

(The Book of Ruth) 4. Boaz and the Nearer Kinsman

by Roy Hession

Jesus is our kinsman redeemer who has settled things with the law and has lost its power to condemn the sinner, and he is the basis for our redemption and restoration.

Duration: 53:57

Scripture: Ruth 1:16-17, Ruth 2:12, Ruth 3:9, Ruth 4:6, Ruth 4:14, 1 Corinthians 15:56

Topics: "Ruth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the power of Jesus' blood to redeem and transform our lives. He emphasizes that Jesus can make something beautiful out of our brokenness and mistakes. The speaker also highlights the contrast between living under the law, which condemns us when we fail, and living under grace, where Jesus forgives and restores us. He shares a personal story from Brazil to illustrate how Jesus can take our lives as raw material and create something new. The sermon concludes with a prayer of gratitude for Jesus' saving power.

Transcript

We're going to turn to Ruth chapter 3, and we're going to begin at verse 8, just overlapping a little bit of what we read yesterday and then continuing on. Verse 8 of chapter 3. And it came to pass that at midnight that the man was afraid and turned himself and behold, a woman lay at his feet. And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth, thy female slave.

Spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid, for thou art a near kinsman, for thou art one that hath the right to redeem a Goel. And he said, Blessed be thou the Lord, my daughter, for thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followest not young men, whether poor and rich. And now, my daughter, fear not, I will do to thee all that thou requirest, for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.

And now it is true, I am thy near kinsman, I am thy Goel, howbeit there is a Goel, a kinsman, nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will not perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, of a Goel, a redeemer, well, let him do the part of the kinsman. But if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee. As the Lord liveth, lie down until the morning.

And she lay at his feet until the morning. And she rose up before one could know another. And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.

Also he said, Bring the veil that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her. And she went into the city.

And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, Revised verses got it here, How hast thou feared, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her. And she said, These six measures of barley gave thee me. For he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law.

Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall. For the man will not be in rest until he hath finished the thing this day. Then Boaz went to the gate, and sat him down there.

And behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by, unto whom he said, Ho, such an one, turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here.

And they sat down. And he said unto the kinsman, Near me that has come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's. And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants and before the elders of my people.

In other words, we don't want this to go out of the family. And you are the go-out and the nearest. You buy it.

And then it can be near me, and so on, as we all know. If thou would redeem it, redeem it. But if thou would not redeem it, then tell me that I may know.

For there is none to redeem it beside thee, and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it. Then said Boaz, What day thou buy'st the field at the hand of near me, thou must buy it also of Ruth and Moabites, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

What's the use of redeeming an inheritance if there's no seed to inherit it afterwards? So you've got to do the two things. That cooled the kinsman off a little bit. And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar my inheritance.

It rather seems that he would have to sell, perhaps, part of his own land in order to purchase this. And he would have his own heirs up in arms against him. That's only a suppose.

But that's what he said. In any case, he didn't really want to take on this Gentile woman. And so he says, Redeem thou my right to thyself, for I cannot redeem it.

Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning exchanging, or literally, for to confirm all things. A man plucked off his shoe and gave it to his neighbor. And this was a testimony in Israel.

It was an old custom, based on an old law in Israel, from Moses. Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for me. So he drew off his shoe.

And Boaz said unto the elders and to all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Marlon's, of the hand of Nehemiah. Moreover Ruth the

Moabites, the wife of Marlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place. Ye are witnesses this day.

Well our first study, in our first study, Nehemi filled the picture. In our second, Ruth, Boaz, was the center of our attention. Yesterday, Ruth was the center of the study.

And now as we come to this part of this beautiful narrative, that which occupies us is Boaz and the nearer kinsman, who had a prior right than he to redeem. Now before we get on to that, I just want to backtrack a little bit to a verse that I touched on very hurriedly as we closed yesterday. Verse 10.

Blessed be thou of the Lord my daughter, for thou, this is 3 verse 10, blessed be thou of the Lord my daughter, for thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch thou followest not young men, whether rich or poor. Now she'd shown kindness in the beginning. And the kindness she'd shown was to make that costly decision, to leave her own land, her own family, her own gods, and to join herself with Nehemi, and take Nehemi's God to be her God.

