Redemption by the Son

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[0:00] Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the Redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, Turn aside, friend. Sit down here.

And he turned aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, Sit down here. So they sat down. Then he said to the Redeemer, Naomi, who has come back from the country of Boab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech.
So I thought I would tell you of it and say, Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not, tell me that I may know.
For there is no one beside you to redeem it, and I come after you. And he said, I will redeem it.
Then Boaz said, The day you buy the field from the hands of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance.
Then the Redeemer said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself. I cannot redeem it. Now, this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging.
[1:10] To confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other. And this was the manner of attesting in Israel. So when the Redeemer said to Boaz, Buy it for yourself, he drew off his sandal.

Then Boaz said to the elders and to all the people, You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belong to Elimelech and all that belong to Chilion and to Malon.
Also, Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Malon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place.
You are witnesses this day. Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel.
May you act worthily in Ephratath and be renowned in Bethlehem. And may your house be like the house of Perez, who Tamar bore to Judah because of the offspring that the Lord will be abused by this young woman. So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife.
And he went into her and the Lord gave her conception and she bore a son. Then the woman said to Naomi, Blessed be the Lord who has not left you this day without a redeemer. And may his name be renowned in Israel.
[2:23] He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age. For your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him. Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse.

And the woman of the neighborhood gave him a name saying, A son has been born to Naomi. They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. Now, these are the generations of Perez.
Perez fathered Hezron. Hezron fathered Ram. Ram fathered Aminadab. Aminadab fathered Nashon. Nashon fathered Salmon. Salmon fathered Boaz. Boaz fathered Obed.
Obed fathered Jesse. And Jesse fathered David. This is God's holy and authoritative word. You may be seated. Most Christian testimonies, our story of how we came to know Jesus and believe in him as our Lord and Savior, centered on some pivotal event in our lives and how we responded to it.
Maybe you grew up in a Christian family like me and had significant spiritual events as you grew up. You probably always knew that Jesus loved you. But as you aged, maybe he became more real

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and clear to you through specific times of worship or a mission strip or praying or talking with somebody.
[3:40] Maybe you didn't grow up in a Christian family, but persistent conversations with a Christian friend moved you from skeptic to questioning and then from questioning to belief. Maybe you had a dramatic life event.

You hit rock bottom. Your circumstances were extremely changed. And it made you consider eternity for the first time. My testimony, though, starts before I was born.
Due to pre-existing health conditions, my parents realized that any pregnancy that they had would be high risk. And so they started applying to adoption agencies. Many places at the time had years-long waits for babies.
My parents were already in their late 20s and they were starting to get concerned that maybe parenting wouldn't work out for them. But one day, a Christian adoption agency called them back and said that they would have a family alignment ready in a matter of months instead of years.
And so, a few days after I was born, I was in the arms of my mom and dad. My birth mother was 16 when she had me, and my birth father had left her before I was born. But, right when I was born, I went from a physically desperate situation and a situation where I may never have heard about Jesus into a loving Christian family.
[4:52] Because of my past, spiritual adoption into God's family has always made a lot of sense to me. Family is not the normal nuclear family group and blood relations. It's about the love and choice of parents for children.

And our inclusion in God's family doesn't depend on us. It depends on God's work and adoption. God is the one who forms our families. And that's a testimony that we all hold.
We've all been adopted by God the Father and we've all gained spiritual family. Jesus is our older brother. And then, along with all the brothers and sisters and spiritual fathers and mothers in the church here that we sit with today, and we're going to see in Ruth that God has always been working this way.
God forms a family in Ruth 4. He's going to take Ruth the Moabite, and he's going to ingrain her fully into Israel, the Old Testament family of God, through her marriage to Boaz.
He's going to give the widowed and bereaved Naomi a new son. And he's going to graft Boaz into a new family lineage. The patience and faithfulness of all our main characters pays off today in the story.
[5:55] The first scene, the marriage to Ruth, is the longest part of our passage. And it's going to require some explaining up front. We start in verse 1 by seeing Boaz come into the city gates, the main thoroughfare, and wait for the Redeemer to show up.

