

2010 AUGUST WHEATFIELD ROMANCE --- RUTH AND BOAZ

Ruth 3:1-18

Today we end our series of life in the Promised Land
The reoccurring theme is one of people turning away from God.
Yet of God's unfailing commitment to stand by his people.

Commitment is the theme of Naomi and Ruth, Mother and daughter-in-law
And continues with Ruth and Boaz.
Today we look at marriage made in heaven.
Or at least in the granary.

Pastor Tom shared that commitment is in danger of extinction.
the foundation of every society rest on the stability of its marriages.
Today even the definition of marriage is at risk.
That was exactly what the California residents overwhelmingly said when they passed
proposition 8 which defined marriage as only between a man and a women.
And now chief U.S. District Judge Vaughn Walker is trying to overturn that decision.

Is it any wonder why the divorce rate among the generations is also a bit of surprise:
Seniors (73+) = 18%
Builders (53-72) = 37%
Boomers = 34%
Busters = 7% (Most of these are not old enough to marry yet).

Dr. Howard Hendricks has said people get married with a picture in their minds of a
perfect marriage. Then after a few trials, they discover they aren't married to a perfect
picture, but an imperfect person. When this realization occurs, they will either tear up the
picture or they will tear up the person. (Kent Crockett, *The 911 Handbook*, Peabody, MA:
Hendrickson Publishers, 2003, 86)

And yet today in this service we are blessed to honor marriages of over 50 years.
Celebrating life together through thick and thin
sorrow and joy
disappointment and divine appointment
These marriages have been like a violin. Even when the music stops, the strings are still
attached." --unknown Kent Crockett's Sermon Illustrations, www.kentcrockett.com

And how many widows or widowers would love
To still have their spouse by their side.
Walking with them this journey of life.

Ruth and Naomi had experienced
The good and bad,
The living and now the dead
They were both widowed, poor, and destitute.
They have moved back to their native land,
It was not easy for widows to make a living.
There were no food stamps,
Salvation army, support groups,
Or food pantries.

Ruth and Naomi didn't expect anyone to help them.
They would have to fend for themselves.

So ² **And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor." Naomi said to her, "Go ahead, my daughter." Ruth 2:2**

We know it is not easy to start over,
Or get one's feet on the ground,
But too many in our day expect the government to do it for them.

Not long ago we dropped some school supplies off at the local Salvation Army.
Donna saw a number of people waiting for dinner,
She asked if any would help her unload our car and carry in our supplies.
Not one moved.
The Salvation Army lady said : We can't ask people to help with that.

I want to say to every person here today.
It is up to you to determine where your life is going,
And what's going to happen.

Beth Moore a popular Bible Teacher said:

"Whatever God has for you, it's not behind you,"
Moore said. "We have to accept the world is going to get worse. The good news is that God has not accidentally assigned us to this time."

She has it right: We are not here by random or chance,
But by the sovereignty of God.
We can spend our lives in self pity,
Or with our hand out,
Or we can believe that God has a plan.
And put our hand up to the task.
Ruth went out to a field she had randomly selected
And discovered it was directed by the hand of God.

As it turned out, she found herself working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelech. Ruth 2:3

Elimelech was family to Naomi.

Is not Boaz, with whose servant girls you have been, a kinsman of ours? Ruth 3:2

Ruth had never intended the wheat field to produce a wedding.
She only went to find food.
But isn't God good?
Just about the time we have decided to go it alone.
God is there and places someone in our path.

I. BOAZ WAS A CARING MAN.

Boaz never intended for his wheat to produce a wedding either.

It was planted as an investment.
So when he saw Ruth gleaning the field.
He felt good about helping the poor. He said to her.

⁸ **So Boaz said to Ruth, "My daughter, listen to me. Don't go and glean in another field and don't go away from here. Stay here with my servant girls. ² Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the girls. I have told the men not to touch you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled." Ruth 2:8-9**

Nothing makes a man more complete than to know he can take care of someone.
And in that care he discovers respect.

