

A Sermon preached by Martin Tanner in St Mary's, Market Drayton on Thursday 27th October 2016 at 10.00am

SS6 RUTH Ruth 4 v1-11a

We are almost there! Today Boaz marries Ruth!

In 3v1 Boaz had assured Ruth that he was willing to act as her kinsman-redeemer and to take her as his wife "*Do not be afraid, I will do all you ask.*"

HOWEVER, there is a problem – although Naomi must have assumed Boaz was their nearest relative, there was, in fact, another man who was actually a closer relative and he had the first right to act as kinsman-redeemer and marry Ruth.

Nevertheless, Boaz is determined to act in the right manner.

He is a man of integrity.

As so he doesn't try any sly or underhand tricks.

Instead he acts wisely and openly.

Boaz knew that he would find his relative at the Town Gate 4 v1.

This was the centre of activity where the city officials gathered to transact business, so Boaz would be sure also to find Elders here to act as his witnesses.

When Boaz saw his relative, he asked him (4v1) to sit down and brought **ten Elders** (v2) to join them. Boaz informed his relative of the situation in a cool and detached manner.

Namely, that Elimelek, Naomi's former husband, still had some property in the area that was for sale. As the nearest relative, this man had the first right to buy the land, and he seemed eager to do so v4 "*I will redeem it*" he said.

BUT v5 then Boaz informed him,

"On the day you buy the land from Naomi and from Ruth the Moabitess, you acquire the dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property."

The other kinsman-redeemer obviously hadn't bargained for this.

He'd been happy at the idea of acquiring more land but he didn't want to take on any further responsibilities or risk complicating his own situation.

(2)

Perhaps he was afraid that if he had a son by Ruth some of his estate would transfer away from his family to Elimelek's family.

Whatever the reason, he said v6

*"I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself.
I cannot do it."*

Unlike Boaz, this man was afraid of commitment, afraid of suffering loss, concerned with protecting his assets rather than offering security and protection to a destitute widow.

He took off his sandal v8 and gave it to Boaz, relinquishing all rights to the land and to Ruth.

Perhaps he would have acted differently if he'd understood the implications, the part that Ruth and Boaz would play in *GOD'S* plans – the impact their actions would have on the history of mankind.

It's interesting that to note that we aren't even told his name, whereas Ruth and Boaz's names have gone in history from every generation to every generation as great names.

Now all the obstacles that stood in the way of Ruth and Boaz are removed **and we can enjoy our happy ending.**

Clearly Boaz was well-liked and respected, as we can tell from the way the elders asked God's blessing on his marriage and his future life and God certainly answered their prayer of v11:

"May the woman who is coming into your home be like Rachel and Leah who together built up the family of Israel"

And, of course, she does as she become part of the lineage of Christ.

In conclusion, the way Boaz acted throughout demonstrated

-faith in God,

-a willingness to behave in a way honouring to God

-and to trust Him for the outcome.

He acted openly, unselfishly, full of integrity, focussing on the needs of others rather than on himself.

He sets us all a great example to follow.