

A Surprise Proposal

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[0:00] My name is Ed, one of the pastors here at Trinity Church. Such a joy. Really excited to dig into God's word this morning. If we want to open up our Bibles, we're going to continue on in the book of Ruth.

We're in Act 3, Chapter 3. So open up our Bibles. If you are in need of a Bible, feel free to raise your hand and we're happy to give you a Bible as our gift.

If you could keep it and take it home with you. Again, we are in Ruth, Chapter 3. Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's word this morning.

Heavenly Father, I'm trying to do something that is impossible by my own strength, by my own wisdom, by myself to do.

I want to faithfully deliver your word and to build up your church, encourage your people, your bride, whom you love. I know you love them dearly, that they are very precious in your sight.

[1:16] So Lord, won't you please use this time, use me as your servant, speak through me, so that I may be able to build your people up, encourage them, help them to really know your heart, to know a heart that loves them and fights for them, a heart that accepts them and delights in them.

Lord, as we read about this beautiful story in Ruth, convict us to the heart that we have a great Redeemer.

Just as Ruth has a great Redeemer in Boaz, we have an even greater Redeemer in Christ. Expand our vision of Him. Help us to see Him rightly, that we would worship Him and love Him all the more. Convict us, cut us to the heart. Do what only you can do. Fill us with your Spirit today. Help us, O God. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Please rise as we honor the Lord, as we read from Him. We're going to read all of Ruth chapter 3, starting in verse 1.

[2:32] Then Naomi, her mother-in-law, said to her, My daughter, should I not seek rest for you? Then it may be well with you. Is not Boaz our relative with whose young women you were?

See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. Wash, therefore, and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak, and go down to the threshing floor. But do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.

But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do.

And she replied, All that you say I will do. So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her. And when Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain.

Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. At midnight, the man was startled and turned over. And behold, a woman lay at his feet.

[3:45] He said, Who are you? And she answered, I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer.

And he said, May you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter, for you have made this last kindness greater than the first. You have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich.

And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask. For all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman.

And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet, there is a redeemer nearer than I. Remain tonight. And in the morning, if he will redeem you, good.

Let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the Lord lives, I will redeem you. He will redeem you. He will redeem you. He will redeem you.

[4:47] He will redeem you. So, she lay at his feet until the morning. But a rose or one could recognize another. And he said, Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.

And he said, Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out. So she held it. And he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city.

And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, How did you fare, my daughter? Then she told her all that the man had done for her, saying, These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.

She replied, Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out. For the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today.

This is God's holy and authoritative word. Please be seated. Everyone loves a good proposal story.

[5:56] Let me tell you about the most persistent one that I know. And in fact, give you some insight into some Kang family lore. When they were dating, my dad asked my mom to marry him six times.

And got rejected six times. My mom said that she was shocked the first time, but even more shocked that he asked another time, and then another time, and then another time.

I think he just bombarded her, beat her down with these proposals, so that she had eventually just said yes. Have you ever noticed that genuine surprise during proposals rarely happens today?

We plan, quote-unquote, surprise proposals. Staging photographers, hiding expensive rings, even organizing flash mobs. Did you know that you can even hire a professional proposal planner these days?

But we know it's all just a bit of a ruse, right? We know it's not fully a surprise. Almost always, the couple has already agreed.

[7:11] They have already talked about it in getting married. So what is a surprise? It's not that you ask, but how you ask. A real surprise proposal is one where the parties haven't even talked about getting married yet.

A real surprise proposal is one where you actually have a chance of getting rejected. And as I remind you, like my dad did, six times. In Ruth 3, we have a surprise proposal, if there ever was one.

Ruth was young. Boaz was old. She was poor. He was rich. She was a foreigner. He was an Israelite.

They're not a thing. They're not talking. They're not a relationship. They're not dating. And to top it all off, she asks him, in the middle of the night, after waking him up from a deep sleep, this is the surprise proposals of all surprise proposals.

But the only thing more surprising than her proposal is the fact that he says yes. In incredible compassion and covenantal loyalty, and really, in a unique biblical masculinity, that he uses his power and position to be able to lift up others instead of for self-gain, in that he promises to redeem her.

