

Faithfulness

by Mike Attwood

This sermon delves into the book of Ruth, focusing on the themes of redemption and fullness. It explores how Naomi's emptiness was transformed into fullness through the kinsman redeemer, Boaz, and the birth of her grandson, Obed. The genealogy presented in the text traces the lineage from Phares to David, highlighting the grace and sovereignty of God in bringing unlikely individuals into the Messiah's lineage. The sermon emphasizes Jesus as the ultimate kinsman Redeemer, drawing parallels between Boaz's role in Ruth's life and Jesus' redemptive work for humanity.

Scripture: Isaiah 54:4, Hebrews 7:14, Matthew 1:5, Ruth 4:13

Topics: "Redemption", "God's Sovereignty"

Description

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Transcript

Okay, so we're in the book of Ruth and chapter 4 and we will read from verse 13 to the end of the chapter. So Ruth 4 13 down to verse 22 and so it begins this way. So Boaz took Ruth and she was his wife and when he went in unto her the Lord gave her conception and she bare a son.

And the the women said unto Naomi blessed be the Lord which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman that his name may be famous in Israel and he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life and the nourisher of thine old age. For thy daughter-in-law which loveth thee which is better to thee than seven sons hath born him. And Naomi took the child and laid it in her bosom and became nurse unto it.

And the woman and the women her neighbors 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. Now these are the generations of Phares.

Phares begat Hezron and Hezron begat Ram and Ram begat Amminadab and Amminadab begat Nashon and Nashon begat Salmon and Salmon begat Boaz and Boaz begat Obed and Obed begat Jesse and

Jesse begat David. And God indeed will add a blessing to the reading of his precious word this morning. Our title this morning is fullness.

We looked last time at redemption and now we're coming from redemption to fullness. One of the underlying themes we've seen in this study has been that fact that there was a lot of emptiness in Naomi's life. Remember she came back from 10 years in Moab and she said I went and I've come back empty.

She lost her husband she lost her sons and now that emptiness has been restored to fullness because of redemption because of the kinsman redeemer. And just to remind ourselves of the outline of what we've been looking at in this chapter. We saw in this chapter the business at the gate in the first 12 verses and now we want to look at the birth of a grandson from verse 13 down to verse 17 and then the blessing of the genealogy in verses 18 down to verse 22.

So as we consider the birth of the grandson we want to think about the family the bride and the birth. And then when we get to the next session and we look to the genealogy what we're going to see not so much the family the blessing and the bride and the birth but we're going to see the family branches. And so we're going to you know how you see a family tree and they've got all the branches everywhere.

Well we're going to trace the family tree and we're going to go back to Judah and we're going to go forward to David and of course we know the rest of the story is going to ultimately take us to David's greatest son the Lord Jesus Christ. And so the blessing of the genealogy is indeed going to be a blessing to us. So this idea of fullness that we've given our as a title to this message one of the promises in the word of God is that when when backsliders are restored that one of the things that God will do is restore the years the locusts have eaten.

And we're going to see in this chapter that those locust years those years of loss during that time in Moab are going to be replaced by fullness and blessing. And so it begins in verse 13 so Boaz took Ruth and she was his wife no longer Ruth the Moabitess or the stranger but now Ruth the wife of this mighty man Boaz. So Boaz took Ruth and she was his wife and when he went in unto her the Lord gave her conception and she bare a son.

And so in this one verse we've we've got nine months it's kind of interesting we've looked in these chapters at at 10 years and then we looked at a night and and so now we're looking at nine months all embraced in one verse. And one of the things that stands out is divine intervention here in terms of the conception of this child because it says he went in unto her the Lord gave her conception and she bare a son. Remember that she had been married to a much younger man and during that time period there was nothing but barrenness 10 years of barrenness in Moab.

