

Galatians 4:4-7

4 When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father!" 7 So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then God has made you an heir.

INTRODUCTION

- Introduce self
 - Introduce series
- Now... maybe you are something like me. When I get to Ruth in my yearly reading plan, I usually power through it and think...
 - Why is this story in here?
 - As pastor Jeff said a few weeks ago, Ruth helps transition the narrative out of the period of the Judges and sets the stage for the arrival of King David.
 - It is a historical narrative, so there is no explicit theological instruction...
 - But really... Doesn't it seem like it is just kind of the love story of these two randos...
 - Now, Jeff did a good job of pulling out some noble character principles for us while highlighting the sovereignty of God in chapters 1 and 2....
 - Last week, Patrick started developing the connection for us between Boaz and Christ, with Boaz pointing forward to the perfect redeemer.
 - And we will see that fleshed out even more in this chapter
 - In fact... the main point of our text today and the *main purpose of the book overall*... for the Christian... is the same:
 - **Main Point: The story of Boaz redeeming Ruth and Naomi is a microcosm of God's ultimate redemption of His people.**
 - Now... It is more of a refined art film, filled with subtle reflections and foreshadowing of this redemption, more than it is a blatant systematic theology of ultimate redemption.
 - But as the story concludes... we will see better the nature of redemption, and see our participation in redemption, in three ways in this story:
 - God's work of redemption is joined through faithful trust
 - God's work of redemption is engaged by assuming responsibility
 - God's work of redemption is accomplished in and through humanity
 - As we come to the end of the book of Ruth lets recap quickly.
 - Naomi initially left Bethlehem with her husband Elimelech and 2 sons due to famine... they go to Moab...

- While in Moab her boys marry Moabite women... one of them being Ruth... and then in a series of tragedies both her husband and her boys die.
- So Naomi returns from Moab to Bethlehem... and Ruth demonstrates this intense *faithfulness* by staying with her
- When the women of Bethlehem call out to her as Naomi, her response is that her name has been changed to Mara... bitterness... because the Lord has afflicted her with deep sorrow at the loss of her men-folk...
- Now these two destitute widows are living in Bethlehem and they need food , so Naomi sends Ruth to glean the fields of a prominent man of noble character from Elimelech's family... named Boaz...
- While harvesting grain, the God-fearing Boaz, passes by and takes particular notice of Ruth.
- After learning about her story and her noble character, he then instructs Ruth to stick around his fields to glean, even to make herself at home, and to rest easy as he has given orders for no one to exploit or harm her.
 - Now, that protection was a big deal for a destitute widow...
 - He prays the Lord would reward her for her care for her mother in law...
 - At the end of the day he provides loads her down with food for her and Naomi signaling his desire to provide for her...
 - Quite the meet-cute in this blossoming romance...
 - Ruth kept working in Boaz's field until one day Naomi comes up with a little bit of a scandalous scheme to get her daughter in law and Boaz together
 - Now to be clear... I don't recommend this method of courtship... but Ruth goes to Boaz while he is sleeping, uncovers him to some degree... which justifiably freaks him out a bit... and then she proceeds to kind of propose to him...
 - And Boaz reveals his good character by protecting Ruth physically and reputation-wise by NOT taking advantage of her... and then he kind of accepts the proposal...
 - He then gives her more food and sends her on her way.
 - However.... During the course of their evening, Boaz reveals that though he is a kinsman to Naomi he is not the CLOSEST kinsman and thus does not have the right to marry Ruth and redeem the family property...
- And that's where we left off last week...
- Now in this we have started to see the Boaz is a type of Christ and Ruth is a type of the church...
 - It is not a one to one allegory but there is something there...
 - The helpless and destitute in need of redemption
 - The wealthy and virtuous man willing to provide it
 - There is certainly something typological here... and we want to learn of the nature of God's redemption through Boaz' redemption of Ruth...
- So with that greater redemption in mind... lets move to our first point...

