the family. Given what we have learned about guardian-redeemers, why do you think he says this? What does it say about Boaz that he, knowing laws about guardian-redeemers, chose to wait for Ruth to come to him before acting upon it?
- **Love blesses and never withholds.** The only reference to God is in the blessing and promise Boaz gives (10-15). Boaz even poured grain into the Ruth's shawl as a sign that of blessing. Do you see the action happening in this chapter more of an example of God working, or of people taking matters into their own hands? Why?

Application.

- Even though some see Naomi's instructions dishonorable, what is important to note, however, is that regardless of the situation, Boaz and Ruth acted honorably and in a godly way. How will remembering their example help you no matter what situation you face?
- Ruth showed obedience, boldness, and humility in her actions, and was praised by Boaz for her virtue. What qualities of Ruth do you most see in yourself?
- Boaz agreed to be the guardian-redeemer, but wanted to make sure he did it legally. Are there times you want something to happen, and work to make it happen even if that means someone else deserving is passed over? What can you learn from Boaz's example?
- In this story, how is Boaz showing us the loving and redemptive act of Jesus.

Prayer. Is there an area of your life that you need to surrender to God?

SCRIPTURE

Ruth 3

1 One day Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, "My daughter, I must find a home for you, where you will be well provided for. 2 Now Boaz, with whose women you have worked, is a relative of ours. Tonight he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. 3 Wash, put on perfume, and get dressed in your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do." 5 "I will do whatever you say," Ruth answered. 6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law told her to do. 7 When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down. 8 In the middle of the night something startled the man; he turned—and there was a woman lying at his feet! 9 "Who are you?" he asked. "I am your servant Ruth," she said. "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family." 10 "The Lord bless you, my daughter," he replied. "This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor.