

The Book of Ruth #2

by T. Austin-Sparks

The book of Ruth presents the whole of God's complete plan of redemption, which is the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Duration: 49:39

Scripture: Joshua 13:7, Ruth 1:3-5, Psalm 8:6, Psalm 16:5-6, Romans 8:32, Ephesians 2:1-2, Revelation 22:5

Topics: "Ruth"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the significance of the book of Ruth in understanding God's plan of redemption. The book portrays the state of human loss and hopelessness, reflecting the curse that rests upon the world and the sinful nature of mankind. However, the good news of resurrection and redemption reaches Moab, symbolized by the barley harvest in Bethlehem. The preacher highlights that redemption is not merely a doctrine or truth, but a vital union with the living person of Christ. The sermon concludes by referencing the last words of the book of Ruth, which foreshadow the ultimate redemption through a kinsman redeemer, pointing to the future fulfillment of God's plan.

Transcript

Returning to the book of Ruth, I want you to note several fragments which indicate another of those lines of unfolding which run through this book. In chapter two and verse one, and Naomi had a kinsman of her husband, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech, and his name was Boaz. Verse twenty, last part of the verse, and Naomi said unto her, the man is nearer kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen.

Chapter three, verse nine, and he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth, thine handmaid. Spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid, for thou art a near kinsman. Verse twelve, and now it is true that I am thy near kinsman.

Howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. Chapter four, then Boaz, then went Boaz up to the gate, sat him down there. Behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by, unto whom he said, Oh, such a 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, You, my, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech, and I thought to advertise or disclose unto thee, saying, By it, before the inhabitants, or them that sit here, and before the elders of my people, If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it.

But if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know. For there is none to redeem it besides 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 Nehomai, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar my own inheritance. Redeem thou my right to thyself, for I cannot redeem it.

Now will you turn to the New Testament, to the letter to the Romans, chapter 3, verse 24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. First letter to the Corinthians.

First to the Corinthians. Chapter 1, verse 30. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us redemption.

And to the Ephesians, chapter 1, verse 14. Which is the illness of our inheritance, until the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of his glory. So we proceed with our meditation in this book of Ruth, without going back over the much ground, the many details which we cover this morning.

Only just to say again that this wonderful book comprehends within the small compass of its few pages the whole of the principles and the properties of God's complete plan of redemption. The book has many things, as we have seen, of real value to our Christian lives in our course here on the earth. It also has these greater aspects of the great doctrine of salvation.

That we shall see again as we proceed this afternoon and take to cover this present meditation, that praise which we have just read from Romans 3, verse 24, the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Ruth presents to us vividly, clearly, strongly our own loss. Take her birth, what a hopeless beginning her birth represented.

You know perhaps the origin of Moab. Moab was the product of incest, not incest with his own daughter. That's not a very propitious, promising beginning for anybody.

And then later the curse pronounced upon Moab collectively as a nation. That curse which we have recorded in Deuteronomy chapter 23. The Ammonite and the Moabite shall not come into the congregation of the Lord forever.

Fairly hopeless situation into which to be born without God and without hope in this world. And then by those tragic results of the conditions which we find in the book of Judges. The leaving of the land of covenant by Elimelech, his wife and two sons.

And all the sequence of trouble and disaster which overtook them in Moab. The father-in-law is dead, her husband is dead, without helper, without protector, an inheritor of death. That describes our state by nature in every detail.

Born sin, shaken and remitted. There's a curse resting upon the very world into which we are born. And upon the very race to which we belong by nature.

And truly this New Testament phrase applies. Without God and without hope in the world. That's the state of the sinner.

And that is the state of every one of us by nature. And we have no helper here. Paul says, dead through trespasses and sin.

That's the background. Very clearly set forth in this middle book. Human loss and hopelessness.

Leading to the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. And we saw this morning that the good news reached Moab somehow. That there was resurrection in Bethlehem.

