

Ruth: A Redemption Story

(this transcript has been lightly edited for readability)

Well, if you think of the book of Ruth, what comes into your mind? For a lot of people, it is this awesome love story, how Ruth meets and marries Boaz. And that story is there, but that's a sub story to the real story of the book of Ruth. This is one of these moments where you see God's zeal for advancing the redemptive story and advancing it in ways that are surprising. I would title Ruth, not a love story, but a redemptive story, a redemption story. It is about the plan of redemption, and there are so many metaphors in Ruth of the way God works and the way God works in each of our lives.

Ruth was a Moabite woman who had no claim to the promises of God, who had no natural entrance to relationship with God. She was an outsider, an outcast, an alien, a stranger who, by God's mysterious plan, His sovereign power, and His amazing grace, this Moabite woman becomes an heir of His covenant promises.

Are you hearing what I just said? That is the entire story of redemption in this lady's biography, that's us! Sin makes us strangers and aliens. We have no right to Covenant promises; we have no natural entrance to relationship with God. Paul says it very powerfully in Ephesians, like I can't read Ruth ever without hearing these words from Paul, "We were without God and without hope in the world." That's Ruth; but that's us.

And we begin to get the picture that God's sights on the size of redemption are way bigger than just the people of Israel; that His grace is going to spread beyond the borders of one nation and actually encompass all the nations on earth. Seeds of that are here in this wonderful story.

You know, there's no doubt that redemption is the theme. Unlike any other passage in the Old Testament, words that have redemption as their root are used twenty-three times in Ruth. God is hammering home the message of this story.

And why is it a story about redemption? Because this is God taking one more step in delivering His promise, because out of this couple would come David, and out of David would come the Messiah Jesus. This is God through this alien woman, this stranger, making sure that the promised Messiah would actually come. It confronts us again with the wild ways that God accomplishes His work of grace.

God uses unexpected people and unexpected instruments to propel the mission. This is God protecting His promises, making sure that they'll happen, creating the line, the genealogy, out of which Jesus, The Redeemer, will come. Yes, Boaz is a picture of redemption, but he's not the Redeemer. But he's in the line of the Redeemer because God makes sure it will happen. Listen, the physical history of Scripture is important because it's that history in which God works to make sure that His promises actually do take place for His people.

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