

Ruth 4 • Redemption, Hope and Abundance

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Father, as we dig into this morning, we just really pray for your Holy Spirit to lead, guide, and speak. Lord, we want to just give you permission to speak to us through Your Word to direct our course. Some of us, Lord, need a probably a course correction. Help us, Lord, today to hear your voice. We just really want to be sensitive, but we find that very challenging and so we ask you to help us.

Help us Lord, to be sensitive to your voice, to hear you. What you have to say, lead us, we pray, guide us, we pray. We thank you for your love for us. We pray these things in Jesus' precious and Holy Name, amen. Amen.

For those of you who are just jumping in on the study of the book of Ruth in the Old Testament. Probably not one that people...I don't know. I don't know. I think women seem to love this book for some reason. I mean, it's really popular book in women's retreats. They just love the book of Ruth because you know what, at its basic sort of idea, the book of Ruth is a love story. And who doesn't love a love story? I mean, that's why the Hallmark channel's so popular. That's why I got so many dumb...oh forget it, anyway. But really this ends up being really a love story between a man and a woman.

And it begins with hard times, very difficult times, which just get worse as kind of time goes on. And then you've got loss and sorrow and desperation. But the cool thing about the book of Ruth is that this is also a story of redemption. It's a story of recovery. And it's a story of hope, and that's what really makes it so endearing.

It begins, as you know, with a man by the name of Elimelech, who's dealing with difficult circumstances in that he has a wife and two young boys, and there's a famine going on in the land, which means no food. And so he relocates to Moab, which is a nearby pagan country, and there's some dangers that go along with that. And dangers aside, the difficulty is that no sooner do they practically get to Moab and Elimelech passes away leaving his wife, Naomi, a widow.

Well, she thinks, well, I've still got my two boys. And so, she decides to marry them off to some Moabite women, which wasn't probably a great idea, but then they die, both Chilion and Mahlon pass away and now they've left Naomi destitute because the boys never got around to having children with their new wives.

So, Naomi lives in the area of Moab for a period of 10 years. She finally decides to go back to her homeland of Israel and one of the Moabite daughters-in-law, and that of course is Ruth, held fast to Naomi and pledged to return with her and make Israel her home and the God of Israel, her God. And I'll tell you something, throughout the book of Ruth, she is, and I'm talking about Ruth now, she is just a picture of loyalty. I mean loyalty in difficult circumstances. She could have left Naomi and said, well I'm going to go find another husband because she's still a young woman.

But she stuck with Naomi and returned to a foreign land, and she became just this picture. And we've seen it in these first three chapters of just what steadfast love looks like. You want to know what faithfulness looks like. This is it. Ruth is it. She is this picture that helps us to understand. And so much so, that once they got back to the land of Israel, specifically the area of Bethlehem, everybody in Bethlehem knew that Ruth was a godly woman. And Boaz, who we were introduced to as well, knew it and took notice of Ruth when she was gleaning in his barley fields.

Gleaning was essentially picking up scraps, and that's what the poor were allowed to do. And so, it turned out, as we found out in the previous chapter, that Boaz was related to Naomi on her husband's side, and as such, he could potentially act as the kinsman redeemer. And we've talked a lot about that role of kinsman redeemer in this study, but it's outlined in the book of Deuteronomy and it was all part of the law. Let me put it on the screen for you from Deuteronomy 25. It says,

Deuteronomy 25:5-6 (ESV)

“If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and he has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go into her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And the first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of the dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.”

“If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies (one of them passes away) and he has no son, (in other words, no heir) the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. (Instead, it says) Her husband's

brother shall go into her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And the first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of the dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel."

And that was a big deal. That was a big deal in Israel that your name not be blotted out and so it was the duty of a brother, or if there wasn't a brother, the nearest relative, beginning with uncles, cousins, and down the line, it was their duty to carry on the name of their deceased relative so that name would not be lost.

Today, by the way, we know this as levirate marriage. And there are even movies made about this. Maybe some of you can think of some. But in the last chapter, you'll remember that Ruth made it known to Boaz that she was interested in having him take up the role as the kinsman redeemer of the family.

And Boaz was very honored by Ruth suggesting that he take up that role because he was a fine bit older than her. But he had told her that there was another relative that was actually in line before him, and so that relative would need to be given the first right of refusal. And so he told her just to go home and I'll take care of this.