[8:46] Ruth chapter 3 is a beautiful, beautiful proposal story of sacrifice, of love, of redemption. And in particular, we ought to pay attention this morning because this is our story.

Like Ruth, all we sinners were poor and needy, sick and sore, undeserving and helpless, without any options to secure our future. But in remarkable kindness that goes beyond all comprehension, Christ has agreed to redeem us.

This chapter opens up with Naomi seeking rest for Ruth. And then it closes with Naomi telling Ruth that she can now rest.

Why? Because Boaz won't. He won't rest until the matter is settled. And so we too, when we have the promise that Christ will redeem us, we, brothers and sisters, can now rest.

Rest because Christ won't. That's my main encouragement for you this morning, is to find rest in your Redeemer who will not rest until we can.

[10:07] In turn, we're going to talk about how these three main characters relate to rest. How Naomi first seeks rest, then Boaz requests rest, and then finally, how Boaz, he secures rest.

We're weeks after the events of chapter two, but chapter three has a very similar literary structure. Both start with Naomi and Ruth in the home, really planning how to survive given their scenario. Then the scene transitions to the field where Ruth and Boaz, they interact. And then finally, third scene is back in the home where Ruth comes home and tells Naomi all that that happened.

So both chapters two and three have this clear chiasmic ABA structure, but there's one major difference between these two chapters, between chapters two and three.

And it's found in the very first verse of this chapter. Do you see it? In chapter two, Ruth boldly initiates a plan to go out gleaning among the fields for sustenance, for survival, to provide for her mother-in-law Naomi.

[11:25] But in chapter three, it is Naomi, Naomi, who initiates an arguably even bolder plan to be able to provide rest, seek rest for the good of her daughter-in-law, Ruth.

It's flipped here. Do you see that? She asks, my daughter, should I not seek rest for you that it may be well with you? What's the rest that she is seeking?

It's the rest that could be found in the house of a husband. That's a clear echo for her desire in Ruth, for Ruth in chapter one, where she prays in verse nine, may the Lord deal kindly with you. The Lord grant that you may find rest each of you in the house of her husband. Two widows, no husbands, no sons, no stable income, no future, and no way to secure one.

If their situation did not change, it's possible, it's very possible that they even would have to sell themselves into slavery just to make ends meet.

[12:36] So Naomi wants Ruth to find rest, find rest in a husband who can finally provide, protect, and produce an heir for her. So what's her big, bold plan then?

Her big, bold plan to get a man. She wants her to find Boaz and ask him to marry her. So first, she tells Ruth to wash up, put some perfume on, make herself look presentable.

It sounds very reasonable, sounds a lot like us, right? Rare is the girl who goes to that friend's hangout in just a raggedy t-shirt, sweatpants, when she knows that that guy will be there.

Right? Her crush will be there. It's very natural, right? We all, both men and women, want to present our very best to get the attention of others. And that very much could be the part, part of what Naomi is planning for Ruth here.

But there may be even more to this suggestion. In the ancient Near East, it was customary for widows who just recently lost a spouse, lost their husbands, to wear special garments that signified mourning and loss.

[13:57] Ruth very much could have been wearing these special garments since the death of her husband. So Naomi may be telling her it's time to put off these garments and it's time to present yourself as available again.

So far, we track with this plan to get a man. But this next part is where it gets interesting, to say the least.

All right, let's just read it exactly. Go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies.

Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do. What in the world? What is this all about?

She's telling Ruth to go to the place, his workplace, watch him, don't let him see you, but watch him, essentially stalk him until he eats and drinks and then falls asleep.

[15:01] And then go up to him, uncover his feet, and lay next to him. We clearly need some historical context to make sense of this plan. Unfortunately, the text doesn't make it exactly clear of the rationale that Naomi has for Ruth, so it's hard to know exactly, but I think that there are two main things, main needs that this plan addresses.

Right, number one, the plan for, the need for privacy, and two, the need for respect. Number one, the need for privacy. This isn't in, like, our modern times where you could just DM somebody, text somebody, where you can have a private conversation that way.

Boaz is a busy man with a lot of servants around him continually. It's likely a small community where everybody knows everybody. It's probably hard to have a truly private conversation with him, one where no one would be watching and then spreading rumors.