Quick reminder from last week, we saw in Ruth 3 that Boaz is ready to marry Ruth and buy Naomi's estate. But due to some legal expectations we'll get to in a minute, there's another closer member of Naomi's family who has first dibs to both the land and to Ruth.
The Redeemer comes into town, likely as part of an expected daily commute, and Boaz calls him aside. It's interesting that we never get this closer relative's name. In the Hebrew, his name is sort of like nonsense rhyming words.
Maybe we call him Mr. So-and-so. Or you young kids out there might call him an NPC. As a lifelong gamer, hearing someone say NPC in real life in a real story is always like really weird to me.
To explain to us older folks, or unks out there, NPC is slang for someone who's in your life but you're not close to and they have nothing notable about them. They're sort of a background character in your story.
[7:04] And in this story, we've got a character so nondescript and so unremarkable that he doesn't even get a name. Before Boaz does anything for Ruth or Naomi, he needs to give this nearer relative a clear and legal option to explain it.

This is why he calls around ten elders of the city and asks them to sit down. To note and validate the transaction that's about to occur. We don't think about the need for this level of accountability in transactions, frankly, because all the modern paper trails and digital logs that we have provided for us.
But honestly, we have a very similar depth of accountability in our day-to-day transactions now. Imagine you're buying a book online from an e-commerce shop. My experience as a software engineer who works on some payment-adjacent platforms tells me that your book-selling website

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needs to go through a compliance audit of some sort to accept payments.
Or the partner that's working accepting your payments for you has to. Then, during your purchase, there's certificates validating that you're connected to the real website and not to a fake website. There's authorization checks to make sure you're actually the person that's logged in. There's live verification with a credit card company, similar to when you're at a grocery store, that it's a real credit card. There's background fraud detection at the time of purchase to make sure you didn't steal the card.
[8:21] There's spam protection software to make sure you're not a bot making the purchase. And some poor engineer probably spent a day or two making sure you, the purchaser, couldn't do something insane. Like buy zero books, or buy infinite books, or buy infinite books for zero dollars.

So, next time you click buy now, you can just picture ten old guys standing around you. One of them's like, yeah, you have enough money in your bank account. And the other one's like, yeah, you should buy this book, that makes sense.
And the third one says, yes, the seller actually owns the book and you're free to buy it. And so on. But the transaction in our story is about to be much more complicated than buying a book.
The other redeemer is going to pass on two big options. First, he's going to pass on the land redemption, and then he's going to pass on marriage, which are his to claim first through family rights. And Boaz is going to claim both of them.
So, this level of accountability we see here is absolutely necessary. With all the pieces in place, verse three begins the actual legal proceedings. Note that the first speech by Boaz about the land is specifically about redeeming the land of Naomi, which is different than just purchasing it.
[9:27] The story so far makes it clear this is a reference to the law in Leviticus 25, which I do have slides for. It states in verses 23 onwards, the land, speaking of the land in the promised land where the Israelites will live when Leviticus is written, shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine.

For you are strangers and sojourners with me, and in all the country you possess, you shall allow a redemption of the land. If your brother becomes poor and sells part of his property, then his nearest redeemer shall come and redeem what his brother has sold.
If a man has no one to redeem it, and then himself becomes prosperous and finds sufficient means to redeem it, let him calculate the year since he sold it, and pay back the balance to the man to whom he sold it, and then return to his property.
But if he does not have sufficient means to recover it, then what he shall sold will remain in the hand of the buyer until the year of Jubilee. In the Jubilee, it shall be released, and he shall return to his property.
So the scenario of redemption is less like buying property for yourself and more like helping out a family member who may be in debt. Now, my family owns a condo. I often tell people about our home buying experience in Somerville that we could not afford a house, but we could afford a third of a house.
[10:43] So I'm aware of how bad the housing market is. And so this didn't happen for us specifically, but I know in some scenarios, older family members, parents, grandparents, uncles, who have expendable cash are helping with gifts on down payments towards new places to make home ownership more achievable.

