**Message Outline:**

1. (v1-5) Naomi’s Plan – a Risk Worth Taking

B. (v6-15) Ruth’s Request/Boaz’ Response – the Redeemer proposal

1. (v16-18) Rendering the outcome to God

For Further Discussion:

What were Ruth’s fears and hopes emotionally as she came to the threshing floor that night? What were her needs?

What were Naomi’s interests in this encounter?

What do we learn about Boaz from his handling of this situation?

What can you say about Ruth’s reputation in the eyes of others? How significant is that?

What does this whole chapter say about God? How does God build our character? How had God framed Boaz’ mind to respond as he did to this proposal? How do you finally leave the outcome in God’s hands?

Other observations, insights, and applications from Ruth 3??

Some further thoughts on Ruth 3 . . .

On the face of it, this chapter simply appears to be a transition scene from the harvest field drama of chapter 2 to the actual redemption process in chapter 4. Yet if we look deeper into this midnight encounter we discover rich themes of faith, integrity, and honest love in the face of uncertainty. The questions of the future seem to loom as large at the end of this chapter as they do at the beginning, but there is a strand of developing hope and abiding trust that drives this story to it greatest purpose –exalting God’s Name through the big redemption story of His heart.

 Naomi’s greatest concern is for Ruth. She may see her own life as forfeit, but there is possibility for Ruth, if she can break out from the grips of her current situation. The lavish gleaning gifts of grain encouraged her heart at one level (food!), yet knowing it was Boaz’ extravagant kindness that provided it made her hope soar. You see, Boaz was of the same clan as her deceased husband and son. Potentially, should Boaz choose, he could redeem the family’s property (at great cost), **and** take Ruth, not just as a servant, but as his wife. Potentially the lineage of her dead husband could be continued – shame erased, redemption accomplished, and God would get the glory for being behind it all.

 So she instructs Ruth toward a dangerous, uncertain plan. The amazing thing is how accepting and trusting Ruth was toward her mother-in-law. What a rare expression of faith and obedience, something not often seen in our individualistic, youth-oriented society. Titus 2:2-6 admonishes 1) the older generation with the responsibility of teaching and training godly character; 2) the younger generation to listen and obey. Maturity comes through wise obedience, and wisdom comes from a proper fear of God (Proverbs 9:10). *May God graciously grant our church many more Naomis and Ruths, in obeying all He commanded us!*

 Ruth does what she’s instructed. Waiting and washing a working man’s feet at midnight might not seem so romantic, I get it. But with a start Boaz wakes up, very surprised to see a young woman at his feet. A man doesn’t come into this situation very often!! Then, with a sincere, humble, respectful attitude, Ruth essentially proposes marriage to Boaz. Poor guy, as he’s rubbing the sleep from his eyes, he realizes he has to respond; whoa! Strange things are happening!

 Here’s where many a mighty man might break. He has a woman in a very vulnerable situation, and he could take advantage of her. But he slows down the passion and urgency, responding with God-driven integrity according to God’s Law. Though flattered, his priority is to honor God in his thoughts and behaviors, even when split-second temptations arise.

 We all face the temptations of short-term gratification vs. long-term integrity and holiness. Our world presents, and our hearts gravitate toward, pleasing self at any expense. To delay gratification seems “weird” and “counter-intuitive.” But a man or woman of godly character and conviction embraces godly, long-term goals as his/her standard – *my life, my body, my mind is not my own. I was bought with a price, the precious blood of Christ. My body is for the Lord, and the Lord is for my body* (see 1 Cor. 6:13, 19-20).

 For now the future will have to wait. It is in God’s hands, before whom every thought, word, deed, and motive is due. But as we get to know and rely on His character, we find greater contentment in not knowing the future. None of us knows what tomorrow may bring, but knowing that the Good, Wise, Sovereign God holds my future, and has a determined plan to unfold it all to His glory greatly comforts me. Though we don’t know the end of our story (Ruth 4 closes this portion of God’s big story, next week – don’t miss it, and bring a friend), trusting our future to Him, in the little decisions we make each day, draws us closer to becoming more like Him.

 ***Because He is glorious, we have hope!***

In His Grace

Pastor Randall

***Trusting our improbable future to His all-glorious character***

**Ruth Chap. 3 Bay Point Church 5/24/15**

Sermon notes