And this is where we pick it up in chapter four. And we talked at the end of the last chapter that Ruth wanted Boaz to marry her, but there was another man in line ahead of Boaz, and she knew that probably by the end of the day she would be married to somebody. It was either going to be Ruth, or Boaz rather, or it was going to be this other guy who has never named in the text. We've been calling him Quasimodo just because we don't know what the guy looked like. He probably, I'm, I won't say it. I'll just get in trouble.

Anyway, here we go, picking it up in chapter four, verse one, and it says, now if you read with me, ¹ *Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there.* Now the gate they're referring to is the city gate, and this is where all the business of the community was conducted. You got to remember, there wasn't a clerk of court back in those days, or a title company or somebody to give you a receipt for a transaction that you were making, whether it was the sale of land or animals, or taking a wife or whatever the situation might be. So, the elders of the city would gather at the gate, and there they would witness any transaction that was going on. And we're going to talk here a little bit more as we go on with this study about the importance of witnesses. But this was a very important thing for them, a very important role for them to carry out.

And so we're still in verse one, it says, *And behold, the redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, this is the closer relative than Boaz to Naomi and Elimelech's family, came by. So Boaz said, "Turn aside, friend; sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down.* And he obviously knows there's some business that needs to be transacted here. Otherwise, you wouldn't ask him to sit down there with the elders.

And then you'll notice what Boaz does next. In verse two it says, ² *And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here."* Now again, these men are going to be acting as the witnesses to the transaction, or the business, that Boaz has with this other kinsman redeemer. So, we're told that the elder sat down and *Then he said to the redeemer, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. In other words, her deceased husband. ⁴ So I thought I would tell you of it and say, 'Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people.' If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you."*

So, you can see here that Boaz is laying out the situation. He's saying, you're the closest kinsman redeemer. We told you in the Hebrew, this is the single word, go'el, and he says, you are the go'el for the family of Elimelech. You're the closest relative. And so it is incumbent upon you to redeem the land in order to keep it in the family. We don't want the land going outside the tribal allotment in which it was originally given. The land needs to stay within the tribe of Judah, right? And so he says it's your responsibility and in fact your privilege to do this.

You'll notice, however, he doesn't say anything about Ruth at this point. He's not telling him that the land comes with a woman. So, kind of interesting. But then he springs it on him. Because the redeemer says, I will redeem it. And we don't know if Ruth and Naomi were within earshot of what was going on. Wouldn't it have been interesting if they were? Boaz lays out the deal and says, well, here's the deal, there's a plot of land that belonged to our relative. You're first in line to redeem it. What do you think? And he goes, I'll redeem it. And Ruth's probably going, I got to marry Quasi...and she's...ah, this is terrible.

But ⁵ *Then Boaz said (verse 5), "The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance."* Well, ⁶ *Then the redeemer said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. And what he's probably referring to is the fact that he's got other sons, he's got heirs who*

are already heir to his property. And if he has a child through Ruth, that would threaten the inheritance that he planned for his current children. And so he feels like this is going to be some kind of a problem potentially in the future. So, he says, *Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it.*”

And if Naomi and Ruth are listening, I'm sure there's a huge sigh of relief at this point. And then we have this interesting cultural comment. In the next two verses, look at this. It says, ⁷ *Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel.* ⁸ *So when the redeemer said to Boaz, “Buy it for yourself,” he drew off his sandal.*

Now that's an odd cultural thing, but remember, these were ways of doing or conducting business in form of witnesses, or in front of witnesses. They would remove their sandal and hand it to the other guy and say, transaction done. This is just the way they did that. Actually, there was more to this whole sandal business as it relates not just to the transaction of who's going to be the redeemer, but there's more that has to do with who's not going to be the kinsman redeemer. And we learn about that as we keep reading in Deuteronomy chapter 25. Check this out on the screen.

Deuteronomy 25:7-10 (ESV)

...if the man does not wish to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, ‘My husband's brother refuses to perpetuate his brother's name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.’ Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him, and if he persists, saying, ‘I do not wish to take her,’ then his brother’s wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face. And she shall answer and say, ‘So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother’s house.’ And the name of his house shall be called in Israel, ‘The house of him who had his sandal pulled off.’

...if the man does not wish to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders (and again, in front of witnesses) and say, ‘My husband's brother refuses to perpetuate his brother's name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.’ (and then it goes on to say) Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him, (try to reason with him) and if he persists, saying, ‘I do not wish to take her,’ then his brother's wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot (this guy is going to be barefoot for the rest of his life, and look at this, shall) pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face. And she shall

answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.' And the name of his house shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal pulled off.' And believe me, you do not want to be known as the guy who had his sandal pulled off. It's not going to look good on a resume. Going in for a job and, oh, I see you had your sandal pulled off. That's not good.

