

Ruth 4
New King James Version
Boaz Redeems Ruth

4 Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, "Come aside, ^[a]friend, sit down here." So he came aside and sat down. ² And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. ³ Then he said to the close relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. ⁴ And I thought to ^[b]inform you, saying, 'Buy it back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if ^[c]you will not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am next after you.' "

And he said, "I will redeem it."

⁵ Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to ^[d]perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance."

⁶ And the close relative said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem it."

⁷ Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was a confirmation in Israel.

⁸ Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself." So he took off his sandal. ⁹ And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. ¹⁰ Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from ^[e]his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day."

¹¹ And all the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. The LORD make the

woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. ¹² May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the LORD will give you from this young woman."

Descendants of Boaz and Ruth

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. ¹⁴ Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a ^[f]close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel! ¹⁵ And may he be to you a restorer of life and a ^[g]nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him." ¹⁶ Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him. ¹⁷ Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "There is a son born to Naomi." And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

¹⁸ Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron; ¹⁹ Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; ²⁰ Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon; ^[h] ²¹ Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed; ²² Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.

Matthew 7
New King James Version
Do Not Judge

7 "Judge^[a] not, that you be not judged. ² For with what ^[b]judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. ³ And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? ⁵ Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

⁶ “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

Keep Asking, Seeking, Knocking

⁷ “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! ¹² Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

The Narrow Way

¹³ “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ [c]Because narrow is the gate and [d]difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

You Will Know Them by Their Fruits

¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

I Never Knew You

²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

Build on the Rock

²⁴ “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

²⁶ “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

²⁸ And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, ²⁹ for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

This is the final Chapter of Ruth that you have been focusing on for the prior 3 weeks in sermons. The book itself is quite short, and taken on its own merits, many early Christians wondered why it was included as one of the books of the Christian Bible.

Rabbi Ze’ira states however that the purpose of Ruth is: “... to teach you how good is the reward for those who perform deeds of loyalty and love. (Ruth Rabbah 2:15)”

See this as a definition of Chesed.

The Book of Ruth unfolds during the barley and wheat harvests, which naturally connects it to the agricultural dimension of the Jewish calendar period of Shavuot. **Shavuot** occurs on the sixth day of the Hebrew month of Sivan; in the 21st century, it may fall anywhere between May 15 and June 14.

Shavuot marked the wheat harvest in the Land of Israel, Rabbinic tradition teaches that the date also marks the revelation of the Ten Commandments to Moses and the Israelites at Mount Sinai.

The story of Ruth begins with famine. It is the opposite of Chesed made manifest in the material world.

Chesed means 'kindness or love between people', and it also refers to the love or mercy of God towards humanity. It specifically focuses on the devotional piety of people towards God as well as of love or mercy of God towards humanity.

In Jewish ethics it is used to describe love or charity between people. *Chesed* in this latter sense of 'charity' is considered a virtue on its own, and for its contribution to *tikkun olam* (repairing the world).

In the past chapters we have noted that Ruth responds to Naomi's bitterness with steadfast presence. Ruth offers an antidote to the experiences of Job, who suffered from his comforters who wished to explain away Job's suffering. Ruth chooses to accompany Naomi's pain.

Naomi's return to Bethlehem, which literally means "house of bread", signals potential restoration. Ruth accompanying her transforms this return from mere survival into redemption. Through Ruth's commitment to another person besides herself, bread becomes possible again.

Ruth's story is set in the time of Judges, a time before kingship.

This is interesting to me and my Bible Study group because we are reading 1st and 2nd Samuel right now. The subject this last week our study included the coronation of Saul as the 1st King of Israel.

This story has an interesting evolution God did not want the people of Israel to have a king. God reigns as the supreme leader and ruler, and he warns the people of Israel of the dangers a King will present to them: 1 Samuel 8: 10 - 20

10 So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who asked him for a king.

11 And he said, "This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and

to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots.

12 He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, will set some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.