Did you see that Ruth was talking to Boaz? And even if Ruth could find a small sliver of time to talk to Boaz, at the end of Ruth 2, we read that it was the end of the barley and wheat harvests in verse 23.

So if those harvests were ending, it very much could have meant that there wasn't going to be much more opportunity for Ruth to naturally interact with Boaz on the fields.

[16 : 32] So Naomi tells Ruth to approach Boaz privately at a time where everyone else would be asleep so that they could truly have a private conversation.

Secondly, the need for respect. Given women back then were not the ones to propose, it could have been a very great offense, an act of dishonor for Boaz if she just stomped into the field, shook him awake, and demanded that he marry her.

So she teaches Ruth to wake him up in a most delicate way, just by exposing his feet so that he'd just wake up from the cold more naturally. And then finally, he tells her to follow his lead when she says, he will tell you what to do.

In her plan, Naomi seems to try to toe this line between boldly taking the initiative and while respectfully submitting to his leadership.

But while Naomi is trying to preserve as much respect possible for Boaz, this really nonetheless is an extremely bold plan.

[17 : 49] At her core, it's a plan to get a menial, marginal, Moabite woman married to a worthy, wealthy, Israelite man.

Just seeing how bold this plan is then, we must observe. I want us to slow down and see how the lamenting, bitter Mara in chapter one is gone.

Here now is the daring, bold, hoping Naomi who is seeking the welfare of her daughter-in-law. Do you remember what happened in chapter one?

Who Naomi is, how she describes herself. She says, don't call me Naomi, don't call me pleasant, call me Mara, call me bitter. Biblical counselors have pointed to Naomi in chapter one as an example in scripture of someone who is depressed.

She struggles with an overwhelming sense of loss, that's the first sign. as a result, her heart, her speech is continually bitter, downcast.

[19 : 00] You see it in how she just tells the whole neighborhood of how much God has taken away from her. She also isn't able to give thanks for anything good in her life.

She's able to return from Moab back to Israel, back to her homeland, something to praise God for. There's also the fact that the famine is over, something else to praise for.

And most significantly, she has Ruth, a devoted and worthy woman, a woman who's worth more than ten sons. And she's committed to her, sticking by her side.

But even when there are blessings in God's hand that he's granting her, she isn't able to see any of that. And then worst of all, she accuses the Lord of dealing very bitterly with her.

She's become very angry against the Lord, seeing him as a divine bully, not as a heavenly father. Yet, even after that wrongful accusation against the Lord, in his kindness, he does not give up on her.

[20 : 15] God doesn't come charging toward her with his finger pointed at her. How dare you say that against me? But in his compassion, he does not give up on her.

He does not abandon the good plan that he has for her, to not just leave her empty, but to bring her back full. God is so kind to deal with Naomi, not as she deserves, but works in her life to redeem her once again, in ways she's never even expected.

In chapter two, Sean talked about how one random day, Ruth just so happens to stumble upon the field of Boaz, who just so happens to be a kinsman redeemer.

And from there, you see, little by little, day by day, she begins to change. At the end of chapter two, she observes that Boaz is a redeemer.

It sounds a lot like maybe there's a tinge of hope there. And then weeks later, look at this bold plan that she's coming up with. So she's changed, she's released from this crippling depression, and she now is taking the initiative, thinking about the welfare of her daughter-in-law, and she's daring to hope again.

[21 : 32] When God intervenes, the depressed, the disappointed, the downcast, they truly can hope again. Maybe that's you this morning.

You feel stuck. You feel lost in life. You see nothing to be thankful for. You don't think anything will change. Your health won't change.

Your marriage won't change. Your joblessness won't change. You won't change. Friends, that is the voice of Satan.

That is the devil trying to keep you down, keeping you from trusting in the Lord. Change is possible because he is working for you, and he will not rest until you are at rest.

If it could happen to Mara, it can happen to you. Today, we may be Mara, but in ways that we don't understand or comprehend, in ways we don't even control, one day by God's mysterious providence, we can find ourselves like Naomi, full of life, full of hope again, planning and dreaming, big plans, hoping again, taking it one day at a time then, cling to the hope in the Lord that he has provided for you, the Lord who will not rest, taking it one day at a time, by the strength that he provides for you, preach the gospel to yourself.