And again there's a there's a kind of a an indirect message here because during those 10 years in Moab because the god of Moab was Chemosh and Chemosh of the Moabites was kind of their equivalent of Baal and basically it was a fertility god and of course Ruth that was her upbringing that was her background she would have been probably a Chemosh worshipper prior to coming to make that tremendous decision where she she said very clearly that your god will be my god your people will become my people and so she she converted to Judaism. And during those years in when she was in Moab and she was following Chemosh the fertility god well he didn't do her much good even though she had a much younger husband. But now she marries this old man who has taken a Boaz this kinsman redeemer and yet it says he went in unto her and the Lord gave her conception.

And again we we can see one of the great themes of the Old Testament is it is the Lord that opens the womb. It's the Lord that that blesses with children and that we we can't take that for granted. You would have thought a young couple would have been in their prime of their ability to reproduce but 10 years produce nothing.

And now this older man and so it's very evident that the Lord gave a conception. It was a miracle. The midrash the Jewish writings suggest that a miracle had occurred in the birth of this this child.

And so and of course every child is a miracle. I think we uh any of us have been present at childbirth. You're just amazed at the miracle that it is.

Yeah but certainly this was a miracle child. And so verse 14 the and the women said to Naomi blessed be the Lord which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman that his name may be famous in Israel. Now I wonder is this the same group? Remember when Naomi came back after her sojourn in Moab and verse 19 of chapter one it says so they went until they came to Bethlehem and it came to pass when they would come to Bethlehem that all the city was moved about them and they said is this Naomi? And you can imagine the women particularly who would have been closest to Naomi being a big part of that chorus.

Is this Naomi? And remember she said she came back empty and she called Amara which means bitch all the rest of it. But now these women they said to Naomi blessed be the Lord which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman. See she had lost in Moab her descendants.

Both of her sons had died and yet now the Lord has not left you without a kinsman. Now up to now all the references to the kinsman and it's the same word kinsman redeemer here has been speaking of Boaz. But now this reference to the kinsman is not to Boaz but to the the child that Boaz and Ruth delivered.

That's who the kinsman is now and so the Goel the redeemer not Boaz but the newborn son born to perpetuate the name of the family in Israel. And again a foreshadowing of the true kinsman redeemer that would be born in Bethlehem a kinsman to redeem. But he it was this child who took away Naomi's reproach of childlessness.

Remember her children had both died and would take care of her in her old age. And so it says in verse 15 concerning this kinsman it says he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life and a nourisher of thine old age for thy daughter-in-law which loveth thee which is better to thee than seven sons hath born in. And again it's a kind of a lovely picture.

Her own children are gone but and so it seems like a lot of her dreams had died in Moab. But now as she cradles this this newborn baby and holds it now all of a sudden she's got purpose again. She's got meaning she can pour her life into this little child that's been given to her to perpetuate the name of her husband Elimelech in Israel.

And so you can imagine the joy the emptiness of the sad years in Moab were now gone forever. There's a fullness her arms are full of this baby. She now has something to live for and someone to live for.

And it is interesting too I noticed in in our own family when my children all fled left the nest and and you know my my wife had poured herself into them and now all of a sudden they're gone. And so what now well thankfully we have five grandchildren and it seems like that's a big preoccupation with her activities these days. She's she's got reason again.

She's got purpose to pour her life into these little ones and so we certainly can see that with Naomi. Now there's something to live for. Ruth has been more to her she says or they say the women say this that this stranger had been better to her than seven sons.

For thy daughter-in-law which loveth thee which is better to thee than seven sons have borne him. Now it's quite a statement to make because of course you know that seven is the number of perfection and completeness that's the idea. And of course the ambition of all married people was was to have sons and if you had seven sons it was like you had the perfect family.

You had the full complete family. Your your posterity was guaranteed. You you had that and and yet what's being said here is that to her Ruth had been better to the to her than if she'd had seven sons.

So it's a tremendous tremendous compliment. Somebody that had been such a blessing to her in producing this offspring which would be a restorer of her life and a nourisher in her old age when her hair was gray and when she was getting old to have this child that would look out for her and care for her. And until that day she was going to look after him.