The barley harvest. The resurrection was on. And the news reached the desolate souls far off.

And they left Moab. The place of desolation. The place of the curse and judgment.

The place of utter hopelessness. And went to Bethlehem. The place of resurrection.

And through resurrection the whole glorious work of redemption was wrought out. They entered into it. Redemption through resurrection.

That's the gospel. Begotten again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. On the ground of his resurrection.

Full redemption. Of course that doesn't spare any of you. It's quite obvious because you're so familiar with it.

You know all about it. But do you? God have mercy upon us that ever that loses its charm and its freshness. But not only on the ground of resurrection was there redemption.

But on the ground of union with the Redeemer. But that's an extra step. Of resurrection union with the redeeming King's man.

That was the next stage and that is the next stage. And let us remind ourselves that that is the heart and the son of the gospel. We break the gospel up into fragments and speak about forgiveness, atonement, justification and so on.

But they are all parts of one thing. The sum and core of redemption, of salvation is vital union with the Redeemer. Redemption is not a thing, a doctrine, a truth.

Redemption is a relationship with a living person. And that makes redemption so full of possibilities and potentiality. See, Ruth might have been saved from her deplorable condition.

And might have come into the land, a little patch of it, of certain personal benefits. But look how much more accrued to her by union with Boaz. Not only then, but look at the last words of the book.

And look through the last words of the book right on down the ages. Look at that again, present day. But this redemption was not just something that saved from, it was something that saved unto.

It was not just something for the time being or for her life, personally, with certain advantages and values. It was someone who comprehended all and carried her into a tremendously full heritage. Yes, redemption, salvation is union, is living union with a living person.

And so we are led by that union to the inheritance which is ours in Christ. Now note carefully the details. Ruth's last inheritance, or the last of the inheritance, was due to union in a first marriage.

It was because she had been married to Illuminat's son. But this whole question of redemption arose. And the whole question of the difficulty of this redemption arose.

Indeed she had no connection with this thing only by reason of that marriage union. It brought the whole thing up into meaning. But it was lost by that union in the first marriage.

And I think that that first marriage has a sidelight thrown upon it and is given meaning by that nearest kinsman. Not Boaz, but the other one. The nearest kinsman.

Who is our nearest kinsman by nature? The old Adam. And we know he's a very near kinsman. Indeed he's far too near.

He is always imminent. Always on the spot. He is never very far off.

So as said, there is another kinsman nearer than I. And that is very true. Very true. We need not work at it.

Try to explain it. For we know how true by nature it is there is a very near kinsman. It's very interesting, isn't it? To note the unfolding of this thing.

You can say very much more in it than I'm saying if you know your New Testament, especially your letter to the Romans. I think it's wonderful. It's almost fascinating.

Boaz, the to-be-redeeming kinsman. There is a mirror. Responsibility rests with him in the first place.

And responsibility does rest in the first place with Adam, the first. Responsibility for this situation. And responsibility to do something about it.

We're not talking about ability. We're talking about responsibility. To do something about it.

Therefore, Boaz says, let's put this thing on him. And see what he can do about it. You see, that opens up a whole realm of whether man can find in himself, in his own natural life, in his own inheritance, heredity, in the nearest kinsman, the old Adam, whether he can find his redemption.

And is it not just the working of that principle which the Lord follows out when he convicts a soul of a lost condition. And then, so often for a time, lets that soul go through an experience by which it is coming to know more and more and more that salvation is not in itself. The fact is that our great redeeming kinsman does that sort of thing.

He says, all right, if you can save yourself, save yourself. I'll stand back. I'll give you a chance.

I'll give the old Adam a full chance, a clear way. I'll give all that humanism a full scope and see what it can do, what it will do. And look at the world that has said that it can be its own saviour and that there is enough good and possibility and power in the human nature to redeem itself and change the world.

Well, what's the answer? Yes, the Lord brings us home to one whom he is going to bring really into the good of redemption. He lets that one know that the nearest kinsman, the old man, the old Adam, is absolutely impotent. He heads up to the point where he and he only is the redeemer and he'll not share this thing with anybody.

