

Ruth 3

10-23-05

“It Happened at Midnight!”

1. **Intro:**

- 1.1. **Redemption** - Jesus sees us not only as we **are**, but as we **can be!**
 - 1.1.1. Jesus didn't see **Simon** the fisherman, but **Peter** the Rock on which he would build his church.
 - 1.1.2. He saw **David** not as a shepherd boy, but as a Giant Slayer!
 - 1.1.3. **Once someone came on Michelangelo** chipping away with his chisel at a huge shapeless piece of rock. He asked the sculptor **what he was doing**. "I am releasing the angel imprisoned in this marble," he answered.

- 1.2. **Boaz was able to redeem, but was he willing?**
 - 1.2.1. Ruth would find out...*at midnight!*

- 1.3. **Understanding the Levirate Law!** (lev-er-it)
 - 1.3.1. Levirate = from the Latin *Levir* "brother-in-law". Still practiced in some parts of Africa today.
 - 1.3.2. **Read - Deut 25:5-9.**
 - 1.3.2.1. *That would sure make you keep an eye on who your brother was dating!*
 - 1.3.3. **Book of Ruth gives the only illustration of it in Scripture.**
 - 1.3.4. **A strange law but a few reasons why:**
 - 1.3.4.1. [1] **To protect womanhood** – It would be very difficult for her to take care of the farm, vineyard, or flock of sheep, etc.
 - 1.3.4.2. [2] **To protect land rights** – Not only did God gave the **children of Israel** "the land"; **but** He also gave **each tribe** a particular parcel of land; **& each family** their own land.
 - 1.3.4.2.1. A family could **loose** their land, but in the year of Jubilee it would be **restored** to the original owner.
 - 1.3.4.2.2. If she could go off & marry a stranger, the foreigner would inherit the land!
 - 1.3.5. She can now **claim** one of the brothers; in fact it's her **duty** to her dead husband to carry on His name.

- 1.4. **Understanding the Threshing Floor!**
 - 1.4.1. It was in the opposite position of the **winepress**.
 - 1.4.1.1. **Winepress** at bottom of hill (drag grapes downhill).
 - 1.4.1.2. **Threshing Floor** at top of hill – needed wind.
 - 1.4.1.3. That's why it was funny when he calls **Gideon** in Judges 6:11,12 "...Gideon **threshed wheat** in the **winepress**, in order to hide *it* from the Midianites. And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, "The LORD *is* with you, you **mighty man of valor!**"

- 1.5. The Threshing floor was a hard smooth surface. It was usually circular with rocks placed around it.
- 1.5.1. Late afternoon a **breeze** would come up, off the Med. It would blow until sundown, sometimes as late as midnight.
- 1.5.2. **Sheaves** were laid on the ground; they were **trampled** by oxen drawing sleds; then people took a **flail**(winnowing fork) & threw the grain up into the air(chaff would be blown away, the good grain would come down on the threshing floor)
- 1.5.3. Then a **feast** was had. [Dinner, Praise to God, then lie down]
- 1.5.4. The **religious festivals** were linked to the agricultural calendar.
- 1.5.4.1. **Passover & Unleavened Bread** came 1st at the time of Barley harvest. - About 7 weeks later followed the **Feast of Weeks**(or Pentecost) at the end of the wheat harvest. Then the **Feast of In-gathering**(or Booths, *Succoth*) came at the end of summer when the harvest of the various fruits were complete. Each of these occasions was the opportunity for a **good party!**
- 1.5.5. Then the men would **sleep** around the grain to protect it from thieves, often with their heads towards the grain & their feet out like spokes of a wheel.¹
- 1.6. **OUTLINE: Ruth Listening; Ruth Obeying; Ruth Believing; Ruth Receiving; Ruth Waiting!**

