

## SUNDAY

May 22, 2011

**READ:** Ruth 4 (Emphasis verses 1-2); If you haven't done so already, read the first three chapters of Ruth for context.

### OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:

Where is Boaz? Is there significance to the location? Who else is mentioned? Why did Boaz include "ten elders of the town" in his discussion with the other kinsman-redeemer?

**KEY CONCEPT:** Boaz did not delay in keeping his word to Ruth. A mature person of God will do their best to follow through on commitments that are made to others.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** The gateway to a city in ancient Israel was a place where people commonly met with one another, often to do business. Boaz's business that day included fulfilling his commitment to Ruth (see Ruth 3:12-13). What does his intentional effort to have this meeting say about Boaz's character? Is following through on commitments you have made to others something that you are faithful in doing? What are the challenges in keeping your commitments? If we commit to something without intending to follow through with it, what does that say about our integrity? What impact does it have on the witness of our Christian faith?

**PRAY:** Remember that as a Christ-follower, we are ambassadors for our Lord in this world (see 2 Corinthians 5:20). When our actions don't match our words, it reflects poorly on our Lord as well as ourselves in the eyes of non-Christians. Pray today that God will help you to live up to the words of your mouth...which may mean that you are not as quick to make commitments that you know you cannot fulfill. Listen for the Holy Spirit...who may be prompting you to keep the commitments you make.

## MONDAY

May 23, 2011

**READ:** Ruth 4 (esp. verses 3-6)

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** Does Boaz clearly present all the details of the picture to the other kinsman-redeemer at the outset? What is the initial decision of the kinsman-redeemer? What is his ultimate decision? What caused the change?

**KEY CONCEPT:** Look beyond the immediate or short-term rewards of the decisions you make to consider future or long-term consequences of those decisions. As the carpenter says, "Measure twice, cut once."

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** The kinsman-redeemer was initially on board with the idea of a simple property acquisition, but changed his mind when he realized that strings were attached (marrying Ruth). That marriage could affect the disposition of future inheritance within his existing family. Was this a wise consideration on the part of the kinsman-redeemer? When you are transacting business or making a commitment of any sort, how well do you think past the immediate gain to what the future ramifications may be of that decision?

**PRAY:** Ask God today to help you to be wise in all the decisions you make, having a far-sighted emphasis that is able to outweigh the desire for immediate gratification. Ask Him to help you accurately weigh all the aspects of important decisions in your life, so that you are not put in an unfavorable situation in the future.

## TUESDAY

May 24, 2011

**READ:** Ruth 4 (esp. verses 7-8)

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** What was the final decision regarding the business between Boaz and the other kinsman-redeemer? What is the significance of the kinsman-redeemer taking off his sandal?

**KEY CONCEPT:** Verbal commitments are normally accompanied by an action that binds that decision. God's presence in our lives adds another dimension in helping to fulfill our word.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** What is typically the conclusion of a business transaction in today's world? Does the phrase "a man's word is his bond" carry weight in your way of making commitments? Does a handshake truly seal a deal in today's world? Why not? What is the purpose of having a signed contract, and why is that necessary? What does God's word have to say about swearing an oath (see Matthew 5:33-37)? Is your simple "yes," a commitment that others can rely on?

**PRAY:** A fallen (sinful) humanity is prone to not living up to commitments made without the threat of legal penalties for breach of contract. The Holy Spirit living in the heart of those who have received Jesus brings a desire and the ability to overcome the temptation to renege on their commitments. Today ask the Holy Spirit to help you live fully into both the letter and the spirit of all you have agreed to. Let God help you fulfill your commitments even when it is difficult to do so.

## WEDNESDAY

May 25, 2011

**READ:** Ruth 4 (esp. verses 2, 9-12)

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** What common thread ties verses 2 and 9-12 together? What is the purpose of Boaz having had these people present? What would be different if there were no others present during his discussion with the kinsman-redeemer?