I'd say redemption is more equivalent to that practice than it is to something else like living in a rich relative's house or something. It's a selfless gift to help someone who is in need out of a tight spot and actually give them ownership of the thing.
So back to this story. When Boaz says Naomi is selling in verse 3, but tells Mr. So-and-so to redeem it in verse 4, the selling and the redeeming are actually two separate events.
As we know, Naomi and Ruth are both poor enough at this point that Ruth needs to go glean in fields regularly to get them food. And commentators assume that while Naomi was still a landowner, it's likely the land was loaned out at low or maybe even no value because she left for Moab during a famine.
And so when Naomi returns, it's possible that she either still has that loan deal going on where she's not getting much in return, or it's possible no one's working the land since she's returned, since she doesn't have any men in her family currently.
[12:01] Possibly it's just sitting unused. Selling the land is the best way to make ends meet quickly in this scenario for Naomi. With the present tense verb, she's likely in the process of that sale.

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Maybe she just agreed to it, or maybe the transaction is happening. Boaz is aiming to essentially intercept the sale through the act of redemption. However, in this scenario, there's a unique twist to the redemption.
There's no one else set to inherit the land. Naomi has no sons and no remaining lineage. The redemption as a goal of keeping it in Naomi's family is symbolic, almost in this case, without more context.
The closer kinsman jumps on this opportunity to redeem it, seeing that the opportunity is really that he'll gain the land for himself after Naomi dies. At that point, there would be no one to reasonably give it back to except for his own sons, who would then be the closest relatives.
But looking back at Leviticus, we clearly see that the purpose of redemption is not long-term land acquisition. The point is to keep the land in the family. It explicitly says that you redeem your kinsmen, redeem for your kinsmen, in order not to sell the land in perpetuity.
[13:08] The land is God's. So you can sort of picture the redeemer saying to himself, God, this is great. I get to uphold the law. I get to look like a good person. And I get to keep the land afterwards.

It feels like a movie scene. You can sort of see and thinking it's like, okay, I figured this out. I have a great deal. He's like reaching down for his sandal. And then Boaz is there and he's like, the day you buy the field, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead.
And he's like, stops for his sandal, stands back up. He has to think again now. This changes the equation. Now Boaz pulls out a different legal precedent that he's presenting separately, that of liberate marriage.
To understand why the kinsman goes from buying the field to suddenly backing out from the proposition, we need to understand more about this. And we'll read the relevant parts of that law from Deuteronomy 25. I also have this on slides.
It reads, Okay, so I'm fully aware of how weird this practice sounds in our current context.
[14:26] In fact, I actually had friends growing up when I was a teenager. It was a family of four sisters. And there was a guy that dated the older sister for a bit. And then I kid you not, he dated the next sister in line after he was done dating the older sister.

And I like to tell the third sister, Hey, you know, you're next, right? And she did not think that was funny. But similar to the redemption of land, this is not a weird dating practice.
There's a purpose of liberate marriage, and it's specifically designed to perpetuate a family line, not just arrange something convenient. Note specifically, verse 6 from Deuteronomy 25, the first son that the wife bears succeeds the name of the dead brother.
That means that if the kinsman redeemer marries Ruth and Ruth has a son, Ruth's son becomes the rightful heir of Naomi's land as her grandson. This is actually really similar to the land redemption practice.
Both are aimed at selfless preservation of family, not necessarily at any specific, like, selfish acquisition. Now, before I continue, you've probably noticed that for both land redemption and leverate marriage, they are both targeted at more immediate family.
[15:37] Both those passages use the word brothers. That's in contrast to Boaz and the other redeemer here. They both seem to be distant enough relations that they aren't even defined at how they're connected to Naomi's family.