2. **IT HAPPENED AT MIDNIGHT!**

- 2.1. **RUTH LISTENING!** (1-4)
- 2.2. (1,2) 1st move here is Ruth. Boaz must wait for her to claim him as her husband.
- 2.3. (3,4) Here is also a picture of the sinner who comes to Jesus Christ!
- 2.4. **Washed** – If you're going to come to Jesus you must come "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit," Titus 3:5.
- 2.4.1. You need a bath...a spiritual bath, the *washing of regeneration!*
- 2.4.2. Someone asked **John Wesley** why is it you always preach on "you must be born again"(which was his favorite text). He said, "the reason I preach on *you must be born again* is because **you must be born again!**"
- 2.5. **Anointed** – Ruth, get out that perfume, "*Midnight in Moab*" (or "Ruth Lauren")

¹ Dr. J. Vernon McGee; Vol.2 pg.107

- 2.5.1. You & I have an anointing of the H.S. “**But you have an anointing from the Holy One, & you know all things**(and all of you know the truth)”
1 Jn.2:20.
2.5.1.1. He is the only way we can know the Word of God.
- 2.6. **Clothed** – God not only **subtracts** our sin when we come to him, but he clothes us w/His robe of righteousness.
2.6.1. “**Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.**” Rom.4:4,5
- 2.7. **RUTH OBEYING!** (5-9)
- 2.8. (5,6) **All** – “The will of God is not a cafeteria where we can pick & choose what we want!”² – Accept **all** that He plans for you!
- 2.9. Being obedient: “The only true guarantee of happiness has little to do with **being married or being single**, & everything to do with **being obedient** to the will of God.”
2.9.1. A lot of **singles** yearn to be **married**, & a lot of **marrieds** wish they were **single** again!
2.9.2. Contentment isn’t a **singleness** or a **married** issue, because everyone wrestles with **dissatisfaction & envy**.
2.9.3. Contentment is found in **enjoying God!** – “**Godliness with contentment is still great gain!**”
- 2.10. (7,8) Ok, a little different then *E-Harmony.com!*
- 2.11. **Lying at his feet**(probably feet to feet) not at his side!
2.11.1. Obviously Naomi trusted him to act responsibly.
2.11.2. This whole uncovering of the feet was a **ceremonial act** that was completely proper.
2.11.3. **Uncovered his feet** – He got cold. Wakes up notices his outer garment down below his feet...he reaches for it...Whoah!
2.11.3.1. Probably screamed like a school girl!
- 2.12. (9) **Spread the corner of your garment over me** (NIV)
2.12.1. To draw a portion of a kinsman’s garment over oneself was the legal way of claiming **protection & redemption**.
2.12.2. This is the same word used in 2:12 “**wings**”.
2.12.2.1. קַנָּפַי [kanaph] – wing, skirt, border.
2.12.2.2. 1st Ruth took refuge under the wings or skirts of **the Lord**, so now a like refuge is requested of **Boaz**.

² Warren Wiersbe; Be Committed; pg.44.

- 2.13. **Close relative** – near kinsman, *goel*, next of kin, kinsman redeemer.
- 2.13.1. He had certain **duties & privileges**. To redeem the land or person of a kinsman who had been compelled to sell his land or himself through poverty.
- 2.13.2. The *goel* must be **related** by blood; must be **able to pay** the price; & must be **willing** to redeem!
- 2.14. **RUTH BELIEVING!** (10-14)
- 2.15. (11) Note her reputation – **Virtuous!**
- 2.15.1. **A woman of excellence**(NASB); **A woman of noble character**(NIV); **A worthy woman**(ESV);
- 2.15.2. **All the people of my town know** (wow, within 6 weeks!)
- 2.15.3. Probably the scene took place **in the dark** so that Boaz had the opportunity to reject the proposal w/o the whole town knowing about it.
- 2.15.4. **She was available...but careful! - Responsive...but pure!**³
- 2.16. (12) **One more hurdle!** – a **closer** relative.
- 2.16.1. Maybe Elimelech’s brother? (an **uncle** of Ruths 1st husband), **whereas** Boaz was probably a **cousin** of her 1st husband?
- 2.16.2. This was the perfect opportunity to let their **feelings** determine their **actions!**
- 2.16.2.1. They could have said, **“Forget the Law. I love you & that’s all that matters. Let’s not take the chance on anyone else!”**
- 2.16.2.2. **But they realized that gaining a blessing by ungodly means was no blessing at all!**
- 2.16.2.3. Though interested in one another, they were **patient**.
- 2.16.2.3.1. **They trusted God!**
- 2.17. (13) He didn’t want her to return to Bethlehem when it was dark.
- 2.18. (14) Stay until dawn & secretly leave, lest her mission be misinterpreted by witnesses; or someone gets a jump on letting his relative know what’s happening. [Boaz wants to handle this himself]
- 2.19. **RUTH RECEIVING!** (15-17)
- 2.20. (15) A very generous gift.
- 2.20.1. Boaz sealed the vow with a gift of barley.
- 2.21. **RUTH WAITING!** (18)
- 2.22. **What great instructions for us when we have needs to be met!**⁴

