

Lesson 34

Naomi and Ruth: God's Faithfulness to Two Women

Ruth 1-2, 4



Teacher, please remember that the commentary below is intended to help you in your study, not to be read to your students. Make your own list of applications, using the help from the commentary, but don't necessarily try to cover everything! Think of the students in your class, then be prayerfully selective.

Contents:

1. Preparation
2. Memory verses
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5. Verse by verse commentary (suggested location of activities included)
6. Suggested prayer to close
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8. Possible Activities to choose from
9. Bible Text (in full, without commentary)

1. Preparation

- 1) Choose memory verse
- 2) Select attention grabber to start off lesson / break the ice - optional, recommended for younger classes. See point 7.
- 3) Suggested activities- optional, recommended for younger children. See point 8.

2. Memory verse

Ruth 2:12

"The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."

... OR ...

Hebrews 13:5: "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

3. Themes

God provides for His children even when we cannot see Him at work, so we should simply be loyal to Him and to one another.

4. Lesson introduction

To the teacher: This is a **combined lesson** on the whole story of Ruth, which covers four chapters in the biblical text! It is a long story and it's especially important for parents to read this ahead of time with their children before they come to class. Be sure to remind them! Your goal will be to cover chapters 1-2 and 4 only. You will need to summarize what happens in chapter 3 in your own words. Each chapter is an act in a short story, moving in turn from the road toward Bethlehem, to the field of Bethlehem, then to the threshing floor in Bethlehem, and finally to the town gate of Bethlehem. Trace the changes in the attitude of Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law, who moves from bitterness to joy. The story is unique because it shows God's grace toward Jewish people living outside God's will and also toward people who were not born into Israel. And it traces Ruth's relationship to king David, the forerunner of Jesus.

5. Verse by Verse Commentary

Ruth 1:1-5

Seeking to escape a famine in the town of Bethlehem, a man named Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon ("sick") and Chilion ("frail"), left their homeland and traveled about 80 kilometers east on the other side of the Dead Sea to the plains of Moab. Moab was probably not a wise place for Elimelech to take his family, since the Moabites were excluded from the congregation of the Lord (Deuteronomy 23:3-6). These people were worshippers of the god Chemosh, a deity (idol) whose worship was similar to that of Baal. God's desire was that his people remain free from the influences of pagan worship that surrounded them. Though Moab was not a desirable place for God's children, God's

hand remained on His children and circumstances ultimately worked together for good (Romans 8:28). We do not know how long they lived in Moab before Elimelech's death, but Naomi finds herself a widow, sorrowing in a foreign land with her two sons.

In verse 4, we find that her sons marry Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. We do not know how long they were married, but they also died, having no children. Naomi experienced tremendous grief. Her husband and sons had died and she was a stranger in a foreign land, far away from her home. There were no sons to carry on the family name, nor was there family remaining to support her. (In those days widows relied on their family for support.) Naomi, it seemed was a woman left without much hope.

Ruth 1:6-10

After the death of her husband and two sons, Naomi decides to return to her homeland, for she has heard that God had ended the famine and provided food for the people. Return is an important word here. Naomi reverses the direction that the family had earlier taken. Perhaps, she realized, leaving the Promised Land to seek help in Moab was not God's will. During her stay in Moab, Naomi had lost everything. Yet, God can even turn our mistakes around to work together for His good purposes. Naomi realized that the chances of Orpah and Ruth re-marrying in Israel would be very small, and she encourages them to go back to their mother's house. Naomi loved the girls and blessed them. She asked that God would give each of them a place of rest with another husband. They were good and kind to her and she extended kindness back to them. Naomi kissed them, intending the kisses to be farewells, but both the women said that they wanted to return with Naomi.

Ruth 1:11-15

Three times Naomi insists to the women that they return to Moab. In their culture, it was very difficult when a woman was unmarried or widowed. She did not have much security. Naomi speaks of a Jewish custom in which a brother was responsible to marry his dead brother's wife in order to have a son and keep the brother's name and inheritance within the family. In her situation, it could not work because she had no more sons; and she was too old to have any more children.