And that was a great step. He calls it a kindness shown to Nehemi. But he says you've shown more kindness at the latter end than at the beginning.

Now what was the kindness she showed at the latter end? Well you can see what she could have done. It's implied, you follow not young men, whether rich or poor. She could have come back with Nehemi and said, well this is nothing for me here.

All I can do is to glean, and stick by Nehemi in the old ruined farmhouse, with the fields where their farm laid waste. There's nothing for me here. And she could well have taken up with some of the young men, and doubtless she could, had she chose, have been married to one of them.

But she didn't choose. She had a vision for the old family. Had she done what she had done, there would be no one to redeem that old inheritance, and certainly there would be no heir to enter into it.

And the name of the Limelech would have died out in Israel. But she had a vision for that old decrepit family. And sticking by the old family, she had a vision for his redemption, and she made her application to the Goel, Goel.

Now the spiritual meaning for me is this. It's very easy when things go wrong and things don't work out to say, well we'll cut our losses. I know things aren't very good.

They haven't worked out. I'm not very happy in this situation. We'll close the chapter and we'll start in another situation.

But why haven't things worked out in the old? Are you entirely innocent in the matter? And I believe what delights the Lord Jesus so much, as it delighted Boaz, is to see us not hiding off to start a new thing, a new chapter, but having a vision for the revival of the old. And saying there's nothing too hard for Jesus. He can do something in this thing.

Very often this has application to a man in a difficult church. Things aren't working out. And the natural thing is to say, well I'll move on to another place.

I'm not going to put anybody into bondage. Please don't think it. God may lead you on.

But the bigger thing is instead of pining for a new start somewhere else, Lord I want to prove your reviving power, your restoring grace in this situation. And bringing that situation to you, who've contributed to its difficulties, to lie at his feet and say, take me on. Bail me out and my situation.

There could well be in the case of a marriage that's not going right. Very often when things don't begin to go right, people go to the divorce court, instead of to the cross. And that is the choice between many but me, the divorce court or the cross.

Well, cut my losses, start again. No, no. He wants you to have a vision for the revival of the old.

And that brings more glory to Jesus than some new fancy thing we embark upon. This is capable of infinite application, not only in those two cases I've mentioned, but in many another. I want to say, mending things is much more glorifying to God than ending things.

And the only one who can mend things is Jesus. Once on a lonely hill, they got hold of a fella they wanted to kill. They decided to chuck him out, cause he wouldn't keep going about.

Just mending things. Mending things. Mending things.

A lot more rewarding than ending things. But he's still about. Some folks have found out.

Just going on. Mending things. And this goes for the smallest day that goes wrong.

Turn over a new leaf. No, no. Get a vision.

Bring that in yourself to lie at his feet. And to ask him to take you on. Bail you out.

And prove that he is indeed the restorer of lost things. That brings him much more glory. It'll mean us going out yet deeper.

It may involve us in deeper repentance, because it isn't always the other people. And I believe why we're very glad to end things and start afresh. It's because we don't want to have to go any deeper.

Oh, it's no good. It's no good. It's no good.

You don't know what could happen if you went to the cross. So that's the sweet little message I get from that verse alone. Oh, she had a vision for the restoration of the old decrepit family, when she could have opted out.

And now we come to what Boaz said to her. Now, my daughter, I will do. No argument.

The moment she used that word, gored, he saw it in a moment. Her need, his right. And there was not a moment's hesitation.

I will do to thee all that thou requirest. But he says there's just one obstacle. And so often there is.

And the obstacle in this case was the fact, he said, there's a kinsman nearer than me, who has a prior right to redeem. And he must be given the first chance. If, however, he chooses not to exercise his right, then I want to tell you, I will play the part of a kinsman redeemer to you.

Now, we are seeing in this book pictures of Jesus and the gospel of which he is the center. I cannot accept for one moment that this book is designed by the Holy Spirit other than to reveal Jesus Christ. I say again, nobody can take bigger liberties with the Old Testament than the Holy Spirit does.

In the Epistles of the Hebrews, the writer picks up a little phrase, and applies it to the Messiah. I would never have thought it did. But if God says it did, it did.

