

A Midnight Marriage Proposal

Running for Refuge Under the Wings of Boaz

Scripture: Ruth 3:1-18

Sermon Series: *From Bitterness to Blessing*

Topic: Redeemer, Ruth, Boaz

I. Introduction

We are following the story of Naomi the Bethlehemite and Ruth the Moabite, which took place during “the time when the judges of Israel ruled” (around 1300 B.C.). This is a story of tragedy, love, devotion, and redemption. The story unfolds in four acts. In **Act I** a famine forced Naomi and her family—her husband and two sons—out of Bethlehem and into the foreign land of

Moab. In that foreign land, tragedy struck, and Naomi’s husband died. Then both sons married Moabite women and for a decade they were both childless. Then both sons died. These tragedies left Naomi filled with *bitterness*. However, hope breaks in and having heard in the fields of Moab that “*the Lord had visited his people*” (1:6) in the fields of Bethlehem, the widow Naomi and her widowed daughter-in-law, Ruth the Moabite, move to Bethlehem.

In **Act II**, in faith Ruth went to work in the fields of Bethlehem and “happened”¹ to find her way into the field owned by a relative of Naomi’s deceased husband whose name is Boaz. Ruth and Boaz meet for the first time. Boaz just happened to show her *favor* as he witnesses her faith in God—“*under whose wings she had come to take refuge*”²—and her faithfulness to her mother-in-law, Naomi. Boaz instructed her to glean in his field, which she did throughout both the barley and wheat harvests (2:23). These two harvest seasons would have lasted for about



¹ Last week, at the conclusion of the service, I meet a woman who happened to visit our church for the first time after recently moving into town. She knew no one before visiting, but she discovered that her cousin just happened to be doing the Scripture reading that morning during the second service. Her cousin didn’t normally attend the second service, but she did because I happened to ask her to do the reading during that particular service.

² Ruth 2:12.

seven or eight weeks (cf. Deut 16:9), normally from late April to early June.³ Thus, almost two months pass from the closing of chapter one to the opening of chapter three.

Today, in **Act III** and chapter three, the story will progress. Ruth and Boaz will meet for a second time and we will witness “a *midnight marriage proposal*.” Upon the advice of Naomi, Ruth goes secretly to Boaz because he is a kinsman *redeemer* and he becomes the one under whose wings Ruth runs for refuge.

But this chapter is peculiar. What is going on? What is this strange suggestion by Naomi that Ruth wash, anoint herself, and go by night to the threshing floor and meet Boaz in secret? Is this the work of a manipulative mother-in-law or masterful match-maker? What is happening during this night? Is this secret sexual seduction of a sugar-daddy or a risky righteous request of a redeemer? Is this an example of the wily ways of a Moabite lady of the night or wise ways of worthy widow?

II. A Midnight Marriage Proposal

This chapter is Act 3 of this 4 Act play, called Ruth. This chapter contains three scenes.

- I. At home, where **Naomi** gives **advice** to Ruth (vs.1-5)
- II. At the threshing floor,
 - A. **Ruth’s agreement** with and obedience to Naomi’s advice (vs.6-9)
 - B. **Boaz’s assent** to Ruth’s proposal
- III. At home again, where **Ruth announces** Boaz’s response.

A). Naomi’s Advice (vs. 1-5)

Scene I: Naomi’s House

The first scene unfolds at home between Naomi and Ruth alone.

¹ Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? ² Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. ³ Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴ But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do.” ⁵ And she replied, “All that you say I will do.”
Ruth 3:1-5 (ESV)

³ F. B. Huey Jr., “Ruth,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 533.