- **God's work of redemption is joined through faithful trust.**
 - Ruth 4:1-5

4 Boaz went to the gate of the town and sat down there. Soon the family redeemer Boaz had spoken about came by. Boaz said, "Come over here and sit down." So he went over and sat down. 2 Then Boaz took ten men of the town's elders and said, "Sit here." And they sat down. 3 He said to the redeemer, "Naomi, who has returned from the territory of Moab, is selling the portion of the field that belonged to our brother Elimelech. 4 I thought I should inform you: Buy it back in the presence of those seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you want to redeem it, do it. But if you do not want to redeem it, tell me so that I will know, because there isn't anyone other than you to redeem it, and I am next after you." "I want to redeem it," he answered. 5 Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from Naomi, you will acquire Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the deceased man, to perpetuate the man's name on his property."
- So, we have seen there is this desire in Boaz to redeem Ruth and Naomi by marrying Ruth... Clearly there is a desire on the part of Ruth to be redeemed... and at the end of Chapter 3 Naomi encourages Ruth by saying she thinks Boaz will actually do it...
 - But there is this problem that he is not technically the first in line to be ABLE to do it...
 - Here is some high drama in the love story...
 - There are religious laws and cultural customs standing in the way of their romance together...
 - So what does Boaz do?
 - Well... if this was a modern film, he would just go ahead and marry Ruth anyway, either secretly or publicly, regardless of law or custom because their love was so true... and love is love... and Jane Austen told us that that is all that matters.
 - He would have bought Naomi's land and fought the battle in court and dramatically appealed to the emotions of the judge and jury, that he must have that land because it was the pathway to Ruth... and Ruth has bewitched him body and soul and he love love loves her and that love had compelled him to violate the laws God had laid out for Israel.
 - And we all would have swooned with our popcorn in the theater over the passionate romance of it all...

- But what happens here?
 - Just like he restrained himself when Ruth uncovered him on the threshing floor... Boaz restrains his passionate emotions... and takes the route of faithful trust...
 - Trust in God and His providence that though he loves Ruth... he is willing to set her upon the altar and see someone else marry her...
 - Trust that all the promises God made in Deuteronomy for those who faithfully observe the law of the covenant would actually come to pass.
 - He literally takes the very thing he wants and offers it to the only person who could, by right, take it from him...
- Boaz goes down to the city gate to find this guy...
 - The city gate served as a kind of community center/courthouse/water cooler all wrapped up into one...
 - There was usually some bench seating that allowed for some of the older and wiser men of the community to sit and hear cases that needed judgment.
 - Business was conducted there as it was the bridge point between the dwellings and marketplace within the city and the produce and animals of the surrounding fields.
 - It is where you would go to pass messages along, or find out if there were any visitors within the city, or what news had come from far off by way of traders...
- So Boaz heads down there first thing in the morning and sure enough this guy comes through as the day progresses.
 - Now I say this guy because he is never named in the story... the Hebrew would be equivalent to Mr So and So...
 - He is not a man of much apparent standing
 - Boaz then gathers witnesses as custom and wisdom required and plainly presents the reality of the situation to him.
 - And our hearts catch a little in our throat when initially it sounds like this guy is going to take the offer...
- Now... what Boaz is doing isn't pure legalism... Boaz is wise... he has a gameplan here...
 - I am sure Boaz knew, as we will see, the mediocre character of this nameless relative...
 - I am sure he probably knew this guy wasn't going to be thrilled at the idea of marrying a Moabitess... which is why he throws that out there in his description of Ruth...
 - He acted shrewdly in how he presented the information...
 - Additionally, he made sure there were witnesses so that this guy would *have* to do right by Ruth and Naomi if he did accept the opportunity to redeem them...
 - He used his wisdom, intelligence, and relational capital with those at the city gate to put himself in the best position he could...
 - And then he laid his hopes on the altar and trusted the Lord...
 - Trusted that the Lord had better plans for Ruth and Naomi than he did...
 - Trusted that the Lord cared for the redemption of Ruth and Naomi...