In my American mind, I imagine this as if I was Naomi, I would see Boaz and the other kinsman redeemer at, like, family reunions, but I wouldn't see them at the yearly Christmas.
It's like their extra extended family, in a sense. And as I mentioned, the reference of both laws is the brothers, and particularly in liberate marriage, it's clearly designed for families with multiple sons.
So if the oldest brother marries and then dies, the next brother in line would marry the widow. In fact, if you remember from Matthew, the Sadducees challenged Jesus on this exact law. They ask if a man has seven sons and a woman marries each one of them after each one of them dies, who will she be married to in heaven?
That's definitely the practice Deuteronomy had in mind. Okay, so now we're doing some legal analysis. Law students, help me out here. I've heard it said that if you ask a lawyer a yes-no question, the answer is it depends.
[16:39] And I imagine that it would be similar in this case. Does liberate marriage and land redemption apply to Boaz? To answer this, it requires understanding the purpose of the relevant laws, not just the exact letter of those laws.

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It's safe to assume that Boaz and the elders are taking the original case law, extracting the principles, and then recontextualizing them and applying them for their own scenario. And their conclusion is that the original purpose of the laws is not just for immediate family.
The purpose is for preservations of family and land in Israel. And so, through careful consideration of God's word, Boaz and the elders understand the moral obligations to Naomi's family in this scenario to preserve her legacy inheritance and that that obligation falls on the nearest Redeemer.
So, because of this legal interpretation, the introduction of Ruth to the equation means the land acquisition benefits that the Redeemer had a minute ago are now suddenly at risk. As I mentioned, he has to marry a young woman and likely lose the land of their son.
So, he'd pay for something that would not come back into his family directly long-term. I suspect there's other layers here, too. It's possible that he has some prejudice against Ruth because Boaz says this is Ruth the Moabite in the context there.
[17:55] And while we don't have all the specifics, it's pretty easy to imagine a number of no-win scenarios for the nearest kinsman Redeemer if his purpose is I want to get land for myself. For example, imagine that the kinsman Redeemer actually has no sons currently, Mary's Ruth has an eldest son with her, and now his entire inheritance, along with Naomi's, goes to a half-Moabite son from his liver of marriage.

For someone thinking about their own profit and legacy, this is the worst-case scenario. So, he responds, I cannot redeem this for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance.
Boaz, however, is explicitly ready to take on this cost. Jumping ahead to verse 10, he says he's marrying Ruth to perpetuate the name of the dead in his, Elimelech's, inheritance.
Contrast that to the closest kinsman Redeemer who specifically says he's concerned about impairing his own inheritance. Boaz is aware of the cost he's taking on and is acting specifically to care for Ruth and Naomi and to perpetuate their family line.
And so, Boaz's generosity affirms here what we've heard throughout Ruth. He is a worthy man. This is the pinnacle of leveraging resources and wealth to care for those in need. If you attended my talk at the finance seminar earlier this year, you know that I asked everyone there in the opener a very specific question.
[19:17] Are you rich? Are you rich? And for most of us, globally and historically, the answer is yes. The very fact that many of us are not under subsistence living, in other words, we don't eat at night what we earn during the day, indicates that we are in fact wealthy.

This means it's safe to assume when we read this story, most of us here live in a scenario that's closer to Boaz's than to Ruth. So, I ask, are you leveraging your wealth for your Christian brothers and sisters' good to preserve their inheritance and well-being?
Let me ask him more directly. Is your bank account the Lord's? And I don't just mean, do you tithe to the church? I mean, how are you investing? If you have emergency savings in the bank, who is that for?
As a white-collar worker in tech who's been blessed by the Lord over the last decade, I am well-paid enough for my family to currently have a steady emergency fund. Picture that I lose my job or something else equivalently drastic happens, and my whole family's in need.
Everyone would think I was insane if I used the emergency money only for myself. And I told my family, eh, sorry, you're hungry. I'll pray for you. Our spiritual family is those sitting around you.
[20:33] And I do bet some of you are in need similar to how Ruth was. And I'll say, I've known brothers and sisters in this church who have dipped into their own emergency savings generously to bail out other church members in need.

