

- Gerard and Sarah here the Sunday this was first preached

Introduction

Recap!

- Ruth to Moab, loses husband and sons
 - brings home one of daughter-in-laws, Ruth
 - Ruth is treated graciously by Boaz
 - turns out he is a potential kinsman-redeemer - one who would buy back (redeem) a family member (kinsman) at personal cost; couldn't do it if not related
 - we noted the parallel between Boaz's actions, acting graciously in ch.2, and as kinsman-redeemer in ch.3, with Jesus
- So Boaz comes to the town gate, seals the deal, and everyone lives happily ever after!!
 - well, maybe there is a bit more to it than that!! Lets explore...

Signed!

- Have you ever heard the phrase "signing your life away"?
 - we often use it in a light-hearted way, but the implication is that there are commitments that we make that can be costly, even having implications for the rest of our lives
- The commitment to be a kinsman-redeemer was such a commitment.
 - at the end of chapter 3 we left Boaz committing himself to act as kinsman-redeemer for Ruth...
 - ...and now we begin to see how that worked itself out.
- There's lots here that we don't understand:
 - we've not heard anything up until this point about Naomi having any land;
 - it would have been unusual for a woman to have inherited property from her husband (usually go to his brother, stayed in his side of the family);
 - and if she had land, how come she and Ruth needed to glean? - that's maybe just a size or timing issue...
 - its also not clear what the connection between property and levirate marriage was - in law, or in day-to-day practise
- But what we do have is Boaz coming to the town gate:
 - the equivalent of a public square, the place everyone passed through to get in and out of the walled town, the place where the elders would sit, the place where business was transacted, the place where legal contracts were made and witnessed by those elders;
 - here Boaz makes contact with the one who was a closer relative to Elimelech than he was himself, the one who had "first refusal" on the kinsman-redeemer role
 - and he broaches the subject...
- While we don't understand the exact details, what is clear from the narrative is that taking on the role of kinsman-redeemer had a significant cost:
 - not just the initial outlay cost for the land, which could have been seen as an investment, but tied to marriage with Ruth and the fact that title for the land would therefore go to any children Ruth might bear, this was an commitment that might threaten this closer relatives estate;
 - so though he was initially interested, the cost was too high!
- Contrast his reaction with Boaz's own:
 - Boaz knows the cost, but he is willing to bear that cost for the sake of Ruth, out of the concern he has for her; perhaps it has even grown to be the romantic love, text doesn't really say!
 - certainly compassion, care, even love would all match the way he has acted throughout the story

- So he acts, bearing the cost for the sake of the loved one...
- **Remind you of anything?**
 - remind you of one who, knowing the cost, still left the glory and peace and security of heaven behind to come to this earth
 - remind you of one for whom the commitment to redeem left him betrayed, alone, and tortured by physical agony?
 - remind you of one whose commitment in love brought us new hope, new life?
 - **remind you of Jesus?!!**

Sealed!

- One of the things that is very striking about this closing chapter of Ruth is the **care Boaz takes to seal the deal**:
 - he goes to the gate, and makes sure the **elders** are present;
 - in the days before written legal contracts, you made sure you had as many **witnesses** as possible, and for water-tightness deals were made in public;
 - **nothing is behind closed doors**, no accusation of cutting corners can be levelled at Boaz!
 - we have fascinating details - **the whole sandals thing (v.7,8)** - that **concentrate on the certainty, the reliability of the deal**
- Neither Ruth & Naomi nor anyone else in the town is ever going to be able to say:
 - "Did Boaz really mean it?"
- We can answer the same question of Jesus with the same assurance:
 - **did Jesus really mean to die for me? Am I really included?**
 - YES!!**
- The whole thrust of Scripture is that God does indeed love us, more than we can imagine; Jesus did live and he did die and supremely he did rise again
 - if Jesus had come, lived and died, we might have believed or speculated that he was acting as our redeemer
 - but **in the resurrection he has sealed the deal**, he has taken off his sandal, he has given to us a guarantee of what he has achieved.
- Paul dealt with this very question in 1 Corinthians 15:
 - the Corinthians were questioning the whole question of resurrection, Jesus' and ours
 - and Paul argues that, if there was no resurrection, there would be no point to faith, no certainty...
 - **but Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep.** (1 Cor 15:20)
- Jesus has sealed the deal, in rising from death, and we can have an absolute confidence in our kinsman-redeemer, and in the redemption he offers
- And Paul finishes that chapter by reminding the Corinthians:
 - (1 Cor 15:58) **Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.**
- Just as Ruth would never be able to say "Did Boaz really mean it?", neither can we!!

Delivered!

- At the end of chapter 1, as Naomi returned to Bethlehem with Ruth in tow, we find her:
 - asking to be called "**Mara**", bitter
 - we find her **empty**, her life emptied of **security** and of **blessing**, and in particular empty of **husband and sons**, those touchstones of identity in a patriarchal society
- **What a contrast with Naomi at the end of chapter 4!!**
 - she knows the **blessing of her people** (vs.11,12,14)
 - her **two sons** have been replaced with **one daughter-in-law** who is "**better than**

- "seven sons" (v.14), and indeed is counted as having a son herself (v.17)
- her emptiness (1:21; no son) has been replaced with fullness (son!)
- there is the implicit security of being in the care of Boaz, a land-owner, well-to-do, and also of no longer being merely a widow, washed up on the edge of society
- and look where it ends - this child, Obed, becomes great King David's grand-father!
- All this is what the redemption of Boaz, kinsman-redeemer has achieved for Naomi and for Ruth!
- The parallel between Boaz as kinsman-redeemer and Jesus as our kinsman-redeemer extends here too:
 - we too have security for the future;
 - we too know His provision;
 - we too know the joy and delight that was Ruth and Naomi's
 - we too are welcomed once more into the place in God's family that was always meant to be ours
 - our shame is wiped away, our tears will be dried up!
- As the hymn writer puts it: Hallelujah! what a Saviour!

Conclusion

- He paid the price, he sealed the deal, he brought the blessings
 - and that's just Boaz!
- As we thank God for Boaz's example and character, let's praise Him all the more for our kinsman-redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, and for all he gave for us, for the certainty with which we can trust him, and for all the blessings he extends to us!