So it says Naomi verse 16 took the child and laid it in her bosom and became a nurse unto it. Now again this is a kind of almost a personal reflection. She she took this child to her and she became a nurse.

Now it's not saying she became a wet nurse because she's way too old for that. But the word nurse literally means a guardian or somebody who would care for him. The the masculine of this verb that's used here is used of Mordecai when he took Esther in to his care.

And so the idea was that she was going to pour her life into this child. She was going to she was going to have that. And you know one of the things one of the sad things about our western civilization is the the breakdown of the extended family.

Because there's something especially in if people are walking in the ways of godliness there's something about grandparents investing spiritually in the life of grandchildren. It's a wonderful thing. And taking some of the pressure off in the home being there to help without meddling and yet pouring them into their grandchildren.

And so she was going to be like a guardian to this child. She's going to be used to direct it and influence this child. And so that was her desire and that was what she would now be occupied with.

So she took the child waited in a bosom became a nurse unto it. And the women her neighbors 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.

A very unique situation here in all of scripture. You don't read of townspeople naming a newborn child. But that's what they do.

And it's not a nickname. They they take it to their make it their business to name this child. And they name it Obed.

Now Obed is a shortened form of Obediah because Obediah means servant of Jehovah. And this word Obed some think it means servant and others think it has the idea of worshipper. And some have combined the two meanings to say well he was a servant and a worshipper.

It's probably an acceptable way of looking at it. Certainly he would be devoted in serving and especially serving his aged grandmother looking after her in a lot of years and certainly doing it in a very devoted way. So that's the idea of servant and worshipper.

So we've looked at the birth of this grandson. But then we we read that there's a son born to Naomi. They calls him Obed.

He is the father of Jesse the father of David. Now we maybe need to just stop because remember this is written during the time of the judges. But we have to remind ourselves that at least Jewish rabbis are all of one opinion as to who wrote the book of Ruth.

The same person that wrote the book of judges and the same person who wrote first Samuel. And they believe that it was Samuel the prophet. Now if you recall that Samuel the prophet was the man who took the the horn the anointing oil and he was told by God to go and anoint David the son of Jesse.

And he did. So and the reason I'm saying this is that some of the more liberal scholars basically will talk about this next section being a later edition of some scribe you know zealous scribe wanting to kind of tell the whole story. But no if it's Samuel and if it was written as Samuel gives the period of judges history and you know kind of what it was like when there was no king in Israel.

And then he's going to be given the details of the kingdom. And so quite clearly this would be a very appropriate thing for him to mention the connection with David who is the true king and messianic heir so to speak that the Messiah was going to come through him. So now we come to the the blessing of the genealogy.

The family branches are going to go back to Judah and forward to David. That's the plan. And so we get this genealogy.

Now it's like many genealogies. It's an edited genealogy. Not going to get everybody in the family line.

In fact it's there are 10 kind of branches here that are in this little section. And it's clearly edited because there's some huge jumps when we we think of going from Nashon to Salmon. Well there's kind of a bit of a gap there.

About 350 years that are just ignored. So we just need to recognize that it's an edited biography and it's just got 10 people in it. And there's some suggestion that the 10 generations parallel the 10 years that were kind of wasted years.

And so that's part of the idea is kind of a parallelism in the passage. The shortened form which is very common in Jewish genealogies to do a shortened genealogy. And so certainly this is what's happening here.

Now it's interesting. Why does it say verse 18 these are the generations of Phares? Why did he not start with these are the generations of Judah? Because we know and remember that Phares was born to Judah. And so that question is often being asked.

And I think part of the reason and this is what many scholars believe is that if you remember the birth of Phares was very similar in the sense it was connected with the kinsman redeemer. If we remember back in Genesis 38 when we look there that the child or the husband but let's just go look there right now and

remind ourselves of this pretty grim passage in Genesis 38. And so it says verse 7 uh verse 6. Judah took a wife for her his firstborn whose name was Tamar.