And I think that's analogous to what Boaz is modeling for us here. Okay, so some will protest. Boaz, yeah, sure, generous, but doing it for gain. He's getting Ruth out of the deal.
That's true to an extent, but I think it's still a logical stretch in this scenario. Ruth is coming at a high long-term price, high enough that he's still being extraordinarily generous.
But I bring this up because I also know that that same argument is a common objection to Christianity. Aren't we all just here at church to do good things so that we can feel good about ourselves? Aren't we obedient because we're fear-motivated by religion?
We get good things if we obey, but if we don't obey, there's bad consequences. But that's not an accurate depiction of the Christian situation. We Christians give blessings, not to be blessed, but because we are already richly blessed.

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[21:37] Even Boaz knows this. The first words out of his mouth in this story, back in Ruth 2, he's walking into the field, he sees his workers, he says, the Lord bless you.

I say, as I said a minute ago, we're all well off here, or a lot of us are probably, but I don't know if anyone here directly employs people, like if we're talking about that level of wealth. Even with this amount of wealth, Boaz knows where his blessings come from.
And when he's in the midst of talking to Ruth in the field for the first time, he doesn't say, oh, I've heard good things about you, Ruth. Don't worry. I'll help take care of you. He says, a full reward be given to you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.
Boaz knows the correct ordering of the blessings. God blesses first, and then we respond to that out of gratefulness and trust. And we see this pattern of God blessing us, first, most clearly fulfilled in the person work of Jesus.
In 2 Corinthians 8, 9, Paul says of Jesus, For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you, by his poverty, might become rich.
[22:51] Jesus, the Son of God, died for us when we were spiritually poor. Sinners, distant from God, lost in our own ways, and he has made us spiritually rich in blessings.

In our fiscal life, let me be clear, many of us may be Boaz that are sitting here, but in our spiritual lives, we are all Ruth. We're destitute and lost without a redeemer to bring us back from the brink.
You may be here today feeling not interested in God explicitly because you think religion is a fear-based motivator. Or maybe you already are afraid. Maybe you're sitting here feeling like you owe God so much, or you're such a bad person, that you'll never pay it back.
Let me be clear. Jesus makes a free offer of riches for us. Forgiveness of all you've done wrong, a family now, a life with him forever, simply in exchange for trusting him as Savior and following him as Lord.
If you are living in fear right now, and you want to talk with someone about what it means to follow Jesus and be free, feel free to talk to me, our pastors, or honestly any church member after the service.
[23:57] We'd all be happy to talk with you and pray with you and share some of the ways that God has richly blessed us. Because I know our brothers and sisters here have those stories too.
Well, we've taken the very long way around to get to my first point.

Sorry for the note takers. God forms Ruth's family. With the closer redeemer now out of the picture, the marriage is official. The sojourner has a home, and all the people bless Ruth and Boaz.
Commentators note that we get some very specific people comparisons in the blessings in verses 11 and 12.
Ruth is blessed to be like Rachel and Leah, who together with Jacob bore all the tribes of Israel. But Rachel, even as the younger wife, and the second wife, and the one with less kids, is named first.
As is often the case in the Old Testament, there's hints of infertility at play in the story of Ruth. She's already been married when she was younger for a number of years, but didn't manage to have any kids at that time.
Rachel was in a similar position, but God still blessed her with sons after she cried out to him.
Tamar was actually also in a similar position to Ruth, as someone from outside of Israel who sought liberate marriage.
[25:04] Perez is her son through Judah, who's the start of the royal lineage to David, which we'll see in a minute. Though Tamar accomplished this through much more deceptive means, if you know the story. But she was still ultimately judged to be in the right.

