

Week 7: What Marriage is not About

Opening.

In this sermon and passage, Boaz marries Ruth, and we see what marriage really is about. It's not some ending to a fairytale or a romantic comedy. It is making a choice to love, and build each other's lives for the better with a bond only death could break.

Scripture. Ruth 4:1-12

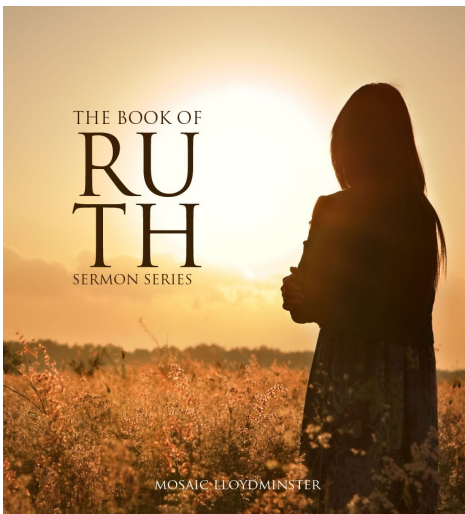
Observation.

- In last week's study, Boaz blessed Ruth and accepted her proposal for redemption as we saw God's plan unfold further. We learned that there was a nearer relative who could claim the role of redeemer than Boaz (3:12). That person should be given an opportunity to redeem Ruth first. In Ruth 3:18, reading the signs given by Boaz, Naomi tells Ruth that Boaz will not rest until the matter is settled.
- In 4:1-8 we find Boaz sitting at the gate of Bethlehem and meeting with Elimelech's nearest relative who could possibly be the guardian-redeemer for Naomi and Ruth. After Boaz presented the case, but when the man realized the cost, he gave up his right to be guardian-redeemer to Boaz. At this, Boaz announced to all who were present his desire to redeem Elimelech's name, properties and widows. The witnesses responded enthusiastically with verses 11-12 with a blessing.
- Verse 13 says, Boaz took Ruth to be his wife. We find here that Boaz loved Ruth, enough to accept all the baggage that came along with her, including the debts of the family. The main points of the sermon remind us that:
 - 1) Marriage is not a feel-good happy ending to a romantic fling, it is a commitment to loving and accepting one another unconditionally.
 - 2) Marriage is not a temporary solution to one's loneliness, it is choosing to walk together with God no matter what throughout your entire lifetime.
 - 3) Marriage is not a two-way street, it is a one way street with two people choosing to walk in the same direction.
 - 4) Marriage is not a competition, it is a lifetime calling to edify and encourage one another to become your God-given best;
 - 5) Marriage is not a soap opera, it is a portrait of Christ and His church.

Application.

- What is the significance of the story happening at the city gates and not a private home; and why are the town elders involved? What role does the spiritual community play in marriage?
- What is the significance of Boaz "redeeming" Ruth? What does redeem mean? How do you think is Boaz and Ruth's story a reflection of God redeeming us?
- Boaz assumes responsibility for Ruth's redemption. Read Romans 3:23-24. Who assumes responsibility for your redemption?
- The passage highlights two aspects of redemption: 1) it's done out of the redeemer's desire and 2) it's done at great cost. Discuss the desire and cost of both Boaz and Christ. What are the implications for our own spiritual life?
- How should the story of Boaz and Ruth change the way you view romance and marriage?

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



SCRIPTURE

Ruth 4

1 Meanwhile Boaz went up to the town gate and sat down there just as the guardian-redeemer he had mentioned came along. Boaz said, "Come over here, my friend, and sit down." So he went over and sat down. 2 Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said, "Sit here," and they did so. 3 Then he said to the guardian-redeemer, "Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our relative Elimelek.

4 I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of these seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you will not, tell me, so I will know. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line." "I will redeem it," he said. 5 Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the land from Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property." 6 At this, the guardian-redeemer said, "Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it." 7 (Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel.) 8 So the guardian-redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it yourself." And he removed his sandal. 9 Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, "Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon. 10 I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses!"