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Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you so much for the beautiful story of redemption that we see in the book of Ruth. Thank you for the beautiful story of redemption we see on the cross and in our lives. We just want to praise you and thank you and give glory to who you are, that you are our Redeemer, that you came down and you loved us and brought us into your family. Thank you Lord, in Jesus name, amen. Okay, well I am finishing up the book of Ruth today. Some of you have been really enjoying it, some of you not so much, but the good news is, hey, we're about done. So we're doing the final chapter, Ruth chapter 4. In chapter 1 we see the story where this family left Israel from Moab and all the men died off and only this widow and her daughter-in-law widow, Naomi and Ruth, came back. And in chapter 2 we start to see God working behind the scenes because Ruth just kind of goes out to start gleaning and she ends up not only in the field of someone who is a good godly man but is also able to be a kinsman Redeemer to her. And then in chapter 3 we see Naomi start turning some gears to say we're gonna make this thing happen, we're gonna set stuff in motion. And she teaches Ruth how to approach Boaz at the threshing floor and say this is what you need to do, this is what you need to say. And Boaz responds positively and says yes I will be the one, I will be your kinsman Redeemer, but there is a closer kinsman and he has the first right to redeem you. And cliffhanger, that's where we left off. And so now we are going to see the resolution of the matter in Ruth chapter 4. And I'm just going to read it straight through and then we'll go through and discuss it. And if there's any representatives from the kitchen back there I'm sure we're gonna go a little late today because we've had so much going on but I'm just giving you a heads up. Ruth chapter 4, "Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there and behold the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, 'Come aside friend, sit down here.' So he came aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, 'Sit down here.' So they sat down. Then he said to the close relative, 'Naomi who has come back from the country of Moab sold the piece of land which belonged to our brother, Alimilec. And I thought to inform you saying, 'Buy back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not redeem it then tell me that I may know for there was no one but you to redeem it and I am next after you.' And this man said, 'I will redeem it.' Then Boaz said, 'On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitis, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance.' And the close relative said, 'I cannot redeem it for myself lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeemed my right of redemption for yourself for I cannot redeem it.' Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging to confirm anything. One man took off his sandal and gave it to the other and this was a confirmation in Israel. Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, 'Buy it for yourself.' So he took off his sandal and Boaz said to the elders and all the people, 'You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Alimilec and all that was Chileans and Malons from the hand of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitis, the widow of Malon, I have acquired as my wife to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance. That the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day.' And all the people who were at the gate and the elder said, 'We are witnesses.' The Lord make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel. And may you prosper and Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. May your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah because of the offspring which the Lord will give you from this young woman.' So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife and when he went into her the Lord gave her conception and she bore a son. Then the woman said to, then the women said to Naomi, 'Blessed be the Lord who has not left you this day without a close relative and may his name be famous in Israel and may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age for your daughter-in-law who loves you who is better to you than seven sons has born him.' Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom and became a nurse to him. Also the neighbor women gave him a name saying there is a son born to Naomi and they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David. Now this is the genealogy of Perez. Perez begot Hezron, Hezron begot Ram and Ram begot Amenadab. Amenadab begot Nashon and Nashon begot Salman, Salman begot Boaz and Boaz begot Obed, Obed begot Jesse and Jesse begot David. So, huzzah, happy ending. Everything turned out the way we were hoping. There's some stuff that happens in here that's a little bit weird so we're gonna talk about it. First thing, we are in we have this new major player in our story, all right, this closer relative. What was his name? We don't know. And then we have him doing this weird stuff like taking off his sandal and all this other weird stuff going on and and it's peculiar to us because we are not familiar with Jewish customs. But we are going to jump back to another point in Scripture and all of this stuff will become clear once we read Deuteronomy chapter 25 verses 5 through 10. And I know Deuteronomy is kind of scary. It's one of those books that just has lots of laws and stuff like that. But once you understand this little piece of Scripture, you'll be able to read the story of Ruth chapter 4 in a whole new light. So Deuteronomy 25 5, "If brothers dwell together and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family. Her husband's brother shall go into her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of the dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. But if the man does not want to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel. He will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.' Then the elders of the city shall call him and speak to him, but if he stands firm and stands firm and