And so, in his own way, he does put the responsibility there where it first of all belongs. Now then, do it if you can. Do it if you can.

And I venture to say that there is no one who ever really comes livingly into the good of redemption who has not come beforehand to the place of absolute hopelessness as to themselves or anybody else. And I'm not sure that the Lord doesn't press that more and more after we ask it. Make us know that there is really, after all, no kinsman but himself who can do this business, either in us or outside of us.

Well, says Boaz, there is a nearer kinsman and let's see what he'll do about it, and so he, in a way, stands back for the other man to give him a chance. Dear friends, if you are still struggling to save or sanctify yourself, struggling and striving to in some way bring about redemption at beginning or at any other point in your Christian life, the Lord's going to leave you to it. He's not going to do anything about it until that court of appeal says, no, we can do nothing about it.

Until that resource is proved utterly impotent. It's a thing for Christians to remember as well as unsaved people. And you will realize that I am keeping closely to this letter to the Romans because it was written to Christians.

And it's about the two Adams, isn't it? Well, it takes some of us a long time even to get there, where we have once and for all closed the door of hope upon the old Adam, upon the nearest kinsman. Boaz puts the responsibility upon him in the first place and challenges him and says, now then, what are you going to do about it? Here's the situation. Responsibility lies at your door.

What are you going to do about it? And it is found inevitably in the long run that he can't do anything about it. Oh, he makes the first gesture in response, I'll do it. I'll do it.

But then there is that which rises up and says, well, I can deal with this matter. I can save this situation. I can save myself.

That is because the whole implication of redemption has not been recognized. So Boaz just lets the man know that there's something more in it than that. A great deal more in it than that.

It is not only just doing this legal thing, but he has got to raise up an everlasting testimony in the house of Israel. A testimony in resurrection. Old man can't do that.

And when the real implicates of this thing are presented to the old man, he says, I can't do anything about it. And why is he unable? Why is this disability upon him? You get it. Most I mar my own inheritance.

I confess that I don't altogether understand what that means. But I think I can get somewhere towards its meaning by interpreting in the light of the New Testament. You see, the old man is just tied up.

Just tied up with his own interests. Just tied up with his own matters. And he can't do anything about this because he is so personally tied up.

This nearest kinsman was like that. His disability was because, well, he got all that he could do to cope with his own situation. All that he could do to look after his own inheritance.

What could he do about redemption? Well, that's true to life, isn't it? It's true to experience. This other thing keeps us too much occupied and too busy to be able to do anything about heaven and eternity and the things of God. And if we begin to think in terms of eternity and heaven and the things of God, well, it's going to spoil our little bit down here in this world.

It's going to upset things here for us. You know, that's the thing up against which souls come so often when there is presented to them the whole matter of salvation in Christ Jesus and their eternal well-being. They say, yes, but see what it means giving up.

See what it will cost. See what it will involve with friends and my position. Yes, all that.

And I'll mar my inheritance if I begin to take on this other matter of eternal affairs. If I begin to consider this whole matter of redemption, it's going to spoil the fun for me in this world. Of course, that's all wrong.

But people are so tied up, aren't they, in their own affairs. And the old man is so tied up like that with looking after himself that he is just not free to entertain this matter. And his disability lies there in his bondage to the world and his bondage to its things and his bondage to its king, its overlord.

He just can do nothing about it. Very well. When that is established and proved and settled, then Boaz steps right in.

That old man must give it up and get out of the way. Well, now, Christians, it's your trouble as much as the sinner's, this trying to effect your own redemption, this trying to find something that will please God in yourself, this struggle and striving of the old man to in some way redeem or save himself. Oh, that old man must give it up and get out of the way before the Lord would do it.

And he never will until we get there. Get out of the Lord's way. When we come to that position, then the redeeming king's man, our greater Boaz, will step in and take over.