13 He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers.

14 And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants.

15 He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants.

16 And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest [a]young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work.

17 He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. 18 And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day."

19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No, but we will have a king over us,

20 that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."

Within this lies a bit of the story of Ruth; Ruth was written during the exile in Babylon or shortly after the return to Israel of the people. It was a time of trouble within the families as there was rebuke to some who were marrying outside of the faith. Here the Book of Ruth plays a part in a healing of this wound; she is the Great-Great Grandmother of David, the most revered king of Israel. She is also a Moabitess (a woman of Moab). The people of Moab are considered untouchables for marriage by Hebrew women, and there are strong constraints for the women of Moab who marry within the tribes of Israel. Moab's people were thought to be the descendants of Lot and the incestuous relationships with his daughters.

Also, there are, as we see in the beginning of this chapter, some questions about the legitimacy of Boaz and his “proposal” with Ruth.

He cannot be Ruth and Naomi’s redeemer legally in this situation. The unidentified individual in the story, at the gate, is the one who legally must redeem her.

Through careful negotiation, Boaz creates a scenario in which he can redeem both Naomi and Ruth.

Reading from the original text of King James this is what we see happen:

⁵ Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabite, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

⁶ And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it.

We see how Boaz has set this situation up. The kinsman, who would have been the redeemer, had it not been for Ruth’s Moab birth, will not accept Ruth in marriage because taking a Moabite as wife would mar his inheritance (his place within Jewish society).

The kinsman plucks off his shoe and gives it to Boaz to signify that he agrees to Boaz acting as the redeemer instead.

Boaz then announces that he will marry Ruth as well as redeem both the lands of Naomi and Ruth (Ruth has property that was her husband’s Mahlon; son of Naomi).

In verse 14 we see this marriage tied to events further back in the past;

¹² And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed

which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman.

Tamar was the daughter-in-law of Judah, she was the wife of Judah’s son, two of Judah’s sons displease God and are killed. Judah is fooled by Tamar in disguise, and Tamar gives birth to two sons of Judah; Pharez and Zerah. Pharez is the 10th Great-Grandfather of David.

This becomes a redemptive story, as one perceives the effect of these relationships, occasionally in sin, who still importantly impact the history of our faith and our churches.

In our story of Ruth, however, there is still one more untied loose end; Naomi. Naomi is still bitter, and unhappy, though pleased for Ruth. The other women of Bethlehem remind her: ***“for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne a son to care for you.”***

When we understand our relationship to both divine and human community, we become, in the language of Jewish and Christian faith, God’s hands in the world through daily acts of chesed.

Reading Ruth on Shavuot challenges us to expand our understanding of how God meets humanity. We need Ruth’s model: revelation that emerges through relationships sustained across time. Through choices renewed daily, through the patient work of making bread possible in a world prone to famine.

Ruth’s story suggests that God can come to us not just in spiritual ecstasy, or inside our church walls, but in acts of chesed.

How do we, like Ruth, become partners in the divine work of bringing forth bread from the earth?

Let kindness lead the way!

Ruth bestowed boundless kindness on Naomi and others, and she was rewarded by becoming the great-grandmother of King David and the ancestress of the Kingdom of Judah.

Our relationship with God is a gift that must be cultivated to be of value. The story of Ruth is the story of a woman who gathers the grains of her faith with devotion and kindness. In the words of Ruth's descendant, King Solomon, the way of faith in God **"are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peaceful."**⁹

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THE BOOK OF RUTH AS EXEGETICAL LITERATURE

[Irmtraud Fischer](#)

[European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe](#), Vol. 40, No. 2

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[Jonathan Magonet](#)

[European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe](#), Vol. 40, No. 2

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Ending Prayer (Prayer of St, Francis)

Lord,

Make me an instrument of your peace;

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so

much seek to be consoled,

as to console;

to be understood, as to understand;

to be loved, as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal

Life.

In your Holy name, Amen.