Naomi felt her situation was a result of God's affliction; she complained of her deep bitterness. But God had a plan for Naomi, though she could not see it at the time. We should never allow our puzzling circumstances to cause us to become bitter. Even if we have made mistakes, when we turn to God, His hand will be upon us for good.

Orpah does return to Moab and we do not hear anything else about her. Naomi encouraged Ruth to go back to her own people as her sister-in-law Orpah had done. But Ruth clung to Naomi, choosing to follow and serve her widowed mother-in-law rather than seeking a husband in Moab.

Ruth 1:16-18

Ruth—in a beautiful expression of love and commitment—settles the discussion by an awesome profession of her desire never to leave or forsake Naomi or to return to her own country or people again. Like Abraham, Ruth decided to leave her family's idolatrous land to go to the land of promise. Abraham had a promise; Ruth did not. Even though Naomi did all she could to discourage Ruth, Ruth was determined to stay with Naomi, no matter what the cost. She was willing to go wherever Naomi went, into a country she had never seen before. She was willing to live wherever Naomi lived—even if there would be no roof over her head—and embrace a people she did not know, "Your people shall be my people,..." And, more importantly, Ruth decided to embrace the God of Israel whom Naomi served—"Your God shall be my God." Ruth must have seen God working in Naomi's life and been attracted to the faith she displayed. May our genuine faith, demonstrated in our daily lives, attract others to the God we serve. May we as Ruth take the Lord for our own God; and then, embrace His people as our people—under all conditions: rich or poor, famous or despised.

Ruth continued her expression of commitment, calling for judgment from God if she were to break her commitment of loyalty to Naomi. With that kind of argument, Naomi finally stops trying to discourage Ruth from going with her. How blessed Naomi was to have Ruth desiring to be by her side. Ruth was characterized by loyalty. Loyalty means hanging in there with people no matter what—through good times and bad times. A loyal person is a faithful person—one you can count on, one who is true to their promises and commitments. God has demonstrated His faithfulness and commitment to us in His rich promises. Have you memorized Hebrews 13:5: "I will never leave you nor forsake you."?

May loyalty be demonstrated in our lives—first to God and then to our family and friends. **God provides for His children even when we cannot see Him at work, so we should simply be loyal to Him and to one another.**

Naomi had experienced severe hardships. She had left Israel with a husband and two sons and returned home widowed

and poor. Though she felt bitterness and pain (1:20), Naomi had a God who loved and cared about her. Naomi and Ruth returned without any help or resources, but God would be their help. He is the helper of the helpless.

Ruth 2:1-3

Lush fields and olive groves surrounded the town of Bethlehem. God used the abundant harvest to teach His people to care for others by instructing them to leave provision for the poor (Deuteronomy 24:19).

When the wheat and barley were ready to be harvested, reapers were hired to cut down the stalks and tie them into bundles. The corners of the fields, along with any grain that was dropped, was to be left for the poor to glean. This was God's way to provide for the poor and to prevent owners from hoarding. Ruth wasted no time in setting out to work in the fields gleaning grain to provide for her and her mother-in-law. She was not afraid to admit her need or work hard to supply it. When she went out to the fields, she had no idea that it was God behind the scenes providing for her. Ruth would soon learn that God is worthy of trust. He had a plan for her as a new part of the people of Israel—a plan to give them a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11). God is at work in our life as well because He cares for us. **God provides for His children even when we cannot see Him at work, so we should simply be loyal to Him and to one another.**

Ruth 2:4-7

Ruth had no idea what God had planned. She found herself in the field of Boaz, who just “happened” to be from the clan of Elimelech, a close relative of Naomi's deceased husband. Ruth was not in his field by mere chance. Boaz was a man of outstanding qualities, and he made an impact on those who worked for him. When he greeted them with the blessing, “The Lord be with you,” they responded similarly. It seems faith in the Lord was an active part of their life. Boaz took notice of the new young woman in his field among the gleaners and asked who she was. The foreman informed him that she was a Moabite woman who had returned from Moab with Naomi and had gleaned in the field “from morning until now.” Ruth performed her task faithfully, though it was menial and probably very tiring. What is our attitude when we are given a task that we do not really want to do? Let us serve God faithfully, even when the task is difficult.

