

# **Ruth the Expat**

## **3. Trust and Obey**

***Ruth 3:1-18***

## Ruth 3:1-18

Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? <sup>2</sup> Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. <sup>3</sup> Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. <sup>4</sup> But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do.” <sup>5</sup> And she replied, “All that you say I will do.”

<sup>6</sup> So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her. <sup>7</sup> And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. <sup>8</sup> At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! <sup>9</sup> He said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer.”

<sup>10</sup> And he said, “May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. <sup>11</sup> And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. <sup>12</sup> And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. <sup>13</sup> Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the LORD lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning.”

<sup>14</sup> So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, “Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.” <sup>15</sup> And he said, “Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out.” So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city. <sup>16</sup> And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, “How did you fare, my daughter?” Then she told her all that the man had done for her, <sup>17</sup> saying, “These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, ‘You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.’” <sup>18</sup> She replied, “Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today.”

# Marriage proposal

- A woman asking the man to marry her? Unlikely, unusual!
- This is part of the story of Ruth
- In vv1-4 – conversation between Naomi and Ruth
- It seems Ruth simply trusted (v5)

# Background issues

- **Threshing:** Separating kernels from the stalks
- **Threshing floor activities:** Reputation (Hosea 9:1)
- **Childless widows:** Ruth needed security
- **Guardian-redeemer:** Close relative as redeemer
- **Corner of garment:** Hebrew idiom (marriage proposal)

**Ruth 3 shows us how God continued to provide for Naomi and Ruth in a remarkable way, but also how they were required trust, obey and wait**

***Three main characters***

# Naomi: *Taking action*

- Naomi needed to make a plan
- Does not know or trust the closest relative
- Does not approach Boaz directly
- Shows appreciation for Ruth's support
- She is not without hope

# Ruth: *Taking a risk*

- Ruth trusted Naomi's plan
- But, Ruth took a massive risk:
  - Could be seen as a prostitute
  - Could be rejected by Boaz
  - Risked her reputation
- But, Ruth trusted, risked her all to ensure the future
- Then she had to wait (v18)

# Boaz: *Taking responsibility*

- Unknown facts about Boaz:
  - Age: Seems to be older (v10)
  - Marital status: More than one wife?
  - Relation to Naomi: Another man was closer
- *What was Boaz thinking? What happened in the night?*
- But, Boaz took responsibility
  - Protective of Ruth
  - Generous (v15)
  - Upholds Ruth's moral character
  - Commits to Naomi's plan
  - Upheld the rules

# Challenges for us

- **Action needed:** Trusting God, but taking action (2 Thess 3:6-12)
- **Risk:** Willing to take a risk (Mt 14:28-29) under God's guidance
- **Trust:** No need to understand, simply trust (Jonah)
- **Refuge:** God as your ultimate Redeemer
- **Patience:** God's timing is not ours
  - Isaiah 40:30-31 – *They who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint*
  - Proverbs 3:5 – *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding*

**Prayer**