Now, what do we make? What does the Holy Spirit, do you think, intend us to see in this? This nearer kinsman who had a prior right. Well, now, I want to regard this, and I'm not going to be dogmatic, of course, as a picture of the law of God who has a prior right on the sinner. And the right that the law of God has over the sinner is to condemn him.

Now, this is not a purely personal fantasy. I find to my great interest that all sorts of writers on this passage have chosen to see in that nearer kinsman the law. In any case, this much is clear.

That although Boaz was willing, more than willing, to play the part of a redeemer to Ruth, he says, I cannot do it illegally. The law states it's the next of kin, and therefore this thing must be done according to the law. And the law's got to be satisfied ere I am free to play my part as a go-el to thee.

All I know is this. In actual, literal fact, the law has a prior claim on the sinner. And the claim that it has is the claim to condemn him.

You see, the law of God sets before us high standards, and when you're saved, the standards seem to be even higher still. And this is what the law says. This do, these standards attain, and thou shalt live, and thou shalt be blessed, and thou shalt be used by God.

Live that sort of life, and what blessing will attend you? But it also implies this fail to do, and thou shalt die. And in the event, every last one of us has failed to do what the Ten Commandments enjoin, what the Sermon of the Mount enjoins, and what the injunctions in the epistles of, in the New Testament enjoin. If I did it, I'd be blessed.

If I fail to do it, that from which I hope for such blessing only ends by condemning me. And that is all the law can do. It doesn't mean those standards are abrogated for the Christian.

They are to be fulfilled, but under grace in a different way. God undertakes to put into you what he wants out of you, with your cooperation. But under law, if you fail to do, you're condemned, and we've all failed to do.

And the law of God, of the high standards that we put ourselves, beautiful as they may be, they cannot redeem those who've broken them. When you break them, there's nothing but censure for you. And in verse 6 of chapter 4, twice this nearer kinsman says, I cannot redeem it.

Indeed, indeed, what do you think of this? 1 Corinthians 15, pick the finger in Ruth and slip over to 1 Corinthians 15. 56, the last phrase of 56. The strength of sin is the law.

You would have thought that the strength of sin is temptation, and that the law is the strength of holiness. Nothing of the sort. This holy law of God only gives further strength to sin.

That is, it gives sin the greater ability to condemn us when we fail. Had I not decided I was going to be different, had I not espoused those wonderful higher standards, sin wouldn't be able to condemn me so

much when I fail. But I put something further into the hand of sin with which to thrash me.

And the law only gives sin the greater opportunity to condemn me. And so it is that if Jesus is our kinsman redeemer, the law is our kinsman condemner. And Jesus cannot do his part as the Goel, as the kinsman redeemer, until he's first settled things with the law.

You know when it says about God forgiving us, he's going to be faithful and just to forgive us. He's not going to forgive us in spite of the law and say, well say no more about that, well forget about the law, we're just going to forgive you. He cannot do it.

If he's going to justify the ungodly, a way must be found in which he can be, to use Paul's phrase in Romans 3, just. And the justifier of the ungodly. In Isaiah, is it 40 or somewhere, we have the phrase, a just God and a saviour.

And if Jesus is going to be the sinner's friend, and undertake the sinner's mess, and blot out the sinner's guilt, he must first settle things with the law that has the prior right to condemn him. And that took him not only to the manger, it took him up to the cross on Calvary. To die there between two thieves as if he was one himself.

I want to ask you, what really was Jesus doing on the cross? Shall I tell you what he was doing? He was robbing sin and the law of its power to condemn it. That's what he was doing. And he was doing it by bearing the curse attached to the broken law himself.

Becoming a curse himself, as it is written, cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree. And as a result, that the curse of the law that we had broken fell on him. The law lost its power to condemn the sinner.

Indeed, the first person concerning whom the law lost its power was Jesus. In Romans 6, there's a very interesting phrase, well, you may as well have it. This is a Bible reading, so slip away to Romans 6, verse 10.

In that he died, Jesus, he died unto sin once. Once for all. Now it says he didn't die for sin there, he did.

But what it says here, he died to it. He died to sin's power to condemn him any longer for those thousands of sins for which he took responsibility. The moment the blood was shed, the moment he said it is finished, Satan had lost his mortal power over us, and the law had lost its power to condemn him.