How much more faithful has Ruth been in obeying and waiting on God patiently for provision? Both of these blessings affirm Ruth's place in God's family, along with a peculiar phrasing in verse 13.
So, Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. Commentators note, again, that typically, husband took bride is enough in the Old Testament to indicate, yeah, they're married.
But this is repetitive. Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. Imagine Sean closes a wedding by saying, I pronounce you husband and wife. And I pronounce you wife and husband.
The additional emphasis here is on Ruth. Ruth is brought into God's family, a daughter with as many rights and blessings as someone born in Israel. Now, the timeline is unknown, starting in verse 13.

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[26:03] But in the narrative, we move very quickly from Ruth getting married to having a son, confirming the blessings she's received. But then, somewhat surprisingly, the focus shifts to Naomi. Immediately after the birth, the woman say to Naomi, she's been blessed with a redeemer.

Obed, in this case. Her family will be perpetuated and cared for after many years of loneliness and questioning. More than a son, she's received a daughter with a love worth more than a full family of sons.

Clearly, this passage is meant as a foil to the one in Ruth 1. So, a reminder that in Ruth 1, Naomi is coming home from Moab. She does all the talking. She renames herself Mara, meaning bitterness, and expresses all that's been taken from her.

Here, the woman of the community do all the talking, reminding her that God has filled up her family after it being drained by death. Naomi obviously is pleased. She receives her grandson into loving arms.

We have this picture of my mom holding one of our kids soon after birth in the hospital, looking down and smiling and partly teary. It's a very sweet picture, and it's kind of what I picture here, being handed to the child for the first time.

[27:07] But there's some narrative tension in the air. Why doesn't Naomi say anything here? Before we had Pearl, our oldest daughter, Lauren and I went through two miscarriages.

I don't think I've ever quoted myself on a public speech, and I don't plan to ever do it again. But I did guest write a blog post in late 2015 for a friend. Soon after the second miscarriage, but before we knew if we would ever have kids.

I want to share part of that blog post now because God spoke to us in specific ways at that time, ways that helped me understand the Naomi here. This is what I wrote in 2015. One miscarriage seemed acceptable, I suppose.

It was painful and miserable, and I assumed it just wasn't likely to happen again. But the second one seemed nearly unfair. I was upset and never processed it as well as the first one. We shared our sad news with our church.

A small new church plan was Trinity. We were meeting at Sean's house at this point. They all prayed over us one Sunday evening while praying one woman, who was June, Sean's sister, who lived here at the time, read part of the end of the prodigal son to us.

[28:15] The response of the father to the elder brother. My son, the father said, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again.

He was lost and is found. The father told me in that moment that his love for us runs much deeper than I expected. That bitterness over not getting what others had, a healthy full-term pregnancy, was what I was feeling on top of the normal mourning process.

That though we can't fathom the experience of the suffering, these light and momentary troubles achieve for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. And praise God, we know the end of this story.

Lauren was able to undergo a specific medical surgery which allowed us to get pregnant shortly afterwards, and we had Pearl in mid-2017. So we also experience a happy ending like Naomi. But some things are hard to leave behind.

Pearl's middle name is Bereith, Mara in Hebrew, and in English, it's a blend of meanings. It's a family name, so it's an easy choice. And one meaning is Lady of the Sea, which fits well with the whole Pearl thing.

[29:24] But it also means Sea of Bitterness, which is where we lived for those couple years. You may be where Naomi was and where we were when you're in a tough spot.

You may be out or partly out of the suffering, but the memory's close. You may be sitting quietly absorbing what's going on. It's not easy to bounce back or to respond to God in those moments.

But you'll note we also named our oldest Pearl, which means precious, because she was and is precious to us. At the time we had Pearl, Sean sketched us a picture of a pearl in a clamshell with calligraphy.

It's beautiful, and the calligraphy is the brief parable of the pearl in Matthew 13, which reads, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who on finding one pearl of great value went and sold all that he had and he bought it.

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That's about God. God found us precious in his sight and gave his only son to buy us back. God's love runs much deeper for you than you expect, and when you feel that bitterness creeping in, I want you to know that he's with you.
[30:34] So that seems like it covers everyone. Ruth gets a family, Naomi gets a family, Boaz gets the girl, right? Well, Ruth is certainly a blessing in this context, and Boaz has made known his admiration for her throughout this book.