Ruth 2:8-13

Foreigners were not always warmly welcomed in Israel, but Boaz gladly welcomed Ruth. Her kindness and generosity to her mother-in-law had been witnessed by those around her. Boaz instructed Ruth to follow directly behind his reapers in order to pick up the choicest grain as it was dropped. Actions reveal true character. Ruth displayed loyalty, kindness, and a willingness to work hard as she supported Naomi. Ruth's reputation for good character became her most valuable asset. How is your reputation? Do people see a person who lives a godly life, showing kindness and concern for others? A good reputation is built upon godly character and kindness toward others. Let them see Jesus living in you as you walk in the Spirit. No matter what group of people or surroundings one is in, a person who consistently lives a life of faith glorifies God and makes an impact on the lives of others.

Boaz also noted that Ruth had placed her trust in God (verse 12)—just as a small chick would seek refuge under the wings of its mother hen. Boaz gave Ruth a place of honor among his servants. Ruth responded with humility. Soon God would use Boaz to carry out His plan of blessing upon Ruth's life.

Ruth 2:14-16

Boaz continues his kindness to Ruth, inviting her to eat the good food provided for him and his harvesters. Ruth was not left to fend for herself as gleaners usually were. Boaz saw to it that his servants would abundantly provide her, purposely allowing grain from the bundles to fall in her path. As a result, Ruth had provisions to feed Naomi and herself for many days.

Ruth must have felt totally overwhelmed with awe because of what was happening. Can you imagine what was going on in her heart as God was blessing her? Although she was living in a foreign land, poor and all alone, Ruth was in the care of a loving God who was abundantly providing for her every need. Though there was danger beyond the fields of Boaz, Ruth found refuge and protection as she worked in his fields. **God provides for His children even when we cannot see Him at work, so we should simply be loyal to Him and to one another.**

Ruth 2:17-23

Ruth could have called it a day, but she continued to glean until evening. Then to finish the job she beat out the grain from the stalks. It came out to half a bushel weighing about 14 kilos. This is an unusually generous amount for one day's work. A good question to ask ourselves at the end of the day when we are getting ready for bed, “Where have I gleaned today? What have I done or accomplished to be a blessing to others and to God?” We need to seize every day and take the opportunity to live unto the Lord that He may be glorified through our lives.

Ruth quickly returned to Naomi to share with her all that had happened. Naomi was excited and full of questions; but before Ruth could answer anything, Naomi prayed a blessing upon the man who blessed her. Ruth told her that she worked in the field of Boaz.

Although Naomi had struggled with bitterness, her faith in God was still alive; she praised God for guiding Ruth to the field of Boaz, acknowledging God's goodness to them. **God provides for His children even when we cannot see Him at work, so we should simply be loyal to Him and to one another.** There may be times we struggle with bitterness over our circumstances, but we must never despair—God is at work in our lives.

Ruth was learning quickly that she could trust in God. As Naomi acknowledged, it was not just by chance that Ruth ended up in the field of Boaz who happened to be a close relative, able to serve as their kinsman redeemer (a redeemer of property and persons--Deuteronomy 25:5-10) through marriage to Ruth.