My daughter. Nearly two months have gone by since Naomi has returned to Bethlehem. Ruth has been diligently working in the fields of Boaz during both the barley and wheat harvests (2:23). Now Naomi's thoughts turn to the long-term welfare of Ruth, whom she views as "**my daughter.**" Ruth is like a daughter to Naomi. Naomi refers to Ruth as "my daughter" three times in this chapter (3:1, 16, 18). She has already done so three times in chapter two (2:2, 8, 22). Ruth is the daughter Naomi never had. These two are incredibly close and Naomi loves Ruth as if she were her own flesh and blood. *Naomi now thinks and acts like a mother who seeks her daughter's welfare above her own.*

Should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? (v.1). Naomi is now seeking **rest** for Ruth, "**that it may be well**" for her. The word 'rest' (*mānôah*, מְנוּחַ) means, "freedom from activity; work or strain or responsibility; a place of quiet; established dwelling place."⁴

Naomi has already used this word when she tried to get both her daughters-in-law to return home to find "*rest... in house of her husband*" (1:9). Naomi is seeking for Ruth the kind of 'rest' that comes from remarrying. Thus, the word 'rest,' "speaks of the tranquility, peace, satisfaction, and security that a woman in Israel longed for and expected to find in the home of a loving husband."⁵ Naomi is thinking of a husband, a home, and a family for her daughter.

A Word to Husbands About Home

Another commentary defined this word 'rest' as, "repose of soul; a condition of security and assurance; quietness and refreshment, attained by marriage."⁶ Husbands, these are the words that ought to describe the environment in your home. This is the kind of home godly men are to create for their wives. Do these words describe your home? This word, 'rest,' does not mean that wives never do any work. It means that the work done at home is valued and affirmed. Home is a place a wife ought to feel secure, assured, and cherished. The covenant of marriage is to be a place of spiritual repose and refreshment. Marriage is to be the primary relationship where a wife feels safe and protected. She can rest, even when she is working hard, because she knows she's loved, protected, provided for, and valued. "To pick up the imagery of 2:12, a responsible husband functions as the wings of God offering protection [and provision] and security for all who dwell in his house."⁷

Naomi's thoughts are for a bright future and happy home for her "daughter." Thus, everything she is proposing is aimed at securing a good life and living for Ruth.

⁴ Rick Brannan, ed., *Lexham Research Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible*, Lexham Research Lexicons (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020).

⁵ Daniel I. Block, *Ruth: The King Is Coming*, ed. Daniel I. Block, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 167.

⁶ Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 629.

⁷ Daniel Isaac Block, *Judges, Ruth*, vol. 6, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 681.

Is Boaz not our relative, with whose women you were? (v.2). Boaz is a “*relative*” and by mentioning Ruth’s prior work with “*his women*,” she is pointing out two reasons to have hope in this advice she is giving. Boaz is both a *relative*, which points to responsibility and relation, but he is also a man who has already shown himself to be favorably disposed toward Ruth by his willingness to *provide for* and *protect* her generously throughout the harvests.

Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor (v.3). Naomi knows that Boaz will be that night at the threshing floor “*winnowing barley*” (v.2). This gives an opportunity for Ruth to “happen” to meet Boaz. But what exactly is she here suggesting? Look pretty, smell good, so you can hook Boaz?

Many have seen in these words a command by Naomi for Ruth to go and seduce Boaz. Some have thought that she was encouraging her to get dolled up, put on some perfume, and her most stunning dress.⁸ However, does this accord with what we know of Naomi? Is Ruth such a woman who would go along with such a suggestion? Would attempting such a thing be wise? There is likely another reason than seduction behind Naomi’s words.

First of all, we’ve already seen that Boaz is a “*worthy man*” (2:1) and the most likely response of a righteous man to a sneaky seductress slinking around in the night would not be to welcome her, but to *shun* her. Recall that the Moabites were despised by Israelites because during the wilderness wandering it was Moabite women who had seduced Israelite men into sexual sin and spiritual idolatry and brought a curse and death upon the people. Naomi would not be helping Ruth’s situation by making such a sinful suggestion. She’d be sealing her fate not securing her future by suggesting such an immoral thing. Naomi is seeking Ruth’s rest, not her rejection.

Second, this series of steps—wash, anoint, change—more likely reflects Naomi’s advice to Ruth to *stop mourning and starting marrying*. Recall that mourning the death of a family member could last for several months.⁹ This same series of actions—bathing, anointing, and changing clothes—is found in 2 Samuel 12 to describe exactly what David did when he ended his mourning for the death of his infant son.