But note this. And I think it's something about Boaz really to be noted. He never fought or asserted himself.

He stood back, so to speak, and waited and waited. There's no asserting, no forcing. If there's anyone here this afternoon who is not really the Lord, the Lord Jesus is not going to force himself on you to be your redeemer.

He is not going to assert himself to take over. He'll wait until you come to the place where you say he's the only one who can do it. He is the only one.

So Boaz did not put his hand on this and assert himself to possess. He will give ample opportunity to any other course that we may think could do the thing. And he'll wait until all other resources have been exhausted.

And we come to the place where we realize that he is able and he is the only one who is able. Boaz was able to do it. And he was the only one able to do it.

But more than that, while waiting, he was perfectly willing to do it. I confess to you and probably you've been reading this little book, when I got to that place where Boaz said to Ruth, there's a henchman nearer than I. We must let him have his chance. A platter took place in me.

Something fine here. Here's a man desperately in love with this woman. He wants her.

But he's hiding it all. Hiding it all. And giving the other man a chance.

Oh, opposing the other man. So he does. Poor Boaz.

You see? Yes, the Lord Jesus is full of concern. Full of love for you and for me. Yet desperately anxious to have it.

But he knows quite well we shall never appreciate him until everybody else is out of the way. And so he's not going to have a half a legion. He's prepared to let go all rather than have only half.

Take second place. He'll run all the risks. If you can find another savior, he says, all right.

Find him. You can find another husband. Find him.

All right. Find him. Or her.

He must come to the place where I am everything before I'm going to do anything about this. He's jealous to have such a thing. He is able.

He is willing. And he is anxious. Though it's hidden, perhaps.

And he is untrammelled. Untrammelled. He is free.

He has no other preoccupations or interests. He is unlike this other man. Nothing of secondary interest with him is free from all such things.

It's a glorious thing, dear friends, isn't it, to really apprehend that our Lord Jesus hasn't any preoccupations where we are concerned. We are his only occupation. Where he is untrammelled by other considerations.

And all personal interests have completely disappeared in the interest of getting his bride. He's free. That's Philippians, isn't it? Yes.

Everything is gone. Even his glory in heaven with the Father is gone because he is single-eyed and single-minded. He has only one interest.

He is untrammelled now by any other considerations. You and I are his object. And he's free from everything else.

I'm so glad the Lord hasn't got an alternative. Aren't you? He hasn't got an alternative. Not at all.

The other man had an alternative. Christ has not. Well.

And then things were established on that basis. And Boaz was the only redeemer. And the redemption was carried out.

All the inheritance became Ruth in Boaz. All the redemption was hers in him. All the inheritance was hers in him.

It was the redemption that was in Christ Jesus. We get it all in him. He who delivered up his own son for us all.

Shall he not also with him freely give us all things. We get it all in Christ. I know how simple this is.

But isn't this a wonderful and a beautiful exposition of the gospel, this book? The inheritance. The inheritance. Let's look at that.

Well, in the first place, of course, it was a part in the covenant land. Have to go back again to the book of Joshua, don't you? When the land was taken by Joshua and finally subdued, conquered, then it was divided up to the tribes. Through the tribes to the families.

They had their lot of their inheritance in the land. Somehow or other, Illuminare came to have a plot in the covenant land. And we know what that Old Testament figure means so well.

You see, we've moved this afternoon just to touch it in the letter to the Ephesians. For the thing which corresponds to the book of Joshua is the letter to the Ephesians. Wonderful inheritance that is in Christ.

And his wonderful inheritance in his own. It's a land, is it not, of far distances. Far distances.

That's the inheritance. Look at Ephesians. Far distances.

Right back into eternity past and right into eternity to come. Wonderful. Very wealthy land.

A very rich land. And the inheritance in the first place, here in Duke with Ruth, was that part. That part in the covenant land.

And it was no small thing to have a part in that. As your own. But it never stopped there.