Ruth was invited to remain in the fields of Boaz for the remainder of the harvest. Naturally, Naomi encouraged Ruth to accept Boaz's generosity. Ruth continued to faithfully work in the fields while living with Naomi. Again, God was at work in Naomi and Ruth's lives despite their seemingly desperate circumstances. It was much more than coincidence that Ruth began gleaming in the field of Boaz. God had a plan that would meet their every need. **God provides for His children even when we cannot see Him at work, so we should simply be loyal to Him and to one another.**

Boaz and Ruth would become the ancestors of Israel's greatest kings including King David and the Eternal King, the Lord Jesus Christ. As Naomi realized, we can realize that God is at work and has a plan for our lives. He is with us through the good times as well as the bad. Our circumstances do not overcome the power of God; God overcomes all circumstances so that He may be glorified. God gives us a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11). We can trust in Him.

Summary of Ruth 3

In the first two chapters of Ruth, we see heartache and hardship. As we continue the book of Ruth, a beautiful love story unfolds—a story of love and redemption. Boaz gave Ruth a promise that he would redeem her (buy back the land belonging to his brother, Elimelech); and being an honorable man, he would be true to his word. In fact, in Ruth 3:18, Naomi tells Ruth to “sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will fall; for the man (Boaz) will not be in rest until he has finished the thing this day.” Naomi knew that Boaz would not rest until he had completed the transaction to redeem his beloved. As we read these verses, we see a beautiful picture of Jesus Christ who redeemed (or bought back) His church for Himself.

Ruth 4:1

Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there. The gate was the open space before the city gate; it was the forum of the city, the place where the public affairs of the city were discussed. There he sat down, calling “court” immediately. What drove this man to act so quickly? Perhaps it was his love for Ruth. We are not told that she was incredibly beautiful, but she certainly had the inner beauty of a virtuous woman—a beauty “far above rubies” (Proverbs 31:10). It was Boaz' desire to redeem the land belonging to Elimelech in order that he might redeem Ruth as his bride. However, there was a problem. The right of redemption was the right of the closest relative. Another man was a closer relative to Elimelech than Boaz (Ruth 3:12-13). While Boaz waited at the gate, this “closer relative” just “happened” to pass by. Boaz asked him to come near and sit down. His name is never mentioned (he is literally called “Mr. so-and-so from here-or-there”), perhaps because he refused to become the redeemer.

Ruth 4:2-4

Boaz called together ten of Bethlehem's elders, and they also sat down with him. They would be witnesses of a legal transaction. Boaz had thought about all of this and had carefully planned out his strategy. He explained that Naomi had a field for sale that belonged to Naomi's late husband. The closest relative (kinsman) had the first right to the property and Boaz was next in line after him. If the closer relative would not redeem the property, Boaz agreed to redeem the price of the land. The closer relative responded, “I will redeem it.” This was not the response Boaz hoped to receive. Would he lose the chance to marry Ruth?

Ruth 4:5-8

There are two Old Testament laws involved in our story here: the law mentioned in verse 3 regulating redemption (buying back) of property (see also Leviticus 25:25-34) and the law mentioned in verse 5: the property included the widow of the deceased relative (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). The redeemer was to marry the widow of deceased in order to raise sons that would carry on the family name. Boaz informed the closer relative that if he redeemed the property, he must also acquire (or marry) Ruth the Moabitess. When the relative heard that marriage to Ruth would be necessary, he refused his right of purchasing the property. He said it would “mar (mess up) his own inheritance.” We do not know why the relative came to

that conclusion, but Boaz must have been delighted. The legal transaction then took place. The passing of the sandal symbolized Boaz's right to walk upon the land as his property. We are not sure where this custom came from. Perhaps it meant that the one owning property---and who would have the right to walk on it---was giving the purchaser the right to walk on the land instead. It was a traditional symbol of the transfer of a possession or right of ownership.

Ruth 4:9-10

Boaz moved quickly to complete the transaction. He claimed and received the right of redemption both for Elimelech's land and for Ruth. Boaz called the elders to witness the transaction as he took possession of Naomi's property and received Ruth the Moabitess. He publicly declared that he would marry Ruth. Boaz then became the "kinsman-redeemer," the "Goel." This Hebrew term was used "to imply certain obligations arising out of that relationship and has for its primary meaning 'coming to the help or rescue' of one" (The New Unger's Bible dictionary). Boaz came to rescue Ruth. He would save her and take care of her the rest of her life.