**KEY CONCEPT:** Witnesses serve both a legal function to enforce commitments that we make, as well as social reinforcement for us to live a life of integrity.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** Witnesses have always been an important part of the social and legal fabric of humanity. Where are witnesses routinely required in today's world? What purpose do they play from a social perspective? From a legal perspective? Do you feel any sense of accountability to those who have witnessed you making a commitment? Why do we call the sharing of our faith a "witness"? Have you ever said "as God as my witness..." Have you considered the truth of that statement, and the accountability we have to God for what we have said or done?

**PRAY:** Hebrews 12:1 assures us that we have many witnesses in heaven to all that we do. Pray today that God will help you to take strength from the fact that others have seen and heard what you have said and committed your life to doing or upholding. Ask Him that when you are tempted to break a promise or commitment, you will see in your mind's eye the faces of those who have witnessed your commitment, who will be let down if you break your word...and that He will help you to overcome any temptation you are facing.

## THURSDAY

May 26, 2011

**READ:** Ruth 4 (esp. verses 11-12)

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** What is happening in these verses? What is the value or importance of this to Boaz and Ruth?

**KEY CONCEPT:** Having a blessing prayed over you is significant, as it invokes God's hand to be at work on your behalf.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** Boaz was not only picking up a piece of property when he fulfilled his role as kinsman-redeemer. He was also willingly upholding his responsibility in taking the widow of a family member as his wife. The elders showed appreciation for the commitment that he was maintaining by praying God's blessing upon he and Ruth. Have you ever received a prayer of blessing as you entered into a new phase of your life (getting married, having a child, taking on a new job, etc.)? Did you experience the Lord's blessing that was prayed on your behalf? Have you considered the importance of praying a blessing over those with whom you have a role of importance (i.e. a child at their high school or college graduation)?

**PRAY:** Today consider how you have experienced blessing in your life. Thank God for His provision for you as a parent, husband/wife, employee/ employer, etc. Remember the prayers of blessing that were prayed over you (baptism, wedding, etc.) and let God know how His role in your life has made a difference.

## FRIDAY

May 27, 2011

**READ:** Ruth 4 (esp. verses 13-14)

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS :** After Boaz and Ruth were married, what happened next? What was the reaction of "the women?"

**KEY CONCEPT:** God is always at work, and can bring great blessing out of tragic or challenging life circumstances.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** It is natural for childbirth to follow marriage. What is significant about how the birth of this baby, as seen from the perspective of Scripture? How did the birth of the baby affect Naomi, the grandmother, as seen from the women in this story? Compare how Naomi spoke about God in chapter 1: 20-21 vs. what was said in 4:14-15. Have you experienced hardship in your life that God has redeemed? What was it that helped to bring you through that hardship?

**PRAY:** Romans 8:28 reminds us that God can use the difficult times in our life in ways that we cannot foresee, but work for our ultimate good. If you are going through a hard season at present, take heart from Naomi's story. Hang on to your faith in God...even when you can't see Him at work in your life or understand the purpose of your suffering. Pray for God to strengthen your faith and help you to come through the present storm.

## SATURDAY

May 28, 2011

**READ:** Ruth 4 (esp. verses 18-22)

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** What is the significance of the genealogy listed at the end of this book? What is the extension of this genealogy (see Matthew 1:6-17)?

**KEY CONCEPT:** God works across time to accomplish His plan and purposes.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** David, known as "a man after God's own heart" and one of the heroes of the Bible, had a genealogy that included the scandal of boy (Perez) born to Tamar who became pregnant by her father-in-law (Judah). David himself was an adulterer. Can you see God's hand at work in the lives of those you know personally (or in your own life) to bring about a good thing from what was impure or ungodly? How does God's constant efforts to bring good out of bad...to redeem those who are living far from Him...touch you? Do you see yourself, a sinner saved by grace, as the beneficiary of His love?

**PRAY:** As descendants of Adam & Eve, we are in need of God's saving grace to redeem our sin. Today thank Him for the multiple examples in the Bible of how He has transformed lives. Thank Him as well for how He may have touched your own life and reclaimed it in some fashion.

Who is your God?

Personal Devotional Guide - May 22 - 28, 2011  
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The story of  
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