We actually don't see Boaz's full reward until the very end of the passage in the lineage. Boaz is getting grafted into a royal family, and it's actually kind of incredible if you think about all the details we just discussed a few minutes ago.
Boaz just jumped through all of these hoops and accountability and legal interpretation for one purpose, to maintain the line of Elimelech. So where's Elimelech?
Dr. Daniel Block, Old Testament professor, notes that, technically speaking, because Boaz was looking to perpetuate the name of the dead, this lineage should read something like, Elimelech fathered Malon, and Malon fathered Obed.
Instead, God has rerouted the entire genealogy of the greatest king of Israel, David, a man after God's own heart, through the path of Boaz and Ruth's family. Even more remarkable is Boaz's place of prominence in this genealogy.
[31:44] If you count, there's 10 total men in this. In fact, that's probably why the author started at Perez, the first son of Judah, to get the count to make the point. Commentators note that in this 10-person genealogy, in 10-person genealogies, the first person, usually significant, the 10th person, the most important, but the 7th person is a hinge point, a foretaste of the 10th.

In Genesis 5, in the genealogy of Noah, is another 10-person genealogy. The first person is Adam, important, the last is Noah, the subject of the story, but the 7th is Enoch, a foretaste of Noah. Enoch walks with God, just like Noah. And he's delivered from the judgment of the flood, just like Noah. Though he's delivered because he never dies. God simply takes him to heaven directly before the flood.
Shout out retreat trivia. One of the two men in the Bible that never died, Enoch. Also, church retreat people, the answer's wrong. There's three people that never died. Jesus is a priest in the line of Melchizedek, who has no beginning or end.
But I got the answer right. I don't care. I'm bitter. I'm just bitter because I missed a three-foot beanbag throw. That's fine. Anyways, Boaz is in the same boat as Enoch. He's a worthy man.
[32:53] A man after God's own heart, like David. Boaz is a mini preview of what's to come with David. After going through this book as a church, I've started visualizing the book of Ruth as a vertical slice of how God works in his people.

I don't know if you've heard of the vertical slice concept, but it's used in software to basically describe part of the software that's a full representation of everything that the software can do. There is a famous video game example of this.
And Sean thought he was getting through a sermon of that video game example from me, and he's wrong. It actually comes from the series The Legend of Zelda. In the early 90s, they made a portable entry for the series in the Game Boy called Link's Awakening.
Absolute top five video game, friendly for all ages, absolutely recommend. And I've heard a popular game critic discuss that the first 20 or so minutes of that game has everything the game has to offer.
You talk to some folks, you see some scenery, you do some combat, you get new tools, you explore new areas, you go to a dungeon, you fight a big monster, you get one of the key trinkets to move the story forward. If you play that first 20 minutes, you have not played the entire game, but you have experienced, you know everything you are going to get in that game.
[34:00] That's the book of Ruth and the story of Boaz. A slice of everything that we're going to get in David, and ultimately a taste of what we see in Jesus, who is also in the genealogy of Boaz and David. But even though Boaz is one of, foretaste of one of the greatest people to ever live, David, and the greatest person to ever live, Jesus, I've also loved our time in this book specifically because it has so many elements of ordinary life stories of people who follow Jesus.

This is God's standard operating procedure with people across the generations. We're all part of this. It's not in this book specifically, it's in Matthew 1, but we learn in Matthew's genealogy that Boaz's mother was actually Rahab, the Canaanite prostitute from Jericho.

