

## ***Small Town Proposal - Ruth 3*** **Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

### **Notes from the Sermon**

Our hallmarky love story takes a bizarre turn in chapter 3, which is also act 3 of the story. And at the very least, it is awkward. Boaz entered the scene in chapter 2, and took on the role of provider and protector of Ruth and Naomi, giving her a safe place to glean food for the year and making sure nobody messed with the foreign woman. Ruth was a young, attractive woman, Boaz an older, wealthy, and honorable man. They even had their first date, as he brought her to the table and gave her an unbelievable noon meal in the middle of a hard day's work. But then, nothing. He was an eligible bachelor who was eligible to be her redeemer. You expect the relationship to pick up some pace, a few nights out, maybe a dozen roses. But two months go by, Ruth going to Boaz's fields to pick up leftover grain as Boaz and his servants harvest their barley and wheat fields. But now it's the end of the harvest, and the opportunity to be present near Boaz each day is coming to an end, and it seems he has not made any overtures or pursued Ruth. And Ruth is living with the mother-in-law of her dead husband.

So Naomi comes up with a plan to put a jolt in the love story. Her plan is for Ruth to go to the threshing floor to check out Boaz. A threshing floor was a vital place for farmers, the place to separate grain from the chaff. It was normally on the top of a hill where good winds would dry the grain and then be useful for the threshing. After the harvest was over and grain had time to dry, they would come with pitch forks to scoop grain and throw it up in the air. The grain was heavy so it would fall right back down, meanwhile, the chaff (leftover pieces from the stalks) were light and would blow in the wind. Do this over and over, over and over and eventually you have nothing left except the grain, now useful for making breads and other foods. Threshing days were hard work, and a farmer like Boaz would be exhausted at the end of the day. And a farmer and land-owner would also want to protect his harvest from thieves, so they would set up a camp site near the grain.

So the plan was for Ruth to go watch from a distance, unseen by Boaz. When he was done working he would eat a meal and drink a glass of wine, and then lay down for the night. His work and the wine would leave him content and tired, so he should sleep well. So she was to carefully watch where he went to lie down and wait until he was asleep. The watching was important, she didn't want to do all this only to freak out the wrong dude, or this story would end badly. She was then to uncover his feet and lay down next to him. This is so weird, and definitely not a prescribed way to catch a man dragging his feet.

So, here is a good place for an important point in our Biblical interpretation. Narratives like Ruth are just that, they are stories. They show us God's sovereignty over people's lives as he orchestrates the events and uses their choices, good and bad, to accomplish His purpose and shower His people with love and grace. But we must remember that just because the Bible reports things in stories does not necessarily mean God supports it. Take polygamy for example. There are several stories of men with multiple wives, yet God uses these people's lives and even the children from multiple wives to accomplish His plan. Yet, from the beginning God's design and command was for marriage to be one man, one woman, one lifetime. So what you will find is that when there is polygamy in the story the whole story is a hot mess, yet God's goodness shines through. Which leads to our second principle when reading narrative We need to separate the descriptive and prescriptive. Most things in narratives do not come with a "go therefore and do likewise" command. Probably not a good idea for a single lady to show up at a guy's house in the middle of the night, sneak into his mom's basement where he is living, uncover his toes and lie on the floor beneath the beanbag where he fell asleep with the video game controller in his hand.

But the prescriptive in this story is about the goodness of marriage. Ruth completes the plan, and when Boaz awakens startled that a woman is at his cold feet, she takes the plan a step further than Naomi said. She immediately proposes to Boaz. Let's skip the dating, courtship, engagement, and get right to the stuff. He is a redeemer, an eligible bachelor, and the guy for her. Her words in verse 9 include a direct quote from Boaz's prayer of blessing over her in chapter 2. She is telling him that the way God intends to answer his prayer, that the wings

of God would cover Ruth with blessing is for Boaz to spread his wings over her. What a beautiful picture of the goodness of marriage. Of course, not all marriages are fairy tales, because the Bible also reminds us that marriage is not ultimate. Marriage is always a picture, a metaphor of a greater love, a greater pursuit, a greater relationship that will fulfill our deepest longings and desires. This is the marriage between God and His people where Jesus is the true and better bridegroom. Nobody really lives happily ever after, marriages are covenant unions between two hot mess people. And not everyone gets married. But the marriage between Jesus and His bride, the church, is a glorious union which does end the way we want all love stories to, with a faithful husband and a beautiful bride together forever.

**Bible Reading for the Week**

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Joel 1	Joel 2	Joel 3	Colossians 1	Colossians 2	Colossians 3	Colossians 4

Reading from this past week: Ruth 3

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Ruth 4

**Family Worship**

Song - *Joy to the World: Unspeakable Joy*

<https://youtu.be/rqxMvvptf9I?si=mWgDYb9Cp3IJSQz>

Gospel Project

Unit: Jesus is alive

Story: Jesus forgave Peter

Big Picture Question: How do we know that God wants us to know Him?

Answer: We can know

that God wants us to know Him because He has revealed Himself through His Word.

Scripture: John 21

New City Catechism

Question #50: Of what advantage to us is Christ's ascension?

Answer: Christ is now advocating for us in the presence of his Father and also sends us his Spirit.

Verse: Romans 8:34

Scripture

Ruth 3

- We love love stories. What longings and hopes are unleashed in these stories? Why don't we ever actually find the ultimate fulfillment in these stories or our own relationships?
- What do you think of Naomi's plan? Good idea or bad idea? On a scale of 1-10, how uncomfortable does her plan make you?
- Why should we take Ruth's response to Boaz in verse 9 as a marriage proposal?
- What is God's plan for marriage in the Scripture? Why is it important for Jesus' people to be clear about God's purpose for sexuality and His plan for marriage?
- How does God's purpose for marriage and family become a pointer to God and His love for us in the Scriptures?

Prayer

\*If you are married pray for your marriage and also pray for the health of marriages in our church. And give thanks to God that marriage is a picture of God's love for us, His people.

\*Pray for our partners Dave & Brenda Meyer in Cayambe, Ecuador. Some of our funds from the Advent Conspiracy Offering go to support this family on mission.

\*The fourth candle of the Advent wreath is called the Candle of the Shepherds and Joy. It reminds that the angels pronounced good news of great joy for all people in the birth of Jesus.