

## NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

### LESSON SIXTY-TWO: RUTH 4:4a

**"And I thought to advertise thee saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee."**

Boaz opened negotiations by informing the nearer kinsman that he had the first option on redeeming Elimelech's land for Naomi. While Boaz wanted to play the part of Kinsman-Redeemer himself, he was an honorable man. He ensured that the Law was followed and the nearer kinsman was presented with the opportunity to redeem the land if he was willing to do so. Thus, Boaz had to wait upon the decision of the nearer kinsman before he could act on his desires. He must have been very anxious that day. His future and Ruth's depended on the nearer kinsman being unwilling to act as Kinsman-Redeemer.

Boaz knew that there was a stigma attached to the kinsman who refused to do his duty to redeem a poorer relative. Therefore, he needed to present the case in such a way that it would be easy for the nearer kinsman to decline to act. First of all, Boaz advised the nearer kinsman that if he did not redeem the land then Boaz would do so himself, being second in succession as the Kinsman-Redeemer. This would take the pressure off of the nearer kinsman, knowing that the land would be preserved in the family regardless of who acted as the redeemer.

Secondly, Boaz handled the transaction for Naomi who was not present during the negotiations. Redemption of the land was presented as a simple business deal between the two kinsmen. The introduction of Elimelech's widow into the proceedings could have added an emotional element that would have made it more difficult for the nearer kinsman to decline.

Finally, Boaz held back any mention of Maholn's widow and her need of redemption. This was his ace in the hole. The nearer kinsman might have been willing to redeem the land for Naomi, but would he also wish to take on a wife and, possibly, children? As a precaution, Boaz would also handle this aspect of the transaction absent the beautiful Ruth. It would be better for his case if the nearer kinsman were not influenced by Ruth's youth and beauty.

Naomi was lawfully allowed to sell the use of her land until the year of Jubilee, when the land would revert back to her. This would provide some money for her to live on. But Naomi was more concerned about preserving her husband's name and legacy and providing for Ruth's future. She could satisfy both goals by making redemption of the land and redemption of the young widow a packaged deal. As Mahlon's widow Ruth had a stake in the land as well.

The book of Ruth gives us multiple examples of God's provision for His people through His Word. The laws He gave His chosen people were there to benefit them. The poor benefited from the command to landowners to leave a portion of the grains, olives, and grapes in the fields (Dt. 24:19-21). Widows benefited from the Levirate law by acquiring new husbands to care for them (Dt. 25:5, 6). People who fell on hard times benefitted financially from the Law that allowed them to sell the use of their land for a period of time (Lev. 25:25-28). The families, tribes, and nation benefitted from the command to not sell a portion of land outside the originally granted family and tribe (Dt. 25:23). This kept the country stable.

God created us. He knows what will help and heal, and He knows what will hurt us. He documented "good use practices" in the Owner's Guide to human beings (aka The Bible). For example, we are told to be joyful in Him, do things in moderation, don't worry, pray, be thankful, and think about good and happy things (Phil. 4:4-8). These uplifting actions, attitudes, and thoughts will create a barrier against sadness, fear, anger, and depression. Create a list of your own "good use practices" and follow it.

*"I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." Psalm 139:14*