He was dead to it. Sin and law could no longer condemn him because he had paid the price. Therefore up from the grave he arose.

No reason for him to stay any longer. But if the law has lost its power to condemn our substitute, it has likewise lost its power to condemn all those for whom he was their substitute. And so it was on the cross.

Jesus was robbing sin and robbing the law and robbing Satan of their mighty power to condemn us. As we sang, thou hast fulfilled the law and we are justified. Ours is the blessing, thine the curse.

We live for thou hast died. And so it is. The incarnation, glorious as it is, God becoming man, partaking of our flesh and blood, was not enough.

The incarnation made Jesus without any doubt our near kinsman. He was made like unto his brethren in all things. But though it made him our near kinsman, it wasn't near enough.

It wasn't near enough. Because so often my coldness, my defeat, my dryness, my lacks, my troubles, my complications, the situations I find myself in with pain and difficulty, so often I'm the cause of them. If I haven't caused the situation by my folly and pride and sin, I've nearly always contributed to it.

Though the other fellow might have began it, my reactions to him haven't been right. And by the time the argument's going on for a bit of time, you don't know who was wrong in the first place, because both are so wrong. As someone has said, when the saints quarrel, and they do, even in churches, fundamental churches, it is said that Satan remains neutral and provides ammunition to both sides.

And the situations you found yourself in, in your home or church, in your relationships, the awful sense of alienation and dryness that you come into, my dear friends, it's sin. Again I say, if you weren't the first, you were the second. And who was first gets soon lost, Satan.

And there's not going to be an answer to these situations of confusion, if my kinsman-redeemer hasn't got an answer for sin. And he has, through his blood. Because he's the one who offered up himself and shed his blood for us, he really is our nearest kinsman.

Here's a man in prison. And there's much that talks about the compassions of Jehovah for those who are in prison, that he delights to set the prisoners free. But this man is in prison for a homosexual offence.

Do you know, Jesus says, I'm your nearest kinsman. Not even your culpability has separated you from me being able to restore and redeem that situation. The incarnation isn't enough.

That which makes him my nearest kinsman, the fairest kinsman, the sinner's kinsman, is the cross, is the blood that he shed. And so it gives you a new liberty to take the place of the wrong one. You see? The great thing, we can't take the place of the wrong one.

But if I see Jesus is custom-made for wrong ones, oh, well, all right then. I know it's hard. But I don't know, I have that little baffle, can I be wrong again, Lord? Then I see Jesus, all right, Lord, I'll be wrong again.

I'll take the wrong one. I've had situations in that, Lord, I'll take it. Please turn the cassette over now.

Do not fast-wind it in either direction. But I don't know, I have that little baffle, can I be wrong again, Lord? Then I see Jesus, all right, Lord, I'll be wrong again. I'll take the wrong one.

I've had situations in that, Lord, I'll take it. I can't tell you, it's sort of a beautiful inducement to come down and take the place of the wrong one. Because when you do, you qualify for Jesus.

In a way you don't when it's only the other fellow who's wrong. And it matters not whether it's a small situation or a deep one, such as I mentioned. There's no sinner who cannot look up to Jesus and say, because thou art my nearest kinsman.

Isn't that beautiful? I, on my part, however, then, have not only got to bring my needs and troubles and complications to Jesus, I've got to bring to him in confession the sin on my part that has caused that situation or at least contributed to it. Do you understand that? And you know we'll fight tooth and nail to protect our own innocence. We will not be wrong.

Look what the other person's done. Yes, yes, no one could agree more. But listen, what's it been like? And very often those reactions have led to actions.

And if you want to know the mighty power of restoring grace, you must take the sinner's place. You must learn to be comfy in the place of the wrong one. And that takes a little learning.

But practice makes perfect. But when you do, when you do, the blood of Jesus comes into view before God on your behalf. That which you confess, and sometimes it's hard to do it.

Some of these things are terrible things. It matters not how great the shame. But the blood of Jesus has never lost its power and it's anticipated the very things that were so slow to confess and settled them to the satisfaction of God even before they were committed.

So that when they are committed, it takes you by surprise and others, it doesn't take Jesus. The surprise and shock of it he bore on the cross but it's anticipated and finished and it only needs your acknowledgement. And you'll find there's power in the blood of Jesus completely to expunge every bit of guilt.