Then David arose from the earth and washed and anointed himself and changed his clothes. And he went into the house of the Lord and worshiped.
2 Samuel 12:20 (ESV)

David’s mourning for his son had come to an end, so he **washed, anointed himself, and changed his clothes**. The word here translated “*clothes*,” is the same word Naomi used with Ruth, which is there translated as ‘cloak.’ I’m quite sure that after mourning

⁸ See NIV, “put on your best clothes.”

⁹ Genesis 50:3.

his son, David didn't go change into his "best clothes." In fact, this word is used in Exodus to refer to a garment, used by both men and women, that had the dual purpose of clothing and being suitable to sleep in.

²⁶ If ever you take your neighbor's cloak in pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down, ²⁷ for that is his only covering, and it is his cloak for his body; in what else shall he sleep? **Exodus 22:26-27 (ESV)**

If you're trying to imagine what a cloak may have looked like, then think of **Luke Skywalker** in the final scene of Star Wars VIII: The Force Awakens.

Naomi's is not suggesting anything sinful or seductive. Far from it. Naomi is suggesting that Ruth take off the dark clothes of a grieving widow¹⁰ and put on other clothes that will let Boaz know that she's letting go of the grief of her deceased husband and she is now prepared to think about the future. And since she may need to be at the threshing floor all night, she is to take her *cloak* so she'll have something warm to sleep in.

All that you say I will do (v.5). Ruth likes her mother-in-law's advice. This concludes Scene 1. Ruth leaves home and heads down to the threshing floor.

B). Ruth's Agreement (vs. 6-9)

Scene II: The Threshing Floor

⁶ So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her. ⁷ And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. ⁸ At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! ⁹ He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer." ¹⁰ And he said, "May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich." **Ruth 3:6-10 (ESV)**

Why would Ruth go to Boaz in this way? Why not just talk to him openly? Why risk this kind of midnight moment? What if things went very wrong? What if Boaz misinterpreted her actions? What if someone had seen them? Is this secret seduction or risky righteousness?

She came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down (v.8). Ruth, did as her mother-in-law instructed her, and waited until after Boaz had supper and had laid down and gone to sleep. Then she went quietly to him and uncovered his feet and then laid down near him and waited.

¹⁰ Genesis 38:14, 19.

Why uncover his feet? Because Naomi had said, *"He will tell you what to do"* (v.4). Ruth needed to have a conversation with him. Apparently she uncovered his feet so the cold night air would chill and awaken him. Verse 8 tells us that *"at midnight"* Boaz *"was startled."* The word means "to tremble," but it does not necessarily require meaning to tremble with fear. Therefore, this could be translated "he shivered."¹¹ This makes complete sense if the whole point in uncovering his feet was to gently awaken Boaz. If this was the intention, then it worked.

Boaz turned over and behold a woman lay at his feet! (v.8). If he wasn't trembling with fear before, then perhaps now he is, because the presence of a person is nearby. He asked, *"Who are you?"* Ruth replies with an amazing answer, which she has most likely been awake all night planning and considering.

I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer (v.9). This verse is the heart of this passage. It's the apex of the drama. Note three observations.

First, notice how Ruth identifies herself, as *"your servant."* She still understands her place. She presumes nothing. She knows Boaz owes her nothing. She maintains her humble attitude and demeanor.

Second, the saying, *"spread your wings over your servant,"* could be taken in one of two ways; an offer of sex or a proposal of marriage. The word *"wings"* could also be translated, *"skirt,"* or *"the corner of your garment,"* as in "can I join you under your blanket," which could connote the offer of a sexual relationship.¹² However, this is not the way that Boaz interpreted her words, for he pronounces a blessing of the LORD upon her and he commends her for her *"great kindness."* If she were tempting him into sexual sin, then certainly he would not have invoked the name of the LORD in *blessing* her. And neither would he have commended her for this *"last kindness being greater than the first."* This statement begs the question, what is the first kindness? It was the devotion she had shown to her mother-in-law by forsaking her family, land, and home in order to remain with Naomi and care for her by not leaving her in her lonely sorrow. Now Ruth was showing an even greater degree of kindness in that she was seeking marriage, not outside the clan of Naomi's family, among the *young* and *rich* men of the town—which he presumes she could do, but rather with a *redeemer* inside Elimelech's clan. Boaz interprets her words to mean that she is seeking marriage with Boaz, not for her own sake primarily, but for the sake of her mother-in-law. Boaz views this a a great kindness!