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Another enemy foreigner married and adopted into the family of God. In this book, Boaz acts like a man who knows exactly what it's like to marry a foreigner who loves the Lord because that's part of his lineage. In some ways, I was able to trust God in our infertility because I saw his work in my parents when they couldn't have kids.
We all share the legacy of God's work in this book. We are all part of this lineage. So, we now see the ways God brings us into his family. But, today, maybe you don't feel like you've been given the blessing of closeness that all of our characters have here.
You may be sitting in church today, but you might feel alone. Where's your spiritual sons? Where's your spiritual brothers and sisters? Where's your spiritual fathers and mothers? Well, let me put it this way.
[35:30] My story of adoption isn't a success and it impacted me because my parents adopted me and then stopped. It's successful because my parents loved and cherished and prayed for me my entire life and continue to do so. Family is a labor of love.

Dr. Wesley Hill, professor of New Testament at the University of Toronto, regularly writes about what Christian friendship should look like. He brings a unique perspective. He's single. He believes in traditional orthodox theology, but also, in his words, has a steady, strong, unremitting, exclusive sexual attraction to persons of the same sex.
But, because he also shares our historic Christian convictions about marriage being between one man and one woman, he doesn't foresee a future for himself where he gets married. In his life of singleness, he has intentionally sought solace in his spiritual family, the church.
This quote is from an article in Christianity Today titled, Why Can't Men Be Friends? But, as you'll see, it extends to the longings we all have for family. It reads, I need people who know what time my plane lands, who will worry about me when I don't show up when I say I will.
I need people I can call and tell about that funny thing that happened in the hallway after class. I need to know that come hell or high water, a few people will stay with me, loving me in spite of my faults and caring for me when I'm down.
[36:44] Moreover, I need people for whom I can care. As a friend of mine put it, you want someone for whom you can make soup when she's sick, not just someone who will make soup for you when you're sick. As a single person, I feel these needs with a special poignancy.

But, these needs aren't limited to single people. I know two married couples in their 20s who recently decided to share a large house together. One of the couples has a small child and the wife of the other couple said to me, living together, I see more clearly how raising kids was never meant to be something two parents do on their own.
Being a young mother or father can be amongst the most isolating experiences in our fragmented culture. And what young parents need, perhaps above all, is the devotion of close friends who won't bail when the dirty diapers and spit up in nighttime cries are overwhelming.
And I know we already have people committing to this in our church. For example, we've had singles living with young families in the same apartments in this church and all the chaos and mess that brings. We have Jason and Nat running, Nat Jenkins, to be clear, running what I can only describe as a baby-beesitting psyop.
I don't know, they've started relentlessly offering to babysit our kids and other kids in the church to help families. And I'm really thankful for the ways they've been hospitable to our family and integrated themselves in. Even just attending community group regularly can be a small step towards us.
[38:01] As a dad of a young family, it's hard to be flexible to just hang out. And so a lot of the closer friends we've had in church over the past few years have been through our community group. A regular time to eat a meal, study, and pray together each week.

I want to speak to you. If you're in a spot where you already feel connected to this body of believers, do not assume that everyone feels this way. Make sure your brothers and sisters are loved and cared for that are around you.
Adoption isn't a single action. We instinctively know that being family, a good family, is hard work. We see Ruth and Boaz and Naomi all sacrifice greatly even as they receive God's blessings.
And we can strive in this, trusting that God has already formed us into his family and cares for us as our father. Let's pray. Lord, I thank you that you are our father.
You are not just some far off God. You are not just moving powerfully for us. You've not just talked directly with us, but you are a loving, good father for us. And I thank you that we are already formed

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into your family.
[39:16] We've been adopted as sons and daughters. I thank you that you see us in our difficulties, that you care for us, that you love us and everything you have is ours, or everything you have is ours.

Lord, I pray, I do pray for those who may feel alone in church this morning, Lord. It's a tragic thing to sit with the brothers and sisters of Christ and to feel this way and to think that there are people that feel that way.
And Lord, I pray that you would bring the church around these people. I pray that they would know that they are not alone. I pray that you would put on our hearts people to reach out to and care for specifically.
And Lord, I pray that we would all know that you care for us directly now. We are never alone. We are never alone. Lord, I pray as we go from here that you would bless us and that your word would stay with us.
In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
[40:26] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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