We, too, have a redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our everlasting Redeemer. He looked at mankind with tender compassion, as Boaz looked at Ruth. In Philippians 2:6-8, we see the price He paid for us. "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Jesus paid the price with His own blood, for He was both able and willing to redeem us. In this special way **God has provided for His children even when we were not even here to see Him at work, so we should simply be loyal to Him and to one another.**

Ruth 4:11-13

The people and the elders said, "We are witnesses," and desired for Boaz the blessing of the Lord upon this marriage. "The Lord make the woman that shall come into your house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel, and do thou get power in Ephratah, and make to yourself a name in Bethlehem."

The phrase "make yourself a name" could be read, "make to yourself a well established name through your marriage by a host of worthy sons who shall make your name renowned." Thus we see in verse 13 that Boaz took Ruth as his wife, and they had a son. What a glorious end to this beautiful story of suffering, love, commitment, and redemption. In the remainder of the chapter, the fulfillment of this blessing unfolds. Ruth bore a son, Obed. At his birth, the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not let a redeemer be wanting to you today." They called Obed a redeemer of Naomi, not just because he would one day redeem all of Naomi's possessions; but because, as the son of Ruth, he was also the son of Naomi—he would take away the shame of her childlessness and be a comfort to her in her old age. Through this lineage would come king David and then our great redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Let us consider what Jesus has done for each of us. Read Matthew 13:45-46, the parable of "The Pearl of Great Price." The pearl represents the nations of the world for whom Jesus sold everything---giving His life---to redeem the treasure, and that's you and I! His love for us is beyond our understanding. If you have never responded to that love by trusting in Jesus' death for you, now is the time to ask Jesus Christ to become your Kinsman-Redeemer!

6. Prayer:

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust in the Lord, our Great Redeemer. Encourage them to express trust in God's care for them, even when they cannot see Him at work. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

7. Attention Grabbers

Magnets

Put out one tray or several trays containing magnets and some things that are attracted to the magnets and some that are not. Ask questions about the different items that are being attracted to the magnets. Explain how that the "attraction" of the magnet compares with loyalty. Loyalty will always "cling" to that which is good and right.

Loyalty Medal

Let your kids make a medal to show their intentions to be loyal. Cut heart shapes out of poster-board or cardboard. For older kids, you may want to do a round shape. Cut a hole in the top and glue either pink or yellow construction paper over the medal (color depends on the shape you choose). Put a 6" long piece of 1/2" to 1" inch wide ribbon through the hole and safety-pin to their shirts. On the medal write "LOYAL TO JESUS CHRIST." Explain to the children that God rewards those who are faithful and loyal to Him. We will learn about all of the wonderful things that God did in Ruth's life because

of her loyalty to Naomi and God.

Gleaners

What is gleaning? Make the idea more concrete with this activity. Take a package of plastic drinking straws and scatter them all over the floor. Tell your class that after you say, "Go," the one who picks up the most straws wins a prize. Have everyone be seated for the prize bestowing ceremony. Give the winner one slice of bread in a clear sandwich bag. Explain: It would take a long time to gather enough stalks of grain to make even one loaf of bread. Then you would have to thresh it by beating it until it came out of the husk. Do not forget you need to bake it! And if that's not enough to make you hungry, think about doing it all over again the next day. In God's law, there was a provision that required those who had land and crops to leave some grain for those who were poor. How can we help those who are in need today?

8. Activities:

Sticking Together

Use little gingerbread men cookies and store-bought frosting. Give each child two cookies to represent Ruth and Naomi. Go around and put a dab of frosting on the back of one of the cookies, ask them to stick them together...like Ruth stuck with Naomi. Next they can eat the gingerbread men sandwiches.