[23:08] Don't just listen to yourself. Say, why are you downcast, oh my soul, hope in God? And one day at a time, trust that he is providentially working all things for your good.

through that stacked obedience then, Mara will turn into Naomi. By the grace of God, it is remarkable to see Naomi bounce back, bounce back on our feet and offer this plan to Ruth. But again, what's even more remarkable is how Ruth agrees to it. Because though this is a bold plan, it's also an incredibly risky plan.

For one, she puts her reputation on the line. What if she's caught in the middle of the night, alone with Boaz?

Do you know what that would mean for her and for her reputation? What kind of rumors would spread? What kind of things would they call her? In that kind of society, it would have all but ruined her future chances of getting married to anybody.

[24:24] So in the truest sense, this is an all or nothing gamble. And not just a gamble with her reputation, but she gambles with her own life, her own well-being.

She already did that in chapter two, but now the stakes are even higher. Why? Because she's going out in the middle of the night. For all our cultural advancement, women still today know the particular fear of going out alone at night.

Constantly aware of your surroundings, trying to read the body language of all these men around you. You feel the need to hold your keys in a fist just in case you have to fight your way out. How much more then in a time when men did whatever they saw fit, and frankly the wicked debauchery of the time of the judges? How much more is Ruth than risking by being alone in the dark?

Where Ruth is going is not an isolated place either. The threshing floor back then was known to be a very public place. So Boaz, he wouldn't be the only man there that night.

[25:41] Not only that, but threshing floors at that time often became a place of illicit sexual behavior. Knowing that men would spend the night in the fields alone, prostitutes, they would regularly offer their services to these men.

The prophet Hosea rebukes Israel for this very behavior in Hosea 9.1. So what if men found her in those fields?

What would they think to do? What would Boaz think to do? In order for this plan to work, Ruth has to be alone with Boaz, right?

But that privacy unavoidably also creates vulnerability. What if Boaz got the wrong idea and he treated her inappropriately?

Would there be anyone to save her? This plan could have gone wrong in a million different ways. She has every excuse in the book to say, nah, I'm not going to do that.

[26:54] But to this big, bold plan, she simply agrees. Don't just move past this in the narrative. There are no ifs, no buts, no conditions, but just a simple, I will do as you say.

She is remarkably brave. Some of these women in scripture, man, they are absolutely courageous, valiant, fearless.

They put some of the men in scripture to shame. Love for Naomi. But it's not just being courageous for her own sake. She is courageous in the name of love for Naomi.

She, of course, has much to gain by marrying Boaz. Don't get me wrong. He's a rich guy. She's a poor girl. She has much to gain. But it seems like Ruth primarily does this out of love for Naomi. Naomi. That's how Boaz comments on her proposal. In verse 10, he interprets it as a kindness to Naomi, greater than the last, not by pursuing younger men, whether rich or poor.

[28:03] An older man was probably not the first ideal choice for a young woman, especially for a widow. That means she could have been widowed twice in her life. But she does it out of covenantal loyalty to her mother-in-law because she knows that Boaz is a kinsman redeemer.

There's a provision in the Old Testament law that's called levirate marriage. It's an important fact to know here. In which when a man with no children, he dies, his brothers can and should marry his

widow to produce an heir to carry on the family name.

And so through marrying Boaz, who is again a redeemer, Ruth knows that she can continue on the lineage of Elimelech and to produce an heir for Naomi's family, knowing that that would completely change her future, her fate.

So in sum, it really is a beautiful picture of these two women seeking to outdo one another and showing honor. Naomi is seeking the welfare of Ruth by helping her to get a husband.

Ruth is seeking the welfare of Naomi by raising up an heir for her. It is a great reminder that we advance ourselves, not by primarily advancing our own agenda, looking out only for ourselves, but seeking the betterment of others.

[29:32] So she goes, she goes to the threshing floor and she does everything that Naomi commanded. She watches him sleep after he eats and drinks merrily and she creeps up behind him, uncovers his feet, lays next to him.