Years ago Commander Cyrus had taken captive a young prince of Armenia
Together with his beautiful wife. On the day of their sentencing.
The Commander inquired of the prince what he would give
to be reinstated in his kingdom?
And Prince Armenia replied he valued his liberty and crown,
but if the Commander would restore his wife to her former dignity and possession he
would willingly pay with his life.
Commander Cyrus was so touched that he restored them both to their former honors.
When young prince Armenia was along with his wife,
He asked her what did you think of Commander Cryus?
She said: I did not observe him, for my attention was focused on the man
Who declared his readiness to purchase my liberty at the expense of his life.

There isn't a man here that doesn't want to be respected by a woman.
We were created to be a protector,
A caretaker,
A provider.
And out of respect we discovers love.
It is the way men are created.
To be needed by the woman he loves
That is the epitome of life.

The Feminist movement of the 60's and the production of the birth control pill,
Brought into the lives of the home and the hearts of the female
A great sense of freedom but a great sense of insecurity.
It was a move to set women free
But freedom without boundaries is anarchy.

When a woman doesn't need a man,
Men move on and away.
Use them and leave them.
Author Beth Moore has picked up on this and said
That the most devastating thing for women today,
Is Insecurity and she is on a crusade to wipe it out
Through the love of God in Christ Jesus.

So when Boaz saw Ruth's faithfulness to her mother in law.
His male need to help came out.
He knew she was a Moabite
An idol worshipper,
An unbeliever.
A foreigner,
But one who had converted to Naomi's God.
And her new faith simply oozed out of her.

**¹² May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD , the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge
Ruth 2:12**

True conversion.
 Doesn't just touch our minds,
 But our hearts.
 Then our hands and
 Then our feet.
 Even Boaz confirms her conversion.

Thus begins a Wheatfield romance
 As Boaz grows in his affections toward Ruth.

But what would it take to awaken Boaz?
 He was an older man,
 into making money,
 Planting and harvesting,
 Tilling and cutting grain.
 Taking care of his big estate.
 Probably felt he would never marry.
 They didn't have E-harmony. Com,
 Or on line dating.
 Or a singles group.

So Ruth had to take things into her own hands.
 What most of us men don't realize it that we probably
 Wouldn't be married if it wasn't for our wives,

A woman takes things into her own hands.
 Or maybe I could say: Our Mother in Laws hands.

One day Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not try to find a home ^{E7} for you, where you will be well provided for? ² Is not Boaz, with whose servant girls you have been, a kinsman of ours? Tonight he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. Ruth 3:1-2

II. RUTH ..A TRUSTING DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

We don't know if Ruth liked Boaz.
 But on second thought, he was rich,
 He was a relative,
 A man of influence in the community.
 He was probably also in the military defense of Israel.

You know military men make ideal husbands -- they're in good health, they can cook, sew, and make beds, and they're already accustomed to taking orders.

Beside the white streaks in Boaz hair was rather stately looking.
 So let's have a go at it.

So Mother-in-law Naomi had to teach Ruth
 The courtship customs of the Israelites.
 Because she was a Moabites with different traditions.
 This would be what it would take to get Boaz attention.
 Notice how this marriage custom of marriage also symbolize Christ and the Church.

III. THE MARRIAGE PREPARATION

1. FIRST of all we must cleanse ourselves.

³ Wash and perfume yourself, and put on your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. Ruth 3:3

Just as every bride take special care to get ready for her wedding day.
When we meet God we are to wash our hearts, hands and minds.
Free them from our selfish ambition.

2. We are to choose the God we will serve.

This is Joshua's statement as for "Me and my house we will serve the Lord."

To be a Christian takes clear thinking.

We have salvation by choice.

Clear thinking is essential for Ruth.

She needed to be wide awake at half past midnight.

the darkest part of night.

So must be careful not to lie down at the feet of the wrong man.

Just like today men and women who they choose to marry.

When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do." Ruth 3:4

3. We must take action.

All the good intentions,
and preparation and planning in the world
will do us no good if we never take action.

It always interests me to see people go to the point of getting cleaned up, and dressed up,
and spruced up for worship and then coming and not participating in worship.

Some don't sing or even make an effort.

God has a Psalm for those of you who can't carry a turn.

