

ORDINARY FAITHFULNESS

THE MIDNIGHT PROPOSAL

RUTH 3

The Desire for Rest

3¹ Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? **2** Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. **3** Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. **4** Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do." **5** And she said to her, "All that you say to me I will do."

- The time of the harvest was about over, which means the generosity of Boaz was coming to an end
- Naomi realizes the harvest season is coming to an end
- Naomi what Ruth to have rest and security
- Security or rest refer to stability, a settled home, and the protection of marriage;
- Ruth didn't have stability or rest because she was a widowed foreigner living in Bethlehem
- Ruth and Boaz have had opportunities to get "acquainted" with each other over the harvest season
- Naomi knows that Boaz is more than a kind land owner; he's a kinsman-redeemer
- Naomi is not telling Ruth go out and hunt down Boaz and make him marry her
- Naomi knew that Ruth could be better taken care of if she was married
- Since Boaz is a kinsman-redeemer of her late husband Elimelech
- If Boaz does not fulfill his duty to Elimelech:
 - The name of Elimelech's family would die
 - Naomi and Ruth would live a life of poverty
 - Naomi and Ruth would be vulnerable to danger and exploitation
- Naomi understands that the end of the harvest season means the end of provision
- So, Naomi creates a plan because she recognizes that temporary survival must become permanent redemption
- Naomi sees Boaz as the key to restoring their future.
- Naomi comes up with a plan for Ruth to approach Boaz to exercise his responsibilities as her kinsman-redeemer
 - Naomi tells Ruth to *prepare herself*
 - Naomi tells Ruth to wash herself, anoint herself with oil/perfume, and put on her best clothes
 - Boaz will be at the threshing floor, winnowing barley
 - When Boaz lies down on the threshing floor, take notice of where he is
 - Uncover his feet
 - Boaz will tell you what to do

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- This is risky
- Walking by faith can sometimes seem risky, but walking by faith never means doing nothing
- **Question:** Are you waiting passively or actively preparing?
- Ruth tells Naomi, I'm going to do everything you said to me
- Ruth trusts Naomi
- Ruth humbly and wisely received the wise counsel of Naomi
- Many people want God's blessings, but they resist God's instructions
- Sometimes your breakthrough is connected to your obedience

Faith Requires Courageous Action

6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. **7** And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down. **8** Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. **9** And he said, "Who are you?" So she answered, "I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative."

- Ruth went down the threshing floor and followed Naomi's instructions
- Ruth is:
 - Moabite woman approaching an Israelite man
 - A poor widow approaching a wealthy landowner
 - About to make a bold request for redemption
- Ruth waits for Boaz to finish eating and drinking and fall asleep near the harvested grain
- Ruth quietly came to the threshing floor where Boaz was, and she uncovered his feet and lay down at his feet
- In the culture of that day, this was an act of total submission
- Ruth was approaching Boaz in a completely humble and submissive way
- Ruth is at the threshing floor to claim a right; Boaz is her kinsman-redeemer
- Ruth is following Naomi's wise advice and humbly uncovered his feet
- At midnight, Ruth uncovers Boaz's feet and lays at his feet and it startles Boaz
- Midnight is not just a time, it's a turning point, an hour of transition
- Midnight often signals divine intervention
- Midnight often represents the darkest moment just before God moves.
- Boaz turned over and asked who she was?
- Ruth says, I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative."
- Take your maidservant under your wing, be my protective covering
- Ruth is asking Boaz to be her kinsman-redeemer, her source of protection, her husband, her source of inheritance

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- Ruth is making a bold request
- Faith sometime requires us to do some uncomfortable things and trusting God to handle the results
- Ruth is showing us how faith moves from belief to action
- When we trust God, we can take bold steps knowing God is in control

God Honors Integrity and Godly Character

¹⁰ Then he said, "Blessed are you of the Lord, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. ¹¹ And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman. ¹² Now it is true that I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. ¹³ Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be that if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you--good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the Lord lives! Lie down until morning."

- Boaz responds with great respect for Ruth, "Blessed are you of the Lord, my daughter!
- Boaz says Ruth's kindness now is greater than in the past:
- Boaz admires Ruth because she didn't go after younger men or selfish gain
- Boaz said, I will do for you all that you request, I'll be your kinsmen-redeemer, "I am willing to redeem you and take responsibility for your future."
- Naomi's plan worked perfectly
- All the people in Bethlehem knew Ruth as a virtuous woman, i.e., a Proverbs 31 woman
- Boaz was attracted to Ruth because of her godly character
- The people of Bethlehem knew the character of Ruth because:
 - she cared for Naomi (Ruth 1:16–17)
 - she worked hard in the fields (Ruth 2:7)
 - she showed humility and gratitude (Ruth 2:10).
- Ruth's reputation was built on observable actions, not just words.
- Even though Boaz is a close relative and could be a kinsmen-redeemer and marry Ruth, he reveals that there is *another* kinsman-redeemer that's a closer relation to her late father in law, Elimelech
- Boaz refuses to cut corners and bypass the law
- If the closer relative chooses to perform his duty as kinsman-redeemer, good; if not, then Boaz will be the kinsmen-redeemer
- Boaz is a man of integrity, he's not trying to bypass the customs/laws of the day

Patiently Wait on God

¹⁴ So she lay at his feet until morning, and she arose before one could recognize another. Then he said, "Do not let it be known that the woman came to the

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threshing floor." ¹⁵ Also he said, "Bring the shawl that is on you and hold it." And when she held it, he measured six ephahs of barley, and laid it on her. Then she went into the city. ¹⁶ So when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "Is that you, my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her. ¹⁷ And she said, "These six ephahs of barley he gave me; for he said to me, 'Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.' " ¹⁸ Then she said, "Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day."

- Ruth lays at Boaz's feet until morning, but leaves the threshing floor before daylight, to protect their reputation
- Also, Boaz didn't want the other closer relative to find out that Ruth was exercising her right marry a kinsmen-redeemer before he told him personally
- Boaz told Ruth she would not leave empty-handed, he had something for her mother-in-law, Naomi.
- Boaz poured into it six ephahs of barley into Ruth's shawl
- This is not just Boaz being generous, it was a *message* to Naomi:
 - Message of respect to the matriarch of the family
 - Message of Boaz's intention to resolve the redemption issue
 - Message that the relationship with Ruth was moving from "temporary provision" to *permanent restoration*
 - Message that she won't be empty anymore
- But the six ephahs of barley are *not* seven (completeness), it signifies a work in progress
- As soon as Ruth gets home, Naomi asks her, "is that you, my daughter?", meaning, "how did it go?"
- Ruth tells Naomi everything
- Naomi understood the message in the gift of barley and tells Ruth that Boaz is a man of character and will settle the matter quickly
- Naomi tells Ruth to *sit still*, and *wait*, knowing that Boaz will not rest until the matter is settled
- After we have taken our step of faith, we must *sit still* knowing God is working behind the scenes on our behalf
- Naomi understands and trust Boaz's character
- Boaz will not rest until the matter is resolved
- Ruth 3 challenging us to:
 - Move from fear to faith
 - Ruth places herself at the feet of the redeemer
 - That's still place where transformation happens
- The question is *same question* Ruth answered:
- ***Will you trust the Redeemer with your future?***