Bethlehem sits on an elevated ridge and so nights are considerably cool and in particular, threshing floors were chosen in particularly windy places.

So exposing his feet was a sure way to wake him up. perhaps he shifts his legs around, right?

Trying to kick the blanket right back over his feet. He's cold, but he touches something. What?

What's that? He sits up and is immediately jump-scared awake. Someone was lying at his feet, startled awake, Boaz asks, who are you?

[30:43] Who are you? So she humbly, submissively replies, I am Ruth, your servant. And then she makes her request, spread your wings.

Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer. She's hearkening back to what Boaz told her in chapter 2, that she's come under the wings of the Lord to find refuge.

So in essence, she's asking him to be the very answer of the blessing that he gave in chapter 2.

He's asking her to cover her, shelter her, protect her under his wings in the covenant of marriage.

God also uses similar language when he uses his phrase, he describes his marriage with Israel in Ezekiel 16, 8.

When I passed by you again and saw you, behold, you were at the age of love, and I spread the corner of my garment over you, which is literally in the Hebrew, to spread my wings over you, and covered your nakedness.

[31:51] I made my vow to you and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord God, and you became mine. marriage is one of those very, very rare lifelong commitments that we make in life.

You can find another job. You can find other friends. You can go to another church. You can never find another spouse.

Consider the weight of the commitment that she is asking him. So to this question, if Boaz says, no, I'm good, no one would blame him.

In fact, Boaz had every right to say no. Ruth, when she makes this appeal, she specifically appeals to the laws of redemption, which are outlined most clearly in Leviticus 25, when she calls him a redeemer.

But those laws actually had nothing to do with marriage. all that redeemers had to do was just give a little money to a financially struggling family member. It was just money that they had to give.

[33:05] So technically speaking, he's not obligated to marry her. And I also mentioned already the practice of levirate marriage, but I must be clear, as far as we know it and what's really clearly written in scripture, it only obligates a dead man's brother, a brother to marry his widow and raise an heir.

Boaz is not Malon's, Ruth's husband's brother. And as we found out later, Boaz isn't even the closest relative. So these laws do not directly obligate him to do this.

So to recap, Boaz is half asleep, shivering cold, blindsided by this ask to take care of a poor Moabite woman for the rest of his life.

and then finally to raise a child that wouldn't legally be his. And yet, when he is put to the sudden test, Boaz's character, his kindness, shine through as he assuages all of her potential fears.

And in this, I want us to pay attention because you really get a model of what a man is like. a true biblical man. There are a lot of bad examples, a lot of bad role models out there where younger men are looking up to modeling.

[34:31] We need to look at Boaz for what a man truly is like. What it looks like for a man to use his power and position for the betterment of others. She could have wondered whether he would be angry.

But immediately, his opening words break all the tension because he begins by blessing her. In a scenario where he could have very much been annoyed, angry, why'd you wake me up?

He begins by blessing her. In a time where many other men might have cursed Ruth as a Moabite dog, as an immoral prostitute, he begins by blessing her.

She could have been afraid that he would look down on her. But instead, he honors, he admires her, tells her that everyone can see that she is a worthy woman.

It's a reference to Proverbs 31, an excellent wife who can find. She is far more precious than jewels. Many women have done excellently, but you surpassed them all.

[35:45] Why does he heap praise and praise and praise upon her? Is it because of her charm, her beauty? He's saying that she is this precious jewel of a woman because of her godly character, because of her love for Naomi.

Really, in a world that is deceived by outward beauty, women who feel the need to dress up and be always put together. It takes godliness to appreciate godliness.

Not only that, but he is also incredibly humble. There's not a whiff of arrogance to him. He's rich, influential, powerful, a lot of people working for him.

And now he even has women flocking to him, asking to marry her. But he doesn't let any of that go to his head. Instead, he points to the stuff that makes him an unattractive suitor.

He says, how kind you are to Naomi, because you're marrying an old guy. But even that, he exaggerates his age. He's clearly young enough to work all day in the field.

[36:56] He's young enough to spend the night in the fields. In great humility, then, he draws all the attention to Ruth, honors her and her sacrifice instead of being puffed up with pride.