³ Chuck Swindoll; pg.75.

⁴ Warren Wiersbe; With the Word; pg.157.

- 2.22.1. Like Ruth we need to...
- 2.22.2. [1] **Listen** to instructions! (1-4)
- 2.22.3. [2] **Obey!** (5-9)
- 2.22.4. [3] **Believe** what your Redeemer says! (10-14)
- 2.22.5. [4] **Receive** His gifts! (15-17)
- 2.22.6. [5] **Wait** in patience for Him to do the rest! (18)
- 2.23. **Ruth is called to Rest!**
- 2.23.1. From here on **Boaz** will be the man of action.
- 2.23.1.1. The work of redemption is **totally** His work!
- 2.23.1.2. All Ruth could do was ask for it!
- 2.23.2. **So how do we “rest”?** - **Bats** are said to live longer for their size than any other animal. They have a life span of **20 years**. It has been suggested that the **secret of their longevity is their ability to relax** and go quickly into the deep sleep of hibernation. Right after fighting, one of them can almost immediately slow its **heartbeat** from 180 per minute to 3, and it can retard its **respiration** from **8 breaths a second to 1 every 8 minutes**. [but we’re not bats]
- 2.23.3. Ps. 37:23 reads, “The **steps** of a good man are ordered by the Lord” In **George Mueller’s bible** in the margin next to that verse he wrote, “And the **stops**, too.”⁵
- 2.23.4. “The LORD is good to those who **wait** for Him, To the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should **hope** and **wait quietly** For the salvation of the LORD.” Lam.3:25,26
- 2.23.5. One day a friend saw the great New England preacher **Phillips Brooks** pacing the floor like a caged lion. “What is the trouble, Dr. Brooks?” asked the friend. “The trouble is that **I’m** in a hurry, but **God isn’t!**”⁶
- 2.23.5.1. **Q: How do you control your impatience?**
- 2.23.6. “**Be still, and know that I am God!**” Ps.46:10
- 2.23.6.1. [be still = lit. “*take your hands off, relax*”]
- 2.24. Boaz will not rest till he has followed through concerning her request.
- 2.24.1. **Q: Do you believe that Jesus is working unceasingly for you? How is he working in you?**
- 2.24.2. For us it is wonderful to have a **Savior** in whom **we** can rest.
- 2.24.3. **We are invited into the rest of redemption because...it is finished!**
- 2.24.4. Jn.17:4 “**I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.**”

⁵Tan, P. L. (1996, c1979). *Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations : [a treasury of illustrations, anecdotes, facts and quotations for pastors, teachers and Christian workers]*. Garland TX: Bible Communications.

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2.24.5. You cannot lift a finger to add to your salvation.

2.24.5.1. God doesn't need your **little** effort to help Him with Redemption. [It is fully His Redemption!]

2.24.5.2. God is not receiving anything from us toward our salvation.

2.24.5.2.1. Plus, **what do we really have to offer?**

2.24.5.2.2. We are bankrupt.

2.24.5.3. Redemption has nothing to do with your **character**, your **family**, your **tithe**, nor your **church membership**.

2.24.5.3.1. Redemption is His work in its entirety!

2.24.5.4. **Today** you are either resting in Him, or you are trying to earn your own salvation!

2.24.6. *“Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe; Sin had left a crimson stain, he washed it white as snow.”* H.M.Hall

2.25. As Boaz from Bethlehem was a near relative, who was **both able** to redeem **& willing** to redeem; **so** our “*greater than Boaz*”, who was also from Bethlehem, Jesus is both **willing & able**...this morning!