You've got to believe it. He is your nearest kinsman and to fail to believe it is to hurt him. What gives him delight is when you do.

And there you are, lying at his feet again. He's so delighted. I mentioned previously about David and how guilt was so completely expunged that he wrote the most triumphant psalms afterwards in the middle of the insurrection of Absalom against himself.

Which insurrection, he was told, was going to be a discipline as a result of his sin. But the guilt aspect has gone. And Psalm 3, my goodness, what a triumphant psalm! I'll lay me down and sleep and go to rest.

The Lord's on me. Those in thousands should raise themselves against me. Yet will I not fear.

O Lord, he says, spike my enemies upon the cheekbone and break their teeth. He really meant it. Yes, he didn't mind talking a bit plain and straight.

But why is he not cowed? Why has he not got his tail between his legs? Because he heard, Jehovah hath also put away their sin, thy sin, and he took it. And the consequent situation and it was a complicated one, was now simply Jehovah's raw material to work out something beautiful, something good, on behalf of his penitent child. And the penitent child was given such freedom, such is the mighty power of the blood of Jesus.

Yes, Jesus not only forgives the sin, but his grace extends to the situation caused by sin. And this is where he delights, to work something beautiful, something new, good. For the man who comes, all I have to offer you is brokenness and emptiness and strife.

And so this morning I want to extol the mighty power of the blood of Jesus Christ. It not only, it first of all, as I've said, I want, I'm going to go with this again, delivers you from the hangover of guilt, which can last for years. You've really got to say with a hymn writer, I hear the words of love, I gaze upon the blood, I see the mighty sacrifice, and I have peace with God.

It's enough! The wrath of a sin-hating God with me now can have nothing to do. My Saviour's obedience to blood hides all my transgressions from view. And this is rather suggested in picture form back in Ruth, when the nearer kinsman said, I can't redeem it, because perhaps he hadn't got rid of the resources and didn't want to impoverish his family, and says, alright, he says to Boaz, you take it over.

And in order to relinquish his right, he performed the ancient custom of taking off his shoe and handing it over to Boaz. To walk over a property in a shoe presumably meant that you had the right to possess it. But in taking off his shoe, he symbolically indicated that there and then he relinquished his right to that land to Boaz.

And I picked up some of this lovely phrase, the law has no right to walk over that which Christ has redeemed. Alright? Got it? But he has been trying to. You've let him.

He has no right! But you can overcome the law, Satan, and Satan and sin, by the blood of your land. And to really make the transaction complete, you add the word of your testimony. And that really, the devil doesn't lie.

As long as they kept it all locked up. But now they're praising and telling others that that which they've labored under so long, they're free. You really are free.

And the nearer kinsman gave up his shoe to Boaz. He says, I've no longer any right to walk over that, to condemn. Isn't that beautiful? Such, such, such is the mighty power of the blood of Jesus on behalf of us.

But the power of the blood of Jesus, I'm going over it again, extends not only to the sin that's caused the situation, but to the situation itself. And once a man has been to the cross, has lain at the feet of Jesus, and said, spread thy skirt over thy handmaid, Jesus takes up that situation. It's simply new raw material for him to work a new thing.

I think one of the most moving illustrations of this that I've come across lately was in Brazil. Three years ago, Pam and I went to Brazil. And we linked up after a few weeks with a very old dear friend, Artur Gonzalez, a young Baptist minister.

Joe Church and I, and William Lagenda and I had met him years before when he was a much younger man. And he'd really been blessed, and he saw the way of living under grace and walking with Jesus. And so when we met 13 years ago, I said, well the brother I'm looking forward to is Artur Gonzalez.

And he happens to be one of the most brilliant interpreters in Brazil. And I was longing for him to interpret for me. But he never showed up for a week or two.

And at last we were at a minister's conference and there was my old friend Artur. I said, Artur, you're going to translate for me, aren't you? You're very diffident, wasn't at all sure. I said, you must.

And, I don't know, as I sat there, all the sparkle had gone. All his joy had gone. He was still a Baptist minister.

And he was so diffident. This wasn't the Artur I'd known. Well, he did translate for me, but once again it was evident the joy and the liberty wasn't there.