The Psalm says we are to make a joyful noise in worship, .

Take action.

"I will do whatever you say," Ruth answered. ⁶ So she went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law told her to do Ruth 3:5-6

Edith Shain June 23, 2010. Her name may mean nothing to you, but her image has been imbedded in your soul. She is the nurse kissed by the sailor in Times Square on V-J Day, August 1945. She was 27 at the time, but it was not until she was 60 that she decided to confess that she was the lady in the picture. Until that time, she did not feel it was dignified to receive such notoriety. But, upon her disclosure, she reflected on the photograph with these words, "It says so many things. Hope, love, peace and tomorrow." (Richard Goldstein, *The New York Times* "Edith Shain)

Marriage is about tomorrow.

A commitment for tomorrow.

4. FOURTH : we must make ourselves know to God.

Just as Ruth had to make ourselves known to Boaz.

In the middle of the night something startled the man, and he turned and discovered a woman lying at his feet. ⁹ "Who are you?" he asked Ruth 3:8

Boaz wasn't startled that a woman was there,
he knew the custom.

But he was startled at who was there.

Make sure you know who it is you are marrying.

Don't be foolish like Jacob who got so drunk on his wedding night.
That when Leah came to his bed instead of Rachael he didn't know it.
Who are you? was a good question by Boaz.

"I am your servant Ruth," she said. "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer." Ruth 3:9

Ruth's action constituted a request to be taken in marriage.

And Boaz response of covering her with the garment.
as a symbol of acceptance, of protection and
Taking on the responsibility of caring for the other.
Just as God in Christ spread his wings over us,
Or his cloak over us to protect and shield us.

5. FIFTH, TRUST GOD: once we have asked we must trust God to do what he has promised.

The LORD bless you, my daughter," he replied. "This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. ¹¹ And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. Ruth 3:10-11

In accepting her offer, Boaz
Became her kinsman-redeemer.
Because he choose to follow God's order in this relationship.

Our 50 year couples are here today because they too trusted God.
Think of a Braid of hair: It appears to contain only two strands.
But it is impossible to create a braid with only two strands.
When two are braided they quickly unravel.
But three keeps the strands tightly woven. In a Christian marriage, God's presence, like the third strand in a braid, holds husband and wife together.

Once Boaz had his relationship with God right,
Then he could get his relationship with his future mother in law right.
Boaz is not stupid..
He gave Ruth as much grain as she could carry.
To take back home to his upcoming mother in law.

Then she told her everything Boaz had done for her ¹⁷ and added, "He gave me these six measures of barley, saying, 'Don't go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.'" Ruth 4:17

In this simple act.
He sealed the deal.
Brought security to both women
Who were now under the protection and love of Boaz.

Jesus is our husband.
Who cares for the bride his church.
We have but to trust him.
Just as Boaz carried out the deal ,
Bought the land.
Paid the price

Redeemed Naomi and Ruth.
 So Did Jesus
 And on the cross paid the price and redeemed each one of us.

Friend If God can take two homeless poor widows,
 And show them his love.
 Bring Ruth in to a new marriage,
 produce a child in the lineage of Jesus.
 Then he can help you and your marriage
 To have a tomorrow together.

The couples we honor today
 Are a testimony to the love and faithfulness of God.
 50 year ago they stood before God,
 And they took this solemn vow,
 for better for worse,
 For richer for poorer
 In sickness and in health
 To love and to cherish
 Until they were parted by death.
 Have kept that commitment,
 And we honor them,

And as we sing our closing hymn,
 I would ask you who have been married 50 years or more,
 To come forward to the altar for a prayer and blessing
 And as a witness of lasting commitment.

PRAYER: Grant Almighty God your blessing on these couples,
 That they may be strengthened in their love for one another,
 And grow in godliness and love together
 That their homes may be a place of blessing and peace
 And their marriage represent to the world Christ and the Church.
 As they serve you. I pray in Jesus Name.

BENEDICTION

And Now May God the Father Keep you in communion with one another,
 May God the Son keep you in love with one another,
 And may God the Holy Spirit keep you in peace with one another.
 All the days of your life.
 Amen.