Popcorn Necklace

Pop some corn during class time or at home before class to make "necklaces" to eat or to hang in the trees at home for the birds (Matt. 6:26). Give each child a needle and a long piece of thread on which to string the popcorn, letting them snack while they work. Use close supervision with the needles, especially with young children. **OPTIONAL:** Notice that they ate parched grain in Ruth 2:14, this could have been like popcorn or popped wheat which can be easily made from a bag of pearl barley (found in the rice and bean section of most grocery stores). Just put a little at a time in a skillet with a little oil and keep it moving over medium heat. Add salt to taste.

Picnic

Place a cloth tablecloth in a wicker basket, then add paper napkins, cookies or graham crackers, cups, a bottle of juice, some sliced fruit or other extras. Bring a big folded blanket to spread out on the floor.

Call the kids to come to a picnic, have them participate in spreading out the blanket, and passing out the napkins and cups. Before you pass out the snacks or drinks, ask the children if they think you have brought some food. How did they know that you brought food? Go ahead and pass out the snack. Just like they "knew" you would bring the food, in an even greater way, they can know that God always provides for His children even before they see Him act.

Boaz, Ruth and Naomi Finger Puppets

Enclosed in your curriculum, you will find templates for Boaz, Ruth, and Naomi finger puppets. Make copies ahead of class. Cut out the characters and pass out to the children. Allow the children to color or decorate the puppets. After coloring, attach the puppets to the children's fingers by using tape. Allow a few of the children to re-enact the story of Boaz and Ruth. Remind the children that just as Boaz redeemed Ruth, Jesus has redeemed us by paying the price for our sin on the cross. Because of His work for us, we will spend eternity with Him.

Cross puzzles

Before class make enough copies of the cross template for the children in your class. Cut up the cross puzzles in the shapes of puzzle pieces. Make enough cross puzzles either for all of your kids or for very small groups to work together. You can decide whether or not to mix up the pieces depending on your children's ability. Next, allow the children to put together the puzzles. You can have them glue the puzzle pieces to a piece of construction paper. Ask your class the question, "Who has redeemed (saved) us?" The puzzle will tell...Jesus!

9. Bible text (NIV):

Ruth 1:1 In the days when the judges ruled,^[a] there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. ²The man's name was Elimelek, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there.

³ Now Elimelek, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴ They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, ⁵ both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was

left without her two sons and her husband.

⁶ When Naomi heard in Moab that the LORD had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. ⁷ With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah.

⁸ Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back, each of you, to your mother’s home. May the LORD show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me. ⁹ May the LORD grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband.”

Then she kissed them goodbye and they wept aloud ¹⁰ and said to her, “We will go back with you to your people.”

¹¹ But Naomi said, “Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? ¹² Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons— ¹³ would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD’s hand has turned against me!”

¹⁴ At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.

¹⁵ “Look,” said Naomi, “your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her.”

¹⁶ But Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. ¹⁷ Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.” ¹⁸ When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

¹⁹ So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, “Can this be Naomi?”

²⁰ “Don’t call me Naomi, ^[b]” she told them. “Call me Mara, ^[c] because the Almighty ^[d] has made my life very bitter. ²¹ I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The LORD has afflicted ^[e] me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me.”

²² So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.

Ruth 2:1 Now Naomi had a relative on her husband’s side, a man of standing from the clan of Elimelek, whose name was Boaz.

² And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor.”

Naomi said to her, “Go ahead, my daughter.” ³ So she went out, entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek.

⁴ Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, “The LORD be with you!”

“The LORD bless you!” they answered.

⁵ Boaz asked the overseer of his harvesters, “Who does that young woman belong to?”

⁶ The overseer replied, “She is the Moabite who came back from Moab with Naomi. ⁷ She said, ‘Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters.’ She came into the field and has remained here from morning till now, except for a short rest in the shelter.”

⁸ So Boaz said to Ruth, “My daughter, listen to me. Don’t go and glean in another field and don’t go away from here. Stay here with the women who work for me. ⁹ Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the women. I have told the men not to lay a hand on you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled.”

¹⁰ At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, “Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?”

¹¹ Boaz replied, “I’ve been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. ¹² May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.”