And her Judah's firstborn was wicked in the sight of the Lord and the Lord slew him. Now that that's a remarkable scripture isn't it? I mean we don't know how old this firstborn was when God slew the child. But remember that God knows the entire history of a person even before it occurs.

And he saw what child this was going to be. A child that would be absolutely wicked and the child is slain by the Lord. And then it says and Judah said to Onan go in unto thy brother's wife and marry her and raise up seed to thy brother.

Remember this idea of the kinsman redeemer. And Onan knew that the seed should not be his. And it came to pass when he went in unto his brother's wife he spilled it on the ground lest he should give seed to his brother.

And then the thing which he did displeased the Lord. Therefore he slew him also. So Judah's family things are not going so well.

Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter-in-law remain a widow at thy father's house till Sheila my son be grown. For he said lest at peradventure he die also and his brethren did. And Tamar as his brethren did and Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

But and we know the rest of the story. Uh time goes on and of course it's all forgotten. Sheila doesn't marry her.

And so she takes matters into her own hands. And she appears as a harlot. Judah certainly did not have a impeccable character.

Uh time of sheep shearing he goes into this harlot. Turns out that it is his daughter-in-law wants to have a stoned. And then when she produces the tokens she he recognizes verse 26.

Judah acknowledged them the tokens that she had been paid for her services as a harlot. She acknowledged them and said she hath been more righteous than I because that I gave a knot to Sheila my son. And he knew her again no more.

And it came to pass verse 27 in the time of her travail that behold twins were in her womb. And it came to pass when she travailed. The one put out his hand the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread saying this came out first.

And it came to pass as he drew back his hand that behold his brother came out. And she said how hast thou broken forth? This breach be upon thee. Therefore his name was called Fares.

So that's where it begins with Fares. And again all we're simply saying is why does he begin his genealogy here in Samuel in the book of Ruth rather than them with Judah but with Fares? Because of the similarities. Because in a very real sense the sons of Judah should have played the part of the kinsmen redeem but they didn't.

And so again there's a similar connection in terms of the birth. So then we go on in the genealogy and it says these are the generations of Fares. He begat Hezron.

Hezron begat Ram. Ram begat Aminadab. Aminadab begat Nashon.

Nashon begat Salmon. Remember Salmon was the one that married Rahab the harlot. And Salmon begat Boaz.

Boaz begat Obed. Obed begat Jesse. And Jesse begat David.

So the story of Ruth the Moabitess is now all but concluded. But the end is brighter than its beginning. It commenced as we know with a famine and funerals.

But it ended with a happy family in Bethlehem of Judea. The family genealogy will lead us up to David and so eventually to the Messiah. And so it begins in the sad days of the judges when there's no king in Israel.

But it concludes with David the illustrious king and the sweet psalmist of Israel. And as another writer puts it, it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah. Hebrews chapter 7 verse 14.

And grace has wrought with sovereignty and has brought into the lineage of the Messiah the most unlikely persons as Tamar who played the harlot. Rahab who was a harlot. Ruth who was a Moabitess.

And of course we know Bathsheba although her name is not mentioned. But it does say in Matthew genealogy, her that was the wife of Uriah the Hittite. So she's there even though she's not named.

And so as we have often said the genealogy of the Savior is a genealogy of grace. And that's kind of a reflection of the heart of God. His mission is grace.

Bringing grace and truth to mankind in the person of the Lord Jesus and even the very Savior's genealogy is a demonstration of the amazing grace of God when we look at some of the ones that are found there. John Watt who wrote a nice little commentary on Ruth said, were this little book emitted from the canon of scripture, it would be an irreparable loss. A most important link would be missing between the judges and the kings.

And in Ruth's position in the genealogy of our Lord, in spite of the law expressly leveled to keep the Moabites out, we find another utterance of the self-same story of grace which in so many languages our God so loves to tell. And so again the transaction by the way also, sorry tradition, Jewish tradition also ascribes to Ruth unusual longevity. The Midrashic commentary said that she did not die until after beholding her royal descendant Solomon sitting and judging the case of the two harlots.