Boaz is certainly much older than Ruth, since he, like Naomi, refers to her as "my daughter." However, his commendation of her is hopeful.

Ruth's use of the word *'wings'* would have reminded Boaz (and us) of his benediction that he pronounced over Ruth on their first meeting, when Boaz commended Ruth for having come for *"refuge under the wings of the God of Israel"* (2:12). The phrase is a euphemism for a

¹¹ Daniel Isaac Block, *Judges, Ruth*, vol. 6, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 689–690.

¹² See Ezekiel 16:8.

proposing marriage. *Ruth is making a marriage proposal to Boaz.* She is saying, “Take me under your wings, and care for me—as wife.”

We know she is requesting marriage, because of the reason she gives for making this request, “*For you are a redeemer.*” As you may recall, a ‘redeemer’ (גֹּאֵל *go’el*) is a close relative who does primarily three things:

1. Buy back family land that has been sold (Lev 25:25)
2. Buy the freedom of family member sold into slavery due to poverty (Lev 25:48f)
3. Marry a childless widow relative to raise up offspring in name of deceased father (Deut 25:5-10)¹³

As this story unfolds, we come to understand that Boaz will serve as ‘redeemer’ in two of these ways. First, he will purchase the land that formerly belonged to Naomi’s deceased husband and he will marry Ruth to raise up offspring in honor of her deceased husband.

Third, Ruth is not actually making a request, but rather a *command*. Ruth, though she has already humbly stated that she is his “servant,” nevertheless is bold enough to make a statement of command based on upon the fact that Boaz is a ‘redeemer,’ under whose wings she is now coming for refuge. She is now stating that Boaz ought to be the answer to his own prayer for her which he prayed upon their first meeting (see 2:12).

This whole night is quite amazing. She is a foreigner telling an Israelite what to do on his own land. She is a woman giving a directive to a man (which culturally would not have been customary). She is a woman making a marriage proposal to a man, rather than the other way around. She is a servant telling her boss what to do. She is a younger woman softly demanding an older man to marry her! *Everything about this midnight marriage proposal is amazing!*

All of these facts probably points to why it was best that this encounter happened at night. It was not culturally unacceptable for a woman to approach a man in public, and even more so when it was a Moabite woman to a Israelite man. It was also inappropriate for a servant to initiate a conversation with her master. Furthermore, this midnight maneuver would have allowed the conversation to be free from the potential social pressure that could be present had they spoken during the work day when others could have heard them. Finally, it would offer some measure of cover for her shame should Boaz choose to reject her request. Boaz completely understands her request and he does not reject her.

¹³ Arthur E. Cundall and Leon Morris, *Judges and Ruth: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 7, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1968), 273.

C). Boaz's Assent (vs. 10-15)

Boaz accepts Ruth's forthrightness and **assents** to her suggestion.

¹¹ And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. ¹² And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. ¹³ Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the LORD lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning."

¹⁴ So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor."

¹⁵ And he said, "Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city.

Ruth 3:14-15 (ESV)

Do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask (v.11). Yes! The plan worked! Boaz agreed. He did not perceive her to be seducing him. He did not think her coming to him at night was sinful. He did not reject her. He did not view her as a gold digger. He did not think her too forward. He whole-heartedly assents to her initiation. Boaz agrees to open his wings and give refuge to Ruth. This is the happiest of news! Why would he assent to this?