She could have been afraid, finally, that he would say, no. So in compassion, in great compassion, he finally puts himself in her shoes and knows how terrifying this whole ordeal must have been for her.

So he assures her, do not fear. Do not fear. And finally, makes his vow. As the Lord lives, I will do all that you ask.

He says, yes. In an extraordinary turn of events, when Naomi commanded Ruth to do everything that Boaz tells her in verse four, Boaz is now telling her that he will do everything that Ruth has asked.

Ruth has introduced herself as her servant, as his servant. But here he is serving her. And he does it really with a God-fearing, law-abiding righteousness, a commitment to obey God in all things.

[38:14] A lot of people read Ruth as a romance story. And I certainly did for a long time. Maybe there is some romance here, but it's certainly not the kind of romance story that we're used to.

We're used to the Romeo and Juliet, the all-encompassing, all-consuming love that must have one another no matter what, no matter what the rules are, even if they're God's good rules.

I think that easily then turns to this wrong application. We easily excuse adulterous relationships, homosexual relationships, unequally yoked relationships, all in the name of love.

We have idolized romantic love so much, placed so much value on it, and placed it above the need to submit to God's good laws.

Sean has said before, it's helpful, that too many of us see God's laws as a straitjacket limiting us, binding us, preventing us from getting what we want, when in actuality, it is a life jacket.

[39:36] It gives us life when we obey God's good laws, good plans. Boaz understands this rightly, so he is willing to redeem her, but he patiently, carefully wants to follow the order and the pattern that God has established.

And when he does that by letting her know there is a nearer redeemer than me, we have to give him the first opportunity. She could have been afraid, moving on to another fear of being taken advantage of, but Boaz is also righteous in maintaining total purity.

There are, again, some who interpret this encounter in Ruth 3 to be actually an illicit counter between Ruth and Boaz. They say that Naomi made Ruth look sexually available.

It's at night. Boaz has been drinking, and a lot of Hebrew words actually in this passage could be understood to have more kind of sexual overtones, like the word for feet actually could be a euphemism for the male sexual organ.

But I just don't think that this is the case here, mainly because of what Boaz says here. He's saying, I'm willing to marry you, but I'm just not sure if another will have you instead.

[41:01] So I just don't see that Boaz, worthy Boaz, is engaging with an act with someone he just doesn't know will be his wife yet.

So even in a possibly tempting situation for him, when they're all alone, Boaz maintains total purity and total innocence before the Lord.

And then finally when she could have been afraid for her safety and her reputation, he protects her. Even if she may not be his wife, as a godly man, observe how Boaz leads in protecting her.

First, he doesn't just drive her out to go home in the middle of the night where there could be dangerous men lurking around. He tells her to find shelter under his wings in that night.

Then once it's near dawn, the danger of the dark has mostly passed, but now being caught with Boaz in the threshing floor, that's the main problem.

[42:07] So Boaz tells himself, let the woman not be seen, and gives her six measures of barley. Definitely a generous provision for a poor widow and her mother-in-law, but also a possible alibi to give reason why she was at the field, lest anyone find her on the way home.

She could just say, oh, I was just picking up food. So in some, he is kind, empathetic, humble, comforting, encouraging, righteous, generous, wise, protecting.

This is a man. There's one more fear to address. Will he follow through? Ruth returns to Naomi to share all that had happened that night.

She tells her everything Boaz said and shows her the barley, and the barley should be proof enough of Boaz's commitment to her.

But I bet a lot of us could relate to this feeling. Maybe as she's telling this story, anxious anticipation starts to creep in. maybe she starts to pace around, wondering how it all played out.

[43:25] Will he actually follow through? That's why Naomi tells her to wait, or more literally, sit down. Sit down. It's a complete contrast to the first scene.

First scene, she has a bunch of things that she needs to do. Go wash up, go change, go ask this, do this and that and this and that. now, what's the command?

It's to sit. Wait. She has the utmost trust in Boaz and his character that he will not renege on his promise to her.

In fact, he will not rest. He will not rest until the matter is complete. In this, she bookends, like I said, this entire chapter, which opens with Naomi seeking rest and now Ruth can sit down.