says, 'I do not want to take her,' then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his face, and answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house.' And his name shall be called in Israel the house of him who had his sandal removed." So a lot of questions answered there. Number one, the reason we don't know this man's name is because when this man refused to do the brotherly duty and take Ruth as his wife, he gave up his right to have a name. By refusing to perpetuate his brother's name, he lost his own name. And then secondly, we understand how it is the custom that the the wife, the sister-in-law who's been jilted, is supposed to take off the sandal and spit in his face. And here we see this brother-in-law taking off his sandal and saying, 'I give it up.' Now I think it's interesting to point out here that God said, 'Here's the way you're going to do it.' And I'm completely certain that God didn't want brothers failing to do their duty. I think God wanted the brothers to do the right thing, provide a son to the sister-in-law. I think God wanted that. And yet over here we see evidence that it had become so commonplace for the brothers to refuse to do this, that they had actually streamlined the custom so that they could not worry about that whole spitting in the face thing. And so now the brothers just take off their own sandal and say, 'I'm not doing it.' And and that was good enough. And that to me is kind of sad. And we see this a lot throughout Scripture. God says, 'Here is my beautiful perfect path. I want all of you to travel this path. This path glorifies me. It's good for you. Travel this path.' But if you absolutely, just absolutely can't travel this path, I've made this little exit ramp right here. I really don't want you to take the exit ramp. I really want you to stay on the path. And time and again we see here in this example and even in modern Christian culture, we see that the little exit ramp becomes the one very well traveled and that's very sad. We see that a lot in divorce. God doesn't like divorce. He really doesn't want any person and especially any Christian to get divorced. And he created, he said, 'If you absolutely need to get divorced, I've got this little method for you to do it, but I really don't want you to do that.' And sadly we see it happening far too often and we see it happening here in this story. But the good news is that because this man did not want to, and here's an interesting side note, in the first verse there when we should learn this man's name, it's probably, it says in my translation, probably in your translation, 'Come aside friend, sit down here.' If you look in the actual Hebrew, what it says is, 'Hey such a one, come sit down.' Hey such a one. In modern lingo that would be the, 'Hey so and so.' So the author who wrote this, he wasn't saying, 'Come aside friend.' He's saying, 'Hey so and so. Come have a seat.' Because he's deliberately not using this guy's name. So I thought that was an interesting mistranslation there. But this guy, he didn't want to do it. He did it first though, didn't he? He, Boaz said, 'Hey, check it out. I've got, there's all this land. This land needs to be purchased.' And the guy's like, 'Ooh I like land. Land is good. Land means more money, more income. Yeah, I'm all about the land.' And it comes from this woman named Naomi, and she's probably too old to have kids nowadays, and if I bring her home as this you know new wife, my current wife isn't gonna get mad because you know she's older lady, she can't have kids, no problem. All right, I'll do it. But then Boaz points out, hey, the Naomi's dead son was married to Ruth. And when you take the land, you also have to take Ruth. And suddenly the guy's like, 'Whoa, hang on a second. Now there's this young, beautiful, mowabyte woman of childbearing age. That's gonna cause trouble in my home. And then once I give her a son, there could be confusion about how much of my inheritance belongs to him and how much belongs to my natural sons.' And so now he's like, 'No, I'm sorry. This is too complicated for me. I don't want to do this.' And I'm sure Boaz realized that would be the man's response, which is why he pointed out, 'Oh by the way, Ruth is part of that package.' And so the guy said, 'No, I'm not gonna do it.' And so then Boaz already had the elders right there as witnesses. He said, 'Okay, he's not gonna do it. I'm gonna do it.' And you all see and approve, and they say, 'We approve and we bless you.' And we've talked about how this story is a metaphor for the redemption of Christ redeeming us, Christ bringing us into the family. And it's, there's an interesting parallel here that the man, the close relative, he wanted the land but not Ruth. But Boaz, he bought the land but not because he wanted the land, he wanted Ruth. He wanted the treasure that came with the land. And maybe that's tingling some neurons up there. You may remember that there is a parable that Jesus told about a man who found a field with a great treasure hidden inside. He said the kingdom of heaven is like a man who finds this field and there's a treasure buried inside. And so he sells everything he has in order to buy the land because not for the land itself but for the treasure that comes with the land. And we see that that story is a metaphor of this story which is a metaphor for the story of Jesus who gave everything he had to purchase us. And then the elders of the city, first they say that may the woman who is coming to your house be like Rachel and Leah. Now Rachel and Leah, you know, they were the, you could call them the mothers of Israel. Between them they had 13 children. So what these people were saying is we hope that you have a prosperous family, lots of kids, a very happy household. And then they said, "May your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah." Now if you remember that story, it's kind of, it's another one of those stories that kind of makes you blush. Judah, he had these three sons and he finds this woman, she's a foreigner named Tamar and he arranges for Tamar to be married to his oldest son. But the oldest son, it says that he's wicked and dies and Tamar has never had a chance to have a son. So Judah marries Tamar to