



Hope of Redemption

RECAP

This week's focus: "God's hesed love promises the hope of redemption."

The story of Naomi, Boaz and Ruth will now come to a close. The opening scene of chapter 4 takes place at the town gate, the place where all the important business took place in this season of Israel's history. Boaz assembles some townspeople, ten elders, and the nearest relative to Naomi (who he names "So and So") to take care of outstanding business as it related to the line of Naomi's husband, Elimelek.

Boaz opens the conversation by bringing to everyone's attention that Naomi needed to sell her land, and according to God's law, her closest relative was in the position to 'redeem' the land and keep it in the family. Mr. "So and So" was that man, and he was willing to answer that call. That was until Boaz mentioned that a Moabite woman (Ruth) was also a part of the deal. This fact was enough to get Mr. "So and So" to walk away from the deal altogether, paving the way for Boaz to 'redeem' Naomi's land as well as her widowed daughter in law, Ruth.

The people in town were witnesses to the transaction and invoked names like Israel's matriarchs, Rachel and Leah, onto Ruth the Moabite. Incredible! The author didn't stop there with Old Testament references either. He referred to the story of Tamar, who fathered Perez through a scandalous encounter with Judah (reread Gen 38 to be reminded of the scandal). In connecting the story of Tamar here in Ruth, we catch a glimpse of how God is always looking to rewrite the hope of redemption into every story, including our own!

At this point in the story the focus lands on Ruth, her marriage to Boaz, and the birth of their son Obed. Immediately thereafter the story zooms in on Naomi, the widow who lost not only her husband, but also her sons at the beginning of the story. We are reminded that in the birth of Ruth's baby, Naomi's family tree is given new life! We are reminded that the once bitter story of Naomi ends with the hope that is found in the new life of a baby. A baby, we are told, who is in the line of Israel's greatest king, David.

What a great place to end this roller coaster of a story! Only, it doesn't end at verse 17. It ends with a genealogy. A genealogy that Matthew uses in his gospel, and a genealogy in this story that ends with David but begins with Perez, whose name means "breach". Ruth, as a Moabite woman, had broken through a barrier, a wall of hatred that had been built between God, His people, and the Moabites. But here was Ruth, written into God's family tree.

This is who God is and how God works. God invites all people into His family. Not only does He extend the invitation, He does all the work. In Jesus, the hope of our redemption is made complete when Jesus Himself breaks down the barrier of sin that keeps us apart from a life with Him, if only we accept the gift of this work He has done on our behalf!



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SHARE (5-10 min)

1. Icebreaker Question: What movie genre is your favorite? (romance, sci-fi, comedy, etc.) How is redemption written into that genre of movie?

STUDY (about 30 min) Read Ruth 4

1. How did God speak to you through the scripture and the sermon this week? Is there anything that was unclear, or that you have questions about?
2. What other stories from the Old Testament can you recall where the theme of "redemption" was clearly in play?
3. Why do you think Boaz gave the 'primary redeemer' the name "So and So"?
4. Tell about a time in your life when you knew you were doing something God was calling you to do even though it flew in the face of "common logic".
5. Share a time in your life when God rewrote hope into a season of your life's story.
6. Why do you think the author of Ruth included the story of Judah, Tamar, and Perez into this book?
7. How can the Truth that God has redeemed you through Jesus impact your day to day life in the here and now and not just be something you get to experience in eternity?
8. Where do you need God to write hope into your story today?

SUPPORT (15 min)

Break up into groups of 3 or 4, share your prayer requests and spend some time praying for God's redemption in your life or in the life of a loved one.