

NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

LESSON FIFTY-NINE: RUTH 4:1b

"... and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here...."

Boaz established himself in Bethlehem's city gate and waited for the nearer kinsman to come to him. Everyone went into or out of the city via the gate on a daily basis. It was only a matter of time before the kinsman would appear. Boaz simply needed patience. His patience was rewarded when he spied his kinsman in the crowd.

Boaz called out to his relative by name. But the author of the Book of Ruth does not tell the reader what the nearer kinsman's name was. Instead, the author designates him as "such a one." The Hebrew language indicates he is a "specified person."

Why is the nearer kinsman not identified in Scripture? He chose not to act the part of the Kinsman-Redeemer for Ruth for whatever reason. And then goes off into complete obscurity, never to be heard of or from again. Did the author of Ruth (Who is ultimately the Holy Spirit) withhold the man's name because he failed to do his duty under the Law and was, therefore, not deemed worthy of mention? Perhaps. But we don't know that for sure.

Mary of Bethany washed Jesus' feet with expensive spikenard ointment and wiped them with her hair. Jesus declared that she would be remembered for this act wherever the gospel was preached (Lk. 14:9). Mary is a well-known Bible figure whose wise choices were approved by the Savior (see Lk.10:42).

What kind of choices do you make? Would Jesus approve? Would He even commend your wisdom and compassion as He did Mary? Or, do you pull back from what you know is your duty? Do you hesitate to obey what you believe is God's will because it requires more faith and trust than you have right now?

Making wise choices can be a challenge at the best of times. During times of crisis, illness, loss and grief, the ability to think at all is diminished. Emotions take over. The intellect is overcome in a sea of sadness, anger, fear, and discontent. We need an anchor to keep us tethered to reality, to Truth. That anchor is God's Word.

The nearer kinsman failed to do his duty under God's Law. He may have had a legitimate reason. Many commentators believe that he may have already been married. Whatever the cause, his name was not preserved in Scripture. His glory was given to another. It is Boaz who is remembered as the Kinsman-Redeemer.

We don't get a vacation from doing what is right because we are hurting. God still expects us to be trusting and obedient. In fact, it is the times of trial, the hard times, that drive us closer to God. The Church historically grew in the times of persecution. Why? Because these are the times that show us that we are not in control. We need God. And that drives us closer to the One Who is in control. These are the times that are bitter because of the circumstances around us, but sweet because of the special bond with our Savior that forms in our hearts.

*"Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us.
Selah." Psalm 62:8*