And then we discovered what had happened. In the intervening years he'd had domestic trouble between him and his wife. And it got pretty widely known amongst his pastor friends.

The Lord helped and it was resolved. But the shame of it was still there. And somehow he didn't feel he could stand up on the platform beside me and start interpreting for me when he knew, they all knew.

They might have known that things were pretty well alright, but the shame of it was still there. And it came out. And, you know, he saw the power of the blood of Jesus as we talked together.

Not only to deal with the wrong thing, but with the consequent shame and the consequent not feeling free with people. What are they thinking? And he saw was to spill the beans himself and to give his testimony. Oh, not about the thing so much because that was known, but about the bondage he'd been for so long as a result with his brethren.

And in coming months, opportunity was given him in the most natural way possible. They loved him. They loved him.

He's got something we haven't got. Arthur, will you come and speak here? Will you come and speak there? And when we went to Brazil in April, he arranged the whole program for us, especially among the Baptist churches where he was known. When this new testimony had begun to touch us, that man is becoming one of the most outstanding Christian leaders in Brazil.

In the Baptist denomination alone, they love to come and they start opening, the ministers do, their hearts to him. And I think we had the most glorious three weeks that I personally have ever known in my experience. What God did amongst the churches, amongst the pastors, there was my brother absolutely interpreting the very message that had set him free and they all knew it had.

Something beautiful, something good. All my confusion, he understood. All I had to offer him, dear Arthur, was brokenness and strife.

But he made something beautiful of my life. Oh, what a goel, what a near kinsman. Yes, he doesn't only forgive the sin, he transfigures the situation and gives you back even more than you lost in your folly.

We come now towards the last bit and this is beautiful. Will you turn back to Ruth? I don't know what part your Bible's open at, mine was in Isaiah just now, I don't know why. Now when Ruth came back to near me, and I want to tell you, oh, a little aside, this is so pure, there's nothing salacious or pornographic in this book.

Because the Bible is not a bit squeamish about sex. Oh, no. It's always clean.

I cannot think of any frank reference to sex in the Bible that is likely to be a temptation even to the most depraved. And if something had gone wrong between Boaz and Ruth that night, he would have mentioned it. No problem to the Bible, but he didn't.

Utter integrity. He said, lie down there. And he didn't touch her.

In the morning he said, we must keep this right and proper and for the sake, for God's sake, this must be known, this transaction. There was nothing wrong in that. And when she came back to her mother, she said, how did it all go? And she told him.

At first, she was delighted to hear that he was willing to do it. And then they heard about this nearer kinsmen. And he's got to settle with him.

And do you know what? Near me the older woman said to her, verse 18, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall. For the man will not be in rest until he hath finished the thing this day. She says, don't worry.

You can rest, Ruth, because he's not going to rest. Leave it to him. You've done the one thing.

You've taken the poverty-stricken place of the impoverished relative. You've laid at his feet. You've asked him to spread his mantle over you.

And he did it all. He didn't need any persuading. He was really enthusiastic.

And he was hoping, as I suggested, that the other fellow wouldn't take on the situation because he had lost his heart to this humble, no-bag woman. What a wonderful word for us. If you've been to the cross, if you've opened up and taken the place of a wrong one and handed over the situation to Jesus, he says now, sit still.

For the man, this man Christ Jesus, will not be at rest until he's finished the matter. What is the matter he's going to finish by taking on and restoring? And that which you've got to trust him to finish is the complete restoration. Oh yes, sin is forgiven for the situation.

Sometimes, in a dramatic, sudden way, it's changed overnight. Sometimes he takes a little longer. Other people are involved and they take a little longer to bend their necks too.

But as for you, if you've been to Jesus for the cleansing power, you can rest. The consequent situation is in his hand and he will not be at rest until he's finished the matter. Turn to Isaiah 30, verse 15.

Isaiah 30, verse 15. For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved. Returning means repenting.

And after that, rest. The particular thing they got to rest about was their political situation with Nebuchadnezzar and the northern armies beginning to invade. And they were running about thinking of this political alliance and that political alliance.

But the Prophet said, the reason for this situation is that you departed from the Lord. Return to the Lord. But they said, that's alright, but it doesn't seem to be relevant.