And I remember when Solomon said, get the sword, cut it in half, give one to one, one to the other. That actually Ruth lived to that day according to Jewish tradition. But this story is not just about grace and it's not just about Ruth.

It's really a story about the Redeemer. About the true kinsman Redeemer. It's not just the reference to David and his connection with the line of Messiah.

But all through the book, the Lord Jesus is seen in type as Boaz who took the office of the kinsman Redeemer. We've seen the kinsman Redeemer had to be a family member. Jesus added humanity to his eternal deity so he could be our kinsman and save us.

He had to be made like unto his brethren. The kinsman Redeemer had the duty of buying family members out of slavery. And the Lord Jesus redeemed us from slavery to sin and to death.

All of us were subject to that bondage of death all our lifetime for fear of death. And he came and delivered us from it. The kinsman Redeemer had the duty of buying back land that had been forfeited.

And one day the Lord Jesus will redeem the earth that the first man Adam sold over to Satan, the great enemy. Boaz as kinsman Redeemer to Ruth was not motivated by self-interest, but motivated by love for Ruth. The Lord Jesus, his motivation for redeeming us is great too.

And it's one of love. He loved us and gave himself for us. Boaz as kinsman Redeemer to Ruth had to have a plan to redeem Ruth unto himself.

And some might have thought it was a foolish plan. But Jesus, the Lord Jesus had a plan to redeem us. And some might think it was a foolish plan, saving men by dying for them on a cruel cross.

Yet the plan worked and is glorious. Boaz as kinsman Redeemer to Ruth took her as a bride. The people the Lord Jesus has redeemed are collectively called his bride.

Boaz as kinsman Redeemer to Ruth provided a glorious destiny for Ruth. Instead of being a stranger, she was brought in to an inheritance and a wonderful position. And we think of what the Lord Jesus did for us, provided a glorious destiny for us.

But it all comes back to the simple idea of Jesus as our kinsman Redeemer. This is why he became a man. God might have sent an angel to save us, but the angel would not have been our kinsman.

Jesus in his eternal glory without the addition of humanity to his divine nature might have saved us, but he would not have been our kinsman. A great prophet or priest would be our kinsman, but his own sin would have disqualified him as our Redeemer. Only Jesus, the eternal God, who had added humanity to his eternal deity, can be both the kinsman and the Redeemer for mankind.

Isaiah 54, I just want to look there just for a minute, verses four through eight, gives us a lovely description of God's saving work through the kinsman Redeemer. Isaiah 54, verse four, fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed, neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame, for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth and shall not remember the reproach of thy widowhood anymore. For thy maker is thine husband, the Lord of hosts is his name, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth, shall he be called.

For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small woman have I forgotten thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.

And what a description of the beautiful ministry of the Lord as our Goel, that's the same word used there in Isaiah, the Goel, the kinsman Redeemer. Do not fear, for you will not be disgraced, you will not be put to shame. Your kinsman Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.

The Lord has called you like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you, saith the Lord your kinsman Redeemer. From eternity God planned to bring Ruth and Boaz together, and thus make Bethlehem his entrance point for the coming of Jesus as our true kinsman Redeemer. Fully God and fully man, spiritually we need to come to Bethlehem and let Jesus redeem us, as is written in that old, what we call a Christmas carol, but really they're hymns that shouldn't be just

restricted, I believe, for Christmas, and we're going to have tremendous theology in them.

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie, above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by, yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light. The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight. How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given, so God imparts to human hearts the blessing of his heaven.

No ear may hear his coming, but in the world of sin, where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in. O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray, cast out our sin and enter in. Be born in us today, we hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell, O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

The wonderful story of the coming into the world of the kinsman, Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ. Hallelujah, we would say. What a Savior.

This concludes our study of Ruth. I said it would be a little bit shorter this morning, but when you're done, you're done.

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