Verse nine,⁹ *Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses (I want you to notice that) this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon. ¹⁰Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day."*¹¹ *Then all the people (notice this, all the people) who were at the gate (who'd been listening in along with these 10 elders that he had chosen, they all said) "We are witnesses.*

Did you notice that, how many times that repeats? Boaz starts and says, you're witnesses, and then he goes over the terms of the deal, right? The terms of the transaction. And then they say, we are witnesses. And you can tell by this that being a witness was a really big deal in Israel. And this is something that we've kind of lost a little bit in our culture because being a witness is a really important role.

Some of you have been married and you've asked someone to stand up with you at your wedding, and it's usually, not always, it's usually like a maid or matron of honor and a best man. And those people are the witnesses. And I've done tons of weddings over the years and I get this marriage license and it says on the line, who's the couple, here's the groom, here's the bride, and then it says, who are the witnesses? And so, I usually write the name of the witnesses on the marriage license. It doesn't require a signature, it just requires, at least in Oregon, it just requires a name. So, you know, you send that in and that gets posted, these were the people that got married and these were the witnesses.

Now, as far as getting a state marriage license, they really just want to know that people were there and witness the vows for state purposes. But God's Word has much bigger purposes behind the idea of being a witness, because if there are no witnesses, well, first of all, who knows for sure what really transacted between these two people, and this is one of the reasons being or having witnesses is so important.

Because if I make a deal with like Joe over here and we just, we say, okay, here's the transaction we're going to do, and here are the terms of the transaction, but nobody hears it, one of us could come back later and say, that's not what I heard. And it's just my word against his. And that's not a good place to be, to have just your word against somebody else's, because if you decide to take it to court, the best you can do is a civil trial. And you know what the civil, either the jury or the judge, depending, they just simply make a determination based on who they think is telling the truth. But it's their best guess. Why? Because there were no witnesses. Right?

So, this whole idea of having witnesses is so important that God's Word even said in the Old Testament, let every matter be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. But the other thing we see going on here in the book of Ruth is that not only does Boaz want this heard, this is what's going on, I'm not taking this land by force. I'm doing it because I have a legal right and you all hear this, but I'm also taking this woman as my wife. I want you to know we're not going to be living together out of wedlock. There's nothing immoral going on. I'm taking her as my wife, according to the Word. Right? Everything's proper but see, it's understood. It protects reputation by having witnesses to say, we were here, we heard, and we understand, and that sort of thing.

I wish that people understood today the important role that witnesses played like at weddings because biblically speaking, the reason you have witnesses is so that if there's ever a violation of the vows. The witnesses stand up and they go, excuse me, I was there and I heard the promises you made, and this isn't that. Right? That's the whole reason for witnesses. They confront a violation of the terms. Right?

And it's really interesting the symbol of the witnesses also is a picture of God's presence when deals are made, and particularly marriages come together. There's an interesting passage in the very last book of the Bible where the Lord is confronting the people of Israel who were now living down in the southern area of Judah, and he was confronting them because they had essentially decided to be very casual about their marriage covenants, their marriage vows. And the men were blowing off their wives, left and right, and so the Lord confronted them, but he had some very interesting language by which he confronted them. Let me show you this on the screen for Malachi chapter two. It says,

Malachi 2:13-14 (ESV)

And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD (look at this, because the LORD) was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife (look at this) by covenant.

It's an interesting passage, isn't it? He confronts the people and says, you guys are crying crocodile tears because God no longer accepts your offerings, and you're like, why doesn't he accept our offerings? And He's telling them it's because you've been faithless, because you've taken your marriage vows and you've considered them a trivial thing to break. And so God says He's acting as the witness. He's standing up as the witness and He's saying, I was there when you promised, and now you're breaking that promise.

I've had a lot of people over the years, write and ask me, what constitutes a marriage in the eyes of God? And they're usually surprised to hear that all the things they thought were important, aren't important at all. Like getting married in a church. I had a gal say that to me one time. Well, we want to get married in a church so that our marriage is proper. And I said, that has nothing to do with it.

And some people think that, well, you got to get married, you have to have an "ordained minister" marry you or it's not a legitimate marriage. Do you know the Bible says nothing about having an ordained minister? You could get married by your plumber and it wouldn't make a bit of difference.

And then of course I love the other one. I've even seen movies write this into the script where a couple gets married and there's something wrong with the marriage license, and so they go, we're not really married. It's like, really? Are you that stupid? To think that a marriage license makes a couple wedded in the eyes of the Lord.