¹³ “May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my lord,” she said. “You have put me at ease by speaking kindly to your servant—though I do not have the standing of one of your servants.”

¹⁴ At mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come over here. Have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar.”

When she sat down with the harvesters, he offered her some roasted grain. She ate all she wanted and had some left over. ¹⁵ As she got up to glean, Boaz gave orders to his men, “Let her gather among the sheaves and don’t reprimand her. ¹⁶ Even pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up, and don’t rebuke her.”

¹⁷ So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and it amounted to about an ephah. ^{fj} ¹⁸ She carried it back to town, and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered. Ruth also brought out and gave her what she had left over after she had eaten enough.

¹⁹ Her mother-in-law asked her, “Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!”

Then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one at whose place she had been working. “The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz,” she said.

²⁰ “The LORD bless him!” Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. “He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead.” She added, “That man is our close relative; he is one of our guardian-redeemers. ^g”

²¹ Then Ruth the Moabite said, “He even said to me, ‘Stay with my workers until they finish harvesting all my grain.’”

²² Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It will be good for you, my daughter, to go with the women who work for him, because in someone else’s field you might be harmed.”

²³ So Ruth stayed close to the women of Boaz to glean until the barley and wheat harvests were finished. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

Footnotes:

1. [Ruth 1:1](#) Traditionally *judged*
2. [Ruth 1:20](#) *Naomi* means *pleasant*.
3. [Ruth 1:20](#) *Mara* means *bitter*.
4. [Ruth 1:20](#) Hebrew *Shaddai*; also in verse 21
5. [Ruth 1:21](#) Or *has testified against*
6. [Ruth 2:17](#) That is, probably about 30 pounds or about 13 kilograms
7. [Ruth 2:20](#) The Hebrew word for *guardian-redeemer* is a legal term for one who has the obligation to redeem a relative in serious difficulty (see Lev. 25:25-55).

Ruth 4:1 Meanwhile Boaz went up to the town gate and sat down there just as the guardian-redeemer^[a] he had mentioned came along. Boaz said, "Come over here, my friend, and sit down." So he went over and sat down.

² Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said, "Sit here," and they did so. ³ Then he said to the guardian-redeemer, "Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our relative Elimelek. ⁴ I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of these seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you^[b] will not, tell me, so I will know. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line." "I will redeem it," he said.

⁵ Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the land from Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the^[c] dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property."

⁶ At this, the guardian-redeemer said, "Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it."

⁷ (Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel.)

⁸ So the guardian-redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it yourself." And he removed his sandal.

⁹ Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, "Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon. ¹⁰ I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses!"

¹¹ Then the elders and all the people at the gate said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel. May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. ¹² Through the offspring the LORD gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah."

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. ¹⁴ The women said to Naomi: "Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! ¹⁵ He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth."

¹⁶ Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. ¹⁷ The women living there said, "Naomi has a son!" And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

¹⁸ This, then, is the family line of Perez:

Perez was the father of Hezron,

¹⁹ Hezron the father of Ram,

Ram the father of Amminadab,

²⁰ Amminadab the father of Nahshon,

Nahshon the father of Salmon,^[d]

²¹ Salmon the father of Boaz,

Boaz the father of Obed,

²² Obed the father of Jesse,

and Jesse the father of David.

Footnotes:

1. [Ruth 4:1](#) The Hebrew word for *guardian-redeemer* is a legal term for one who has the obligation to redeem a relative in serious difficulty (see Lev. 25:25-55); also in verses 3, 6, 8 and 14.
2. [Ruth 4:4](#) Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; most Hebrew manuscripts *he*
3. [Ruth 4:5](#) Vulgate and Syriac; Hebrew (see also Septuagint) *Naomi and from Ruth the Moabite, you acquire the*
4. [Ruth 4:20](#) A few Hebrew manuscripts, some Septuagint manuscripts and Vulgate (see also verse 21 and Septuagint of 1 Chron. 2:11); most Hebrew manuscripts *Salma*