- Trusted that by his faithful actions, redemption would occur, be it through him or Mr. So and So...
- And as we seek to join God's redemptive work, this tells us something important about faithful trust:
 - Faithful trust does not mean laziness.
 - Faithful trust does not mean apathy or fatalistic determinism.
 - Faithful trust is exercised in OBEDIENT actions...
 - And faithful trust is demonstrated by letting God be responsible for the OUTCOME of those obedient actions and humbly accepting that outcome, whether you get YOUR desired results or not...
 - PRAYER EXAMPLE – Daisy
- There is no better example of how God's work of redemption is joined by faithful trust than the Lord Jesus... he demonstrated faithful trust throughout his life, certainly... but particularly in the garden... sweating drops of blood... pleading with the Father for there to be any other way than this particular next step...
 - And then he obeyed... don't miss this... Jesus did not get the result his prayers petitioned for... but he obeyed and our redemption was accomplished...
- As we seek to join God in His redemption of all things, we come to moments like Boaz... whether we are trying to help redeem our spouses, or our children, or our neighbors, or vocations, or property, or whatever... we need to bring all our wisdom, all our experience, all our resources to the moment and act shrewdly and diligently... and then entrust the outcome to the care of God...
 - Remember was Proverbs 16:9 says
 - Proverbs 16:9
"A persons heart plans his way, but the Lord determines his steps."
 - There will only be resentment and frustration if we turn that proverb into "A persons heart plans his way, and the Lord owes it to him to bring it to fruition..."
- Our call is to obedience and humble trust in God's providence, whatever the outcome...
 - So, how can we generally know what the next obedient action is?
 - Well, like Boaz we seek to do what God has explicitly commanded in his word.
 - But what about those moments when its not entirely clear?
 - We take the route that INCREASES our godly responsibilities...
- God's work of redemption is engaged with by assuming responsibility.**
 - Ruth 4:6-11
6 The redeemer replied, "I can't redeem it myself, or I will ruin my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption, because I can't redeem it." 7 At an earlier period in Israel, a man removed his sandal and gave it to the other party in order to make any matter legally binding concerning the right of redemption or the exchange of property. This was the method of legally binding a transaction in Israel. So the redeemer removed his sandal and said to Boaz, "Buy back the property yourself." 9 Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses today that I am buying from Naomi everything that belonged to Elimelech, Chilion, and Mahlon. 10 I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, to perpetuate the deceased man's name on his property, so that his name will not disappear among his relatives or from the gate of his hometown. You are

witnesses today.” 11 All the people who were at the city gate, including the elders, said, “We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is entering your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built the house of Israel. May you be powerful in Ephrathah and your name well known in Bethlehem. 12 May your house become like the house of Perez, the son Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring the Lord will give you by this young woman.”

- So this guy, who initially had accepted the right to the property of Naomi, backs out of his acceptance when he finds out that taking responsibility for another person and another family line is involved...
 - He initially jumped on the boat because he thought he was getting an easy increase to his assets...
 - But He looked upon being responsible for two widows... one of whom he would need to marry and try to have a baby with according to Torah law... as taking on liabilities rather than increasing assets...
 - His reasoning for not wanting to marry Ruth is that it would threaten his own inheritance.
 - Nothing to do with not being able to provide for her... nothing to do with, oh I am already married and multiple wives never really works out well...
 - Just, oh this property comes with some extra duties apart from making a profit? No thanks...
- Now... It is unsurprising to us that Boaz... this man of good character and faithfulness who is in love with Ruth... would exercise the right of redemption.
- He made it clear in chapter 3 that was his intention.
 - Boaz and others throughout scripture make it clear that godly men take responsibility for themselves, their family and their community.
 - It is a proper extension of the dominion mandate issued to Adam in the garden.
 - Go out and exercise godly rule over all creation... take responsibility for and over all that exists...
 - But just because the fall has now introduced PAIN and TOIL and DIFFICULTY in taking godly responsibility, does not negate the fact that it is the ontological nature of man to take on responsibility...
 - It is what he is built for... designed for... it is one of the ways in which he images God...
- Not only is Boaz honoring the Lord by obeying the covenant laws regarding property and family preservation...
 - ...he is embracing his God ordained design by committing himself in marriage to Ruth, establishing the family line of Naomi, and serving the community by his example, his obedience to the covenant, and his provision for the destitute.
 - And look what the people at the city gate respond... not only do they honor him and applaud him... they pronounce a blessing upon him that can basically be summarized as: “May God grant you great success in being fruitful, multiplying, and having God-ordained influence in the earth!”
- My heart breaks for young people... young men especially... as the culture encourages them to delay increasing their responsibility... for themselves and others... while they have fun, or make money, or explore their lusts, or follow their passions, etc...
 - It robs them from participating more fully in the redemption work of God...
- Think about Mr So and So from our story...
 - He is forever the nameless faceless nobody in the story of Ruth, when he had the potential to be part of the lineage of Christ... as we will see later...