What do you think they did before marriage licenses existed? Do you realize it wasn't until 1929 that every state in the union required marriage licenses? What

about the people that got married before that? Weren't they married in the eyes of the Lord? A marriage license is the state's way of acknowledging that you're already married. The state does not make, the state has no power to make you married. All they do is recognize it.

And see we've lost this. We started thinking that it was the state who made us married because we have a marriage license. See this? We have a marriage license. Who cares? And so we started thinking that, well, if the state makes us married, then all I got to do is go petition the state to get unmarried, and then I'm unmarried. Wrong. It has nothing to do with it. Absolutely nothing to do with it.

People are married when they're married before God because they've made a commitment before witnesses and they've understood that it's a covenant made before God. That's what causes people to be married. You don't get married in private. You get married in front of witnesses and you make a promise and you invite God to bind that thing together and God is there when we get married. And that's why Jesus said this about two people who get married from Matthew chapter 19 up on the screen, he said,

Matthew 19:6 (ESV)

“...they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

“...*they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man* (I'll put in the state) *separate.*” It's not to be done. So there you go. What constitutes a marriage? A commitment. A promise. A covenant witnessed by people and the Lord.

Now, let me, just before we move on, let me just say, I know that there are people here in the room this morning who've been through the tragedy of divorce and some of you were victims of divorce because you got divorced because your spouse no longer wanted to be married and some of you in your foolishness did it yourself. I want you to know that it's not the unforgivable sin and there is restoration, and there is hope and there is life even after divorce. It's never a good thing. It's never a good thing. It's always a break. It's always a tearing away, a ripping away, but there's life and you serve a God of mercy and grace and love.

We're in the middle of verse 11. They're doing this blessing, the witnesses, and listen, as they just speak out, it says, *May the Lord make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah*, they were the matriarchs of the

nation of Israel, you'll remember, and had the 12 sons of Israel, *who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah (which is the ancient name for Bethlehem) and be renowned in Bethlehem, ¹² and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the LORD will give you by this young woman.*”

And you almost wish they would've stopped at Rachel and Leah, because this whole blessing that surrounds Tamar, if you know your Bible and you know your Old Testament, you know that this one's a little dicey because Tamar, yes, she had a baby. She named him, well, she actually had twins and Perez was the one who became the carrier on because he was the first born.

But you might remember also she got impregnated by her father-in-law when she posed as a prostitute along the roadside. So it wasn't the greatest of beginnings, and she did it because Judah was being a jerk. That was her father-in-law. The son that married Tamar died because he was a wicked man, and Judah made no effort to get her married to anybody else.

He promised her another son to marry her, but he never did it. And so she finally took matters into her own hand. It wasn't a good thing at all. And so she dressed up like a prostitute, sat beside the road and knowing that Judah would be coming along, and she essentially propositioned him and she got pregnant by him.

And you're kind of looking at this going, that's weird. When the people say, may she be like, Tamar, it's like, well, not all like Tamar, but it's going to get even more interesting. So, we're told in verse 13, ¹³ *So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. ¹⁴ Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! (look at this, look what they go on to say) ¹⁵ He shall be to you a restorer of life (because a widow without a husband and then without sons, she had nothing to look forward to but death, and now the women are saying he will be to you a restorer of life) and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.” (Wow!) ¹⁶ Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse.*

And by the way, that does not mean that she nursed him in the sense of breastfeeding him. She was an older woman. The milk factory had shut down. And this simply, the word in the Hebrew simply means a supporter of faithfulness, by faithfulness. So she faithfully supported the raising of this child and so forth. And then it goes on to say, ¹⁷ *And the women of the neighborhood*

gave him a name. How would you like that if you had a baby and your neighbors named him? That would be a little strange, wouldn't it? But it says that they said *A son has been born to Naomi, and they named him Obed.* And we don't care what you think his name should be. His name is going to be Obed. And by the way, that means either servant of God, or worshiper. And it says *he was the father of Jesse, (oh, look at this) the father of David.*

And the book of Ruth ends with this genealogy saying in verse 18, ¹⁸ *Now there are these are the generations of Perez:* Remember, that's the baby, one of the twins born to Tamar. And Perez eventually grew up, got married and *fathered Hezron and Hezron fathered Ram, and Ram fathered Amminadab, and Amminadab fathered Nahshon, and Nahshon fathered Salman, and Salman fathered Boaz, and Boaz fathered Obed, as we just read, and Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David, who's, I believe, the greatest king in all of Israel.*

And it is through this genealogy that the book of Ruth becomes so much more than just a wonderful love story. It becomes a picture of God's mercy and grace. And we discover here that Ruth is the great grandmother of King David. And we can see in the life of David, then you study through the life of David, we can see snippets of Ruth's character, great grandma coming out in David, courage, faithfulness, that commitment to God, that unwavering commitment to God that you see in David's life was in his great-grandmother.