All my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman (v.11). The text here literally says, "all the gate of my people."¹⁴ It refers to all the people who sit in the gate, which is where the elders sit and decisions of governance were made. This means two things. *First*, it means that Ruth has been the topic of conversation in the city gate. *Second*, it means that the leaders of this town have been watching Ruth and have concluded that she is "**a worthy woman**." These Israelites have not judged her negatively because she was a Moabite. They have not thought little of her because she was poor or because she was a childless widow, or because she was a foreign woman. They have watched her diligent work, her respectful conduct, and her deep and loving devotion to her mother-in-law, and they have concluded this woman is "**a worthy woman!**" This is amazing! And with this judgement Boaz assents!

Good news! All will turn out well! But wait...

Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I (v.12). What!? About whom is he speaking? A nearer redeemer? No, no, no! This can't be. Boaz is the guy! We've gotten to know Boaz and he's a great boss, a faithful leader, a generous man, and one who is not afraid of a new challenge, even though he is a bit older. Now what are we supposed to do?

¹⁴ Daniel I. Block, *Ruth: The King Is Coming*, ed. Daniel I. Block, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 183.

Remain tonight... and if he will redeem you, good; let him... (v.13). No, this is not good! Come on Boaz. Do something. Boaz is a steady man. There is a right and proper way to do things and Boaz will let this play out. Boaz is trusting in God, but he did give her a promise.

If he is not willing to redeem you, then as the LORD lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until morning (v.13). Boaz gives a solemn promise here. He invokes the name of the LORD. And he does not take his name in vain, because he will keep his promise. But once again, "*lie down until morning*." Sometimes it is impossible to sleep the night before major decisions or significant events. When we have done all we can do, we must ultimately trust in the Lord. True rest comes from the LORD.

So she lay at his feet until morning (v.14). The author does not tell us that she actually slept. We are simply told that she "*lay at his feet*" the rest of the time "*until morning*." I think both she and Boaz lay there awake all night. Boaz perhaps thinking how to resolve this situation and Ruth wondering who would redeem her. But they kept their distance. They did not have sex. They could have. I'm sure the temptation was there. No one would have seen them. But they did not. They were both self-controlled. They both did what was right.

She arose before one could recognize another (v.14). There's no point in laying there wide awake. It's better to get up and go home. There was no street lights. Only the light of the stars and the moon and so off she went. They did not want to be wrongfully accused of impropriety, and so better to go home before being seen and misunderstood. It is "better to avoid even the appearance of evil."

Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out (v.15). Boaz again is very generous to her. He gives her six measures of barley, which is an undefined amount, but knowing that Boaz is a generous man, he no doubt gave her more than she would need. I likely did this as a way to comfort these two widows and again remind them that they would be cared for. After having her cloak filled with barely, *she went into the city*.

D). Ruth's Announcement (vs. 16-18)

Scene III: Back at Naomi's House

Now we arrive at the final scene of this chapter, back inside the house where Ruth announces to Naomi all that took place.

¹⁶ And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did you fare, my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her, ¹⁷ saying, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, 'You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'" ¹⁸ She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."

Ruth 3:16-18 (ESV)

How did you fair, my daughter? (v.16). Naomi is certainly curious. Did she get charged with acting like a prostitute? Did she get attacked? How did Boaz respond? Did he listen? Did he reject or accept her? Ruth “told her all,” especially what Boaz said when he gave Ruth the barley.

You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law (v.17). Boaz was thinking of Naomi that morning. He was not merely thinking of himself or of Ruth. He had Naomi in mind. He didn’t want Ruth to *return empty* to Naomi. These are familiar words. We’ve heard them before on the lips of Naomi. Boaz wanted Naomi see that Ruth *returned full*. That’s why he filled up her cloak with barley. Boaz no doubt heard Naomi’s words when she arrived in town when she said, “*I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty*” (1:21). Boaz is sending a message to Naomi, that the LORD through him, will fill her again. Ruth went out that night empty, but she returned full. God had not abandoned these two widows. He was not against them. Naomi therefore responds to Ruth.

Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matters turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today (v.18). Naomi invites Ruth now to rest and wait. No need to be anxious or worry. All she needs to do is wait. Naomi is confident in Boaz. He is a man of action. He is not lazy. He will settle the matter today. He will be faithful to what he has promised he would do. Ruth must wait.

And we must wait until next week to see how this turns out.

III. Conclusion

There are at least three observations to consider from this chapter.

1. ***It is good and right to think of the needs of others before your own.*** Naomi was thinking of Ruth welfare before her own. Ruth was thinking of Naomi’s needs above her own desires. Boaz was thinking more about Naomi’s faith in God than his own unfolding situation. The apostle Paul said it well, “Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus...” (Phil 2:4-5). Jesus thought of the needs of others more than his own desires, therefore so also should his followers. As Jesus prayed to the Father, “*Not my will, but yours be done,*” (Mt 26:39) so also should we pray the same.
2. ***Sexual purity, rather than permissiveness always brings greater blessing from the Lord.*** The scene in this chapter is so countercultural. Our culture is so sexually promiscuous. We need godly examples like this. Our culture tells us you can have sex with whomever or whenever you wish. This is not God’s will.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;
1 Thessalonians 4:3 (ESV)

God's will for you is holiness. Sexual immorality is all sexual activity outside of marriage. It is not God's will for you to have sex until your married and then thereafter only with your opposite sex spouse. Don't believe the lie that disobedience to God's command is better than obedience. God blesses obedience and he curses disobedience. If you want God's blessing, then obey God's will. If you want his curses, then disobey. Sex with anyone whenever and wherever minimizes the meaning of sex and sweetness of intimacy between husband and wife. Don't allow the devil to rob you of the goodness of sex by believing the lie that waiting until marriage is a stupid plan. You who are unmarried, consider the example of Boaz and Ruth. They exercised self-control. They were not slaves of their hormones. Sex is God's idea and he blesses sex within marriage and forbids it everywhere else. If want His blessing, then have sex according to his word. Get married and then enjoy a blessed marriage bed.

3. ***Rest in the work of Jesus.*** Naomi said to Ruth, *"Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."* Naomi was seeking Ruth's rest. She did all that Naomi suggested and now she has only to wait. She just needs to sit still and rest. However, Boaz will not rest until the matter is settled. Ruth's rest is found in the work of her redeemer.

This is true for Christians as well. The true rest of the Christian is found in the saving work of Jesus. He is our redeemer. He did not rest until all the will of the Father was done. ***"It is finished,"***¹⁵ he said. Jesus did not rest until he had accomplished righteous and secured holiness. After dying, being buried, and resurrected on the third day, he then ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father. He did not rest until the matter of salvation was settled. Now he is resting and he invites us into his rest. This is what faith is. It is resting in the work of Jesus for salvation and not trying to earn it ourselves. Yes, we must do righteousness, but not to earn salvation, rather to demonstrate our devotion to Jesus.

On the night before Jesus was crucified, he prayed an amazing prayer, found in John 17. In that prayer, he prays for his disciples and for all who will believe in him through the testimony of his disciples (Jn 17:9, 20).

"Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. **John 17:24 (ESV)**

The saving work that Jesus worked, he worked because he loved the Father and wanted all who believe in him to know that love as well. If you'd like to know that love, then run to Jesus to find refuge under his wings, just like Ruth ran to Boaz to find rest and refuge under his!

¹⁵ John 19:30.

IV. Discussion Questions

1. What are the keywords for each of the first three chapters?
2. What is the main point of this chapter?
3. What was Naomi primarily seeking for Ruth, as stated in 3:1? What was offered as the meaning of this word?
4. Why did Naomi advise Ruth to “wash, anoint, and put on a cloak?” What is the meaning of this series of actions as based upon David’s similar actions found in 2 Samuel 12:20?
5. What was the primary purpose for which Ruth went to Boaz at the threshing floor?
6. Why did she go at night?
7. What is the meaning of the word ‘redeemer?’
8. What does this chapter reveal about Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz? What does it reveal about Jesus?
9. Where do you see God active in these events?
10. What in this chapter do you find most meaningful? Why?