- Yet he avoided the responsibility of the kinsman redeemer... and relegated himself to the sidelines of God's redemptive history while Boaz stepped up...
- But Boaz isn't even the best example of this...
- Christ's part in the work of redemption is accomplished through an ever-expanding realm of responsibility.
 - He redeems us by taking GREATER responsibility for us.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:18-21
18 Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. 19 That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God." 21 He made the one who did not know sin to be sin[e] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
 - In this ministry of reconciliation... of redemption... not only does he take on the responsibility of initiating reconciliation... he takes on the responsibility for the SIN of humanity, becoming sin on our behalf... and in successfully discharging the obligations of the responsibility, by dying on the cross under the wrath of God and rising from the dead.... he takes on even more responsibility...
 - He tells his disciples in Matthew 28... All authority in heaven and on earth (and all the attendant responsibility that comes with it) has been given to me...
 - He then commissions his disciples with the responsibility to train the world to obey that authority...
- God's work of redemption is engaged with by assuming responsibility... the responsibility for the ministry of reconciliation entrusted to us by Christ... the responsibility of raising a Christian family... the responsibility of running a Christian business... the responsibility of the ministry of this church...
- This might seem like WAAAY too much responsibility to be entrusted to us but... as our third point makes clear....

- **God's work of redemption is accomplished by God in and through humanity.**
 - Ruth 4:13-17

13 Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. He slept with her, and the Lord granted conception to her, and she gave birth to a son. 14 The women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you without a family redeemer today. May his name become well known in Israel. 15 He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. Indeed, your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him." 16 Naomi took the child, placed him on her lap, and became a mother to him. 17 The neighbor women said, "A son has been born to Naomi," and they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.
 - For the Jewish reader, the story really takes a compelling turn here at the end...
 - As any good love story hopefully ends with a marriage, our story does not disappoint.
 - Ruth and Boaz tie the knot and inside that covenant of marriage they get to have sex...
 - And what is one of the natural outcomes of marital relations...
 - Babies, that's right... so along comes a baby...
 - But this baby is special, in that it reestablishes the legal lineage of Elimelech and Naomi amongst their people...
 - The joy of this little one diffuses the bitterness of Naomi's losses...
 - The women of the city are no longer calling her Mara... they are calling her and the Lord blessed for the gift of this child...
 - And who is this child?
 - Why he happens to be the father of a man named Jesse, who wound up having a fleet of fine sons... one of whom happens to be the greatest King that Israel would know... he would be a valiant warrior and deliver his people... he would be a passionate worshiper who would pen many of the Psalms found in the hymnbook of Israel... one to whose descendants the throne of Israel would be guaranteed forever... David...
 - We have gone from a simple drama about a tragedy that befalls a woman and her daughter in law and their cultural redemption... to a story of kings and the liberation of Israel...
 - For the Christian Reader this part of the story is even MORE compelling than for the Jewish reader, as we know that from the lineage of David comes the Messiah... the Redeemer King, not only of Israel... but of the world... Jesus of Nazareth...
 - All because a man and his sons died... all because a Moabitess was faithful, obedient, and courageous... all because a kinsman was honorable... All because a man and woman loved, married, and procreated with each other...
 - Without out a doubt the providence and sovereignty of God has orchestrated all this... but brothers and sisters, seldom do we get to see the notes of the supernatural orchestrations in everyday life...
 - We get to see husbands dying and wives mourning... we get to see people devoting themselves to the care of grieving family members... we get to see faithful trust and obedient actions... we get to see marriages and babies being born... and God uses all those ordinary human means to accomplish the extraordinary...
 - A child is born in Bethlehem... and nothing is ever the same again... not for Ruth or Boaz or Naomi because of that child Obed.... Not for the whole nation of Israel because of

that grand-child David.... And not for the whole world because of the Son of David who has come in the name of the Lord....