And then 27 generations later, this whole lineage winds up in the life of Messiah and the Savior of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same lineage. Now I want to show you how Matthew gives this lineage in the first chapter of his gospel account. On the screen it says,

Matthew 1:3-6 (ESV)

Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah,

Judah, the father of Perez (right) and Zerah by Tamar, (those were the twins) and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, (and is the) father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of

Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah,

Now let me, we're going to leave that up on the screen for just a minute. We're going to point out some interesting things. I don't know what you see when you look at that lineage, but you know what I see? I see a whole slew of people that don't deserve to be there. And I want to speak about your life, and I want you to think about the many times that the enemy has whispered in your ear and told you that you're unworthy and you don't deserve to be a child of God, or to receive his mercy and love.

And let me just go through some of these people. We'll circle them as we do.

Matthew 1:3-6 (ESV)

Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah,

First of all, you've got Judah. Well, Judah was a man who was sexually immoral with a prostitute, or at least the person he thought was a prostitute.

Matthew 1:3-6 (ESV)

Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah,

And then you've got Perez, who is the offspring of sexual immorality.

Matthew 1:3-6 (ESV)

Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah,

And then you've got Tamar, who's the woman who played the part of the prostitute in order to have a baby.

Matthew 1:3-6 (ESV)

Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah,

And then you've got Rahab, who was a prostitute in Jericho and yet married a man from Israel.

Matthew 1:3-6 (ESV)

Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah,

And then you've got Boaz, who is the offspring of Rahab, a former prostitute.

Matthew 1:3-6 (ESV)

Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah,

And then you've got Ruth, who's a descent...not only is she a Moabites who was not allowed into the inner sanctum of the temple because she's a Moabites, but she is a product herself, or all of her people are a product, of incest between Lot and his daughters.

Matthew 1:3-6 (ESV)

Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and

Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And **David** was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah,

And then you've got David, who was a man guilty of adultery with Bathsheba and worse.

Matthew 1:3-6 (ESV)

Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of **Solomon** by the wife of Uriah,

And then you've got Solomon, oh, don't even get me started on Solomon. It just goes from bad to worse. And what you see there in that genealogy is a list of undeserving people. And yet, here's how Matthew ends that genealogy of all those undeserving people.

Matthew 1:16 (ESV)

...and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

...and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Messiah.

That blow you away? I want you to remember the next time Satan tells you that you're not worthy, I want you to say this back: "I never was, and nobody else is either. And God loves me and accepts me as I am." Of course, he loves me too much not to change me, and he doesn't want to leave me as I am. That's a whole other message.

But you know this is what we see in the book of Ruth. We see grace, we see mercy. We see people who don't deserve being blessed, being given an abundance. So much so that not only did he love those people and forgive those people, he included them in the family line of Jesus, the Messiah, who was perfect and without sin. I'm not sure I would've done it that way.

I mean, I probably would've wanted to protect, the reputation of my perfect son, by having a perfect lineage. The only problem was one could not be found, and yet he didn't just, he didn't line it up with a bunch of people that were practically

perfect, like Mary Poppins. He lined it up with people who were completely undeserving, to show his mercy, to show his love.

And Ruth becomes this picture for you and me of the sinful, hopeless humanity that cries out to God. And here's the deal, here's the deal, and this is where it applies to all of us. She's a picture of all of us, unworthy, unworthy, right? But what did she do? She laid herself at the feet of her redeemer and she said, cover me.

And he said, I will cover you. And do you know that the Lord Jesus is still doing that today? When unworthy people lay down at his feet and say, cover me. And he says, I will cover you with my blood and you will be forgiven, and you will be my child. You will be even in my family. And it's such a beautiful picture of our redemption.

You know it's interesting, God had put into the Law of Moses that a relative was obligated to marry the wife of that relative if the relative passed away. But you know what's interesting? It wasn't the law that motivated Boaz. It was love. It was his love for Ruth, and that too makes Boaz a picture of the Lord in our lives because the Bible tells us that God so loved the world that he gave his only son. It wasn't a legal, on a legal basis that God gave his son. It was on a love basis.