You see, what had been hers, because of her union with Naomi and through Naomi, Illuminare, what had been hers had been corporated. It had been lost. But in the recovery or in the redemption, a very great deal more than what was lost was given.

Her bit was joined to his large bit. The great truth is this. That in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, we get far more than ever we lost.

Far more than ever Adam lost. Christ brings to us far more than ever Adam had. And therefore far more than ever he lost.

It's a very much enlarged inheritance into which we come in Christ. Our bit, yes, but his all. His all.

And I like that, you know. I like that. Now Naomi returned and Ruth the Moabite.

Her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out to the country of Moab. They came to Bethlehem and Naomi had a kinsman of her husband, a mighty man of wealth. A mighty man of wealth.

Look through that glass down the ages, through Ruth, and see the mighty man of wealth. Did Ruth come into a larger inheritance than that little bit of the land of Canaan that she had lost? Oh, look on to Christ who came through her. He came by way of Ruth.

What an inheritance. What an inheritance. A greater than Boaz is here.

And then for the present, finally, the motive and principle of this redemption. It's stated in those words of Boaz, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. Have a little perplexity, don't grasp that, the meaning of that.

To raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. To raise up the name of Elimelech upon his inheritance. How? By a seed.

By an abiding seed in resurrection. Elimelech. What's the meaning of that? God is the King.

That's it. See, the very first thought brings in God. The name means God the King.

To raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. Last words in the book of Judges. There was no king in Israel.

Every man did that which was right in his own eyes. And what chaos! What tragedy! There always is where there is no central and supreme authority. All the trouble can be traced to that.

It was in the four hundred years of the Judges. Terrible conditions. And the final tragedy.

It is today in the whole world. And sadly, in some sense it is true in Christianity. All the divisions.

All the disruptions. There's all these unhappy conditions which exist because Jesus is not in his place of headship. Because really, while he is called Lord and King, while he is said to be that in name and profession, he really is not in that place.

Other lords have dominion. We can name any of them. The things that really do rule even Christian lives and church affairs.

Things which get in the way of the absolute sovereign headship of the Lord Jesus. It is not that made perfectly clear by Paul. That oneness.

Unity. That is, that organic fellowship in the body of Christ proceeds from his headship. All the body, hit me phrase, joined together, is from the head.

Some of you are so familiar with that. Here you have conditions which were anything but like that. And they are like that today.

The need is for authority. For governance. For headship.

For a King. The Lord really acts to relate to be King and Lord. Everywhere I have been, recently in the States among Christians, the same thing has been said to me.

I haven't said it, but it's been said to me everywhere. Our trouble is no leadership. Our trouble is our lack of authority.

Everybody does as they think or like. No central authority and no leadership. Therefore, what have you got? A famine.

Hunger. Hunger. Need.

Spiritual starvation and poverty. It's all there. That's how it was in the judges and that's how it was in these days until the Lord visited them to raise up a name of the dead upon his inheritance.

It surely does mean the recovery and reinstatement of the absolute Lordship of the Lord. Eliminate his nameless. God is King.

To raise up that name. And when he is, what a very blessed situation. A pain.

Nothing to be lost in having the Lord as absolute Lord. People seem to think that if they're going to let go to the Lord and let him be Lord, altogether they're going to lose something. Well, don't be deceived about that.

Look again at the book of Judges and look to see that this, shall we call it little book now, surely not, this book of Ruth, says inclusively and finally that it is when there is a head and a Lord established that there is plenty, there is prosperity, there is blessing, there is life, there is everything. And when that is not so, there's nothing. To raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

Another glance at that. Thou madest him to have dominion. He lost his inheritance in death through sin.

And yet to raise up for man, man who has sinned and man who has died in the sight of God, to raise up even for that man through redemption his dominion again, his kingship. We shall reign with him, our Lord. That's all very simple.

But I'm finding...

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/1/SID1052.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/t-austin-sparks/the-book-of-ruth-2/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net