- God's redemptive work is accomplished in and through humanity
- But... our enemy hates this... he opposes it at every turn...
- Have you ever wondered why there are so many genealogies in the Old Testament?
 - Why there is a little genealogy here in Ruth 4 verses 18-22?
 - Remember what God says to the serpent in Genesis 3?
 - I will put hostility between your seed and the seed of the woman...
 - He will strike your head and will strike his heel..
 - God is promising a deliverer... one that will strike the head of the serpent...
 - Those genealogies are a tracking of the line of that deliverer who is going to crush the head of the serpent...
 - And all throughout the OT the serpent, and those who were of the serpent, were seeking to snuff out or interrupt the line of that deliverer...
 - We see it in everything from Pharaoh's attempts to kill the all the Hebrew male children.
 - To the surrounding nations led by demon gods trying to enslave or destroy or intermarry and corrupt the people of Israel.
 - We see it in things like the young Hebrew males being castrated when taken off to Babylon or Herod trying to kill the messiah by slaughtering the children.
 - Satan opposes the ordinary human means of marriage, family, being fruitful and multiplying because that is the way in which God works out his rule and redemption...
 - First through the new Adam, the promised seed, and then through all those who are IN the new Adam...
 - Because just as all who were in the Old Adam fell... those in the new Adam are redeemed...
 - Romans 5:18-19
18 So then, as through one trespass there is condemnation for everyone, so also through one righteous act there is justification leading to life for everyone. 19 For just as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so also through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.
- Never overlook the ordinary human means... things like mothers and fathers and children and friendships and regular acts of obedience and devotion....
 - Certainly, God acts miraculously in human history...
 - Certainly, we want to pray as though God will move miraculously...
 - Christ's incarnation and birth was definitely miraculous... but his genealogy is filled with generations of very ordinary births leading up to his...
- But we must never discount the powerful effect of the ordinary... things like:
 - A faithful life and character...
 - A commitment to local body of believers...

- An invitation to dinner to an unbelieving neighbor...
- Running an honorable and excellent business for the glory of God...
- Suffering well through cancer...
- God has ordained these things to be the primary methods through which He is redeeming the world...
 - Remember that little girl Daisy who died, even though we prayed so hard for her?
 - My mother's prayer life was transformed by praying for her.
 - Think about that... a little girl's tragic illness and eventual passing... God used it to redeem the spiritual life of a woman who she never even met...
- The Lord works powerfully in and through humanity... and both the ordinary and extraordinary experiences of humanity... to accomplish his redemption of all things.
- So what is the application of the book of Ruth? Here are just a few...
 - Faithful trust and REST in our Redeemer God... in his providence and sovereignty over the ordinary affairs of humanity...
 - For example... It will be easy in the coming election season to think that God can't possibly be redeeming anything through the dumpster fire that is our political landscape...
 - Though the nations do rage... they rage in VAIN against the Lord and His Anointed One...
 - God will continue His work of redemption no matter who is elected.
 - Though we want to act shrewdly and use our influence and vote...
 - We need not fear...
 - We can trust God no matter the outcome...
 - Another application point is a recommitment to faithfulness in the ordinary things of the Christian life:
 - Personal and family devotion
 - Participation in and commitment to a local body of believers
 - Excellence in your studies or vocation
 - Stewardship of resources, including your physical and mental health
 - Evangelization of your neighbor
 - We need not wait for a miracle when perhaps God has said simple faithfulness will do...
 - Grow in your responsibilities.
 - Take greater ownership over the life and ministry of this church... show up to the prayer meeting... become a member... lead a small group... strive to meet the qualifications of being an elder... join a team...
 - If you are interested in marriage... Become marriageable... get married... stay married... have children... adopt children...
 - Start a business or find ways to revitalize the one you work for now...
 - Intentionally disciple someone... anyone...

- Run for mayor...
- And in all of these things remember that God is at work in and through humanity and the regular things of humanity...
- We are going to celebrate one of those seemingly regular things this morning, as we observe communion in remembrance of the Lord. (INVITE USHERS AND WORSHIP TEAM FORWARD)
 - This table serves as a regular reminder of what Christ, the second person of the triune God, has done for us...
 - He was sent into the world according to the promises of the Old Testament
 - He became man and lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father
 - He bore the wrath of God on our behalf and gave to us his righteousness
 - He confirmed a new and eternal covenant of gracious reconciliation by the shedding of his blood and the affirmation that "It Is Finished"
- Though the invitation of this meal is to all who believe, we cannot approach this table frivolously. Jesus Himself dismissed Judas from the table before instituting the ordinance. The Apostle Paul warned the Corinthians that some in their community were sick and had died because they partook in an unworthy manner. It is good and right to self-reflect and see if we have, by our sin and selfishness, divided the body of Christ. If we have, let us turn to confession, repentance, and reconciliation with our brothers and sisters before we partake in the table.
 - As symbolic of our unity as the family of God, we hold on to the communion elements until all have received and then we take them together. If you need a gluten free option please hold your hand up and an usher will bring one around to you.
 -