What about this situation? What are we going to do about this army? And what Isaiah says, if you return to the Lord, you can rest about Nebuchadnezzar. For if you've returned to the Lord, the man will not be at rest until he's finished the matter, until he's risen up on your behalf. That's a great word.

In returning and rest. It's not in returning and resolving. In repenting and resolving.

That's what most... We repent and we have a big, big resolve. And we do our best to try and right things. No.

You go to the cross. And having gone, you can rest first of all about your righteousness. The blood and righteousness of Jesus is your righteousness now.

You're as right with God as you can be if you've gone to the cross. And if you wonder what people are going to say, you better tell them. Stand before them with a testimony and you're clad in the righteousness of Christ.

You can rest about that. And I have. Sometimes I'm always putting the wrong foot forward.

Pam said to me, you know, what you said was really rather hurtful, but it wasn't that that worried me. I thought it was such a bad witness to revival and what we stand for. I said, you're right.

I admitted it, went to the cross. I said, have I got to rush around and try and tell everybody? No. The Lord says, just rest.

Your righteousness with me is your blood. And if they think you're a pretty, poor type of a Christian, they think the truth. I've got peace.

All right. We're all the time. We want people to be known as they really are.

Oh, people see me as I really am. And I can rest because I've been to the cross. It's as right with God as the blood can make it.

And if there's no opportunity, and if I'm not called upon to put things right with them and they think I'm this, they think the truth. And you can tell them so. And if it comes up, yes, brother, you're dead right.

Couldn't agree with you more. In returning and rest. But it also applies to the situation.

These situations of trouble and confusion. This is the way. The other day we were sitting at a table and I drew a brother in in a conversation.

I said, did you hear what we're saying? We're saying about this. He said, I heard. He said, I've had an experience of that.

And we sat spellbound as this brother gave us his testimony. And inasmuch as he gave it to the table, I'm sure he won't mind me quoting a little bit now. He told us how he, his wife had divorced him because of cruelty.

And she felt she had to divorce him if only for the children. She had been a believer, but she felt it wasn't right for the children. And this traumatic thing and finding himself divorced, God used to convict him and bring him to himself.

He left them with the house and had a little room all on his own. And there was an open Bible and a sorrowing heart. He said, it's me.

I'm the one who's been wrong. And he was gloriously saved. He found himself in fellowship with some lovely Christians and they rallied round and encouraged him.

He was able and he was allowed to see his children once a week. But his wife wouldn't have him back into the house. They had to meet at the corner.

And when he did tell her what had happened to him, she thought it wasn't real and thought it was only an act. But the one thing in the middle of the situation he'd been to the cross. And therefore the situation was no longer his responsibility.

All guilt in the matter, in God's sight, gone. And the situation, neutral, raw material for Jesus to work out something beautiful, something good. And the Lord said, you've got to do some things.

I'll do the rest if you do some things. And the one thing he was told to do by God, don't push. Don't push.

Don't press your attentions on her. Because he longed to see this whole situation made new and a new marriage. I'm sure, I do hope I'm not hurting him because he told us all, free for all, we were all listening.

It was so beautiful. I saw Jesus. But you know, bit by bit, bit by bit, there was a change.

He was allowed not to come into the house to pick the children up. And in answer to his concerned queries as to how she was, she would answer. And she's begun to smile at him now.

I say, brother, sit still, my son. For the man will not be in rest until he's finished the matter. Isn't this beautiful? So Jesus, by the power of his blood, has robbed the Lord of his power to condemn me.

But the power of his blood extends right to situations. And at the end of the day, you're going to have nothing but songs of praise to him who hath done all things well in the many messes, large or small, that we've made. Let's sing our chorus.

Something beautiful. Something good. All my confusion he understood.

Something beautiful. Probably. Something good.

All my confusion he understood. All I have to offer him is something beautiful. Something beautiful.

Something good. All my confusion he understood. All I have to offer him he made something beautiful.

Lord Jesus, we're amazed that you're this sort of saviour. You make something beautiful out of what we've messed up. Not only a whole life or a whole situation, but sometimes it's just a day which we've messed up and got wrong in.

And we want to thank thee for the mighty power of your precious blood, our nearest kinsman, to wash away the guilt and recover the situation. Accept our thanks this morning in thy dear name. Amen.

Amen.

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