She can now rest because she has found a redeemer who will not rest until she can. All this about Boaz ought to remind you of another man, another willing redeemer who's redeeming a people who cannot save themselves.

[44:42] is not Ruth 3 simply a version of our own stories? We live in a different culture and time, most of us in a very different socioeconomic status.

We don't need to be redeemed in that same sense that Ruth and Naomi did, but does that mean that we are any more stable or secure? It doesn't mean that we are finally at rest.

rest. We need rest. We are tired. We need rest from the desperate toil of always trying to prove ourselves to others.

Rest from the constant anxiety about our own health and the way that we look. Rest from the constant attack from the enemy. We need rest from always trying to hold our lives together by the little strength that we have.

Are you tired this morning? Are you at rest, brothers and sisters? We know we need the help that we can't find in ourselves.

[45:51] We need the help of a redeemer. But like Ruth and Naomi, we know that we have no right to this man. We have nothing to offer this man.

In fact, we are even worse off because Ruth, she's never even sinned against Boaz. But our redeemer, he knows us.

He knows exactly who we are, exactly what we have done. He knows we have wronged him in countless ways. And Hebrews 3 tells us that the wilderness generation of Israel, they weren't able to enter into God's rest.

Why? Because of their sin. So what will this redeemer say to us? Against all odds, even when God would have been perfectly righteous to reject us, he immediately bursts forth with blessing.

Just like Boaz, immediately bursts forth in blessing. We can't ever catch God off guard. We can't catch him sleeping. But even if we could, God's immediate reaction is to burst forth with divine blessing.

[47:08] Hear this quote, God is slow to anger. He doesn't have his finger on the trigger. It takes much accumulated provoking to draw out his ire.

Unlike us, who are often emotional dams, ready to break, God can put up with a lot. This is why the Old Testament speaks of God being provoked to anger by his people dozens of times, especially in Deuteronomy, 1 and 2 Kings, and Jeremiah.

But not once are we told that God is provoked to love or provoked to mercy. His anger requires provocation. His mercy is pent up, ready to gush forth.

We tend to think divine anger is pent up, spring-loaded. Divine mercy is slow to build. It's just the opposite.

Divine mercy is ready to burst forth at the slightest prick. He needs not time to muster up the willingness to save you, to redeem you.

[48:14] How do we know this? John 6, 37, whoever comes to me, whoever comes to me, I will never cast out, Jesus says. Christ, in fact, he is the one who has been in search of you.

He is the good shepherd that leaves the 99 to go in search of the one. In a frantic and desperate search, he is searching for you.

Jesus, he is the father who constantly is anxious looking out of his window to see if his prodigal son will return home. He is not at rest.

And then once he sees his son return, he is launched into a full-on sprint to run after a broken and prodigal people.

The father was not at rest until we are at rest. So when Jesus came to the earth, he didn't come just to rest, just to be served, but he came to work, to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

[49:25] That's ultimately shown in the cross. The greatest sacrifice in which he dies in the stead of sinners. He resurrected on the third day and he's now seated on the right hand of the Most High.

But even in heaven, he is not idle. He is not idle. He is laboring. Hebrew tells us that he still labors, interceding, praying on your behalf.

He will not rest until he has brought you into his rest. Friends, we are tired and we need rest, don't we?

We have that. We have that in Jesus. Now, it means we won't experience full Sabbath rest, no.

Living on this side of heaven means we still get tired, we still wage war with our sin, but today, today we can enter into rest.

We can sit down and rest because our redeemer is working. You can rest from earning God's favor because Christ has earned it for you.

[50:43] You can rest from seeking the approval of man because Christ already thinks the world of you. He thinks you are precious and he loves you. you can rest from the exhausting work of holding your life together because you are held by him.

Brothers and sisters, we have a champion fighting for us. You have a husband committed to you, a redeemer who's working for you. So we ought to find rest in that man, the man who will not rest until we can.

let's pray. Heavenly Father, we pray for that kind of rest more and more in our lives. Help us to experience it fully.

Help us to release control. We are a people that is obsessed with control, a people that don't trust you enough, that you have our best intentions in mind.

Make us a people that will submit all things to you, trust you entirely, and know that we are held by you, oh God. We look to you.

[51:57] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.