the second son. He's wicked, he dies. No kids there. And so Judah should say, you know, "Okay, I'm gonna marry you to my third son." But the third son, he's like, "Well, he's still too young and so we're just gonna wait a while and Tamar just kind of cool your heels." So Tamar, she's like, "Well, I'm not waiting around for this." So she finds out that Judah's going on this trip. She runs on up ahead. She dresses like a prostitute and covers her face with a veil and she sits out there and when Judah comes by, she lures him in and says, "Hey, why don't you come on in?" And he impregnates her and she holds on. He says, "I'm gonna pay you for this, I promise." And she says, "Well, you know, what kind of proof do I have that you're gonna return with the money?" He's like, "Well, here's my ring and my staff and my robe. Hang on to those." And so she takes those things. He leaves, but then she leaves. And when Judah sends the guy to pay her and retrieve his stuff, she's gone. And then later on, a few months later, it turns out, hey, she's pregnant. And Judah says, "What? She's pregnant? How can this happen? That's not right. She needs to, you know, bear the sin of adultery and who made you pregnant?" And she pulls out the ring and the staff and the robe and said, "It was you." And Judah says, "You know what? It was my duty to provide you with offspring and I did the wrong thing and you did the right thing." And so he's like, "You were tricky about it," but he's like, "I was the one who was in the wrong here because it was my family duty to provide you with the Son." And so this son's name was Perez. And so these people here are saying, "May your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah." They're pointing out here that Tamar also was a foreigner who was brought into the family and into the lineage here. And so in this crazy roundabout way, we see that not only is this the story of redemption that mirrors Jesus, but we also see that these players in the story are direct ancestors to Jesus. Perez, who they blessed him and said to be like, was the ancestor to Ruth and Obed. And Ruth and Obed, we follow down the family tree, gets to David. And if you read Matthew chapter 1, you keep going down the family tree, you get to Jesus. So not is this a story that teaches us about the redemption story of Jesus, but they're actually all in his family tree. And people like to, scholars like to say that this man who doesn't have a name, that he represents the law. And the law is not willing to save us, the law cannot save us, only Jesus can save us. And so this man represents the law because he will not, he chooses not to redeem Ruth, just like the law chooses not to redeem us. The law only points out our sin, it cannot save us from our sin. But Jesus comes down, becomes a man, becomes a kinsman to us, and becomes our kinsman, redeemer, dies and saves us. But as I, as I studied this story and what people said, well this person represents this, this person represents that, I started kind of switching roles around just to kind of, you know, what would it be like if this person was in that role? And when I realized that, I said to myself, when I was thinking about how Ruth is the treasure in the field, and this man wanted the field but not the treasure, I said to myself, gosh there's been a lot of times in my life and there's been a lot of times in the lives of other Christians where we want God's blessings but we don't want the relationship. Relationships are hard work to maintain, you know, spending spending time with people is not always easy. It's a lot easier with God than with some of the needy people, you know, but but nevertheless a lot of times we would rather just receive, you know, God save me, you know, give me health, give me finances, give me all these blessings and stuff, but but let's not do the relationship thing, let's not have the quiet time, the prayer, the Bible reading, and it's sad because that stuff is the real treasure. That stuff is the real treasure and and I'm so so sad that there are people who have not just experienced his presence and his Holy Spirit and what it's like just to walk through life just with him, just relationship with God. And so as we go into our quiet time now, I ask that you focus on your relationship with Jesus. If you got, if you lost your finances, if you lost your health, if you had nothing else but just Jesus walking close to you, his presence with you every day, would that be enough? Should that, it should be enough. I think it was John Piper who said if you can imagine heaven without God then you have the completely wrong idea of heaven. God is the treasure. His relationship with him is the most valuable thing and if you haven't experienced that, then I pray that right now during quiet time you say, "God I'm sorry for just going after your blessings, please fill me with your Holy Spirit, help me to experience living life, living with your presence with me every day." Friends, God sees you as a treasure. Not your talents, not your bank account, not your personality, just just you. It's not what you bring to the table. He just sees you as a treasure worth dying to attain. And someone like that ought to be a treasure to you. A God who loves you that much ought to be your greatest treasure. I'm gonna close this in prayer and I'm also gonna go ahead and pray for the meal as our singers are coming up. Wonderful Heavenly Father, precious Lord Jesus, we thank you so much that you have chosen to love us to an extent that defies explanation. Thank you that you have chosen the greatest symbol throughout all of history to demonstrate your love towards us. Thank you for choosing to treasure us, not because of what we have to bring, just because you are love and you created us and you have chosen to love us. Please help us to understand that. Please help us to treasure you the way you have treasured us. And I pray that you fill everyone's heart here with your Holy Spirit, with your beautiful presence, and that even if we got no other blessing from you for the rest of our lives, that we would learn to just be content with you, with your presence, going with us day by day. We praise you and thank you in the name of your glorious Son Jesus, Amen.