

RUTH AND CINDERELLA

The book of Ruth is the Hebrew version of Cinderella. Ruth is a young woman who escapes a life of reproach and poverty by meeting a wealthy prince. He sweeps Ruth off her feet, and makes her his bride.

The difference of course between Ruth and Cinderella is that the book of Ruth is no fairy-tale - no pumpkins turn into carriages.

This is a real-life story set amidst the hardships of everyday circumstances. And the miraculous occurrences that unfold are orchestrated not by a *fairy godmother*, but by *God the heavenly Father*.

RUTH AND ESTHER

"*Ruth*" is one of two books in the Bible named after a woman. The other is Esther. The book of Esther is the story of a Hebrew woman living in a gentile land, while Ruth is the story of a gentile woman living in the land of the Hebrews.

And both stories are prophetic of the times in which we live.

For 2000 years the Jews have been displaced from their homeland. They've been scattered among the gentiles. Esther foreshadows God's providential protection and preser-

vation of the Hebrew nation over the last two millenniums.

Ruth, on the other hand, foreshadows God's plan for the gentiles. Though Ruth is an outsider, she receives the blessings God intended for the Hebrews by marrying into an Israeli family. We too have been married into God's promises for the Jews. We've married a wealthy Hebrew prince named Jesus. We've fallen in love. He's swept us off our feet. And in Christ we have an inheritance with God's people.

RUTH AND HEBREW HISTORY

It's interesting that Ruth is the 8th book of the Hebrew canon of Scripture.

Let's recount the books we've covered. Genesis is the book of beginnings. Exodus speaks of redemption. Leviticus teaches us to worship. Numbers, how to walk with God. Deuteronomy, the importance of obedience. Joshua is all about our victory over our enemies. Judges, what happens when we fail to fully follow. And the 9th book is Samuel, which describes the establishment of the Kingdom.

Now think of these 9 books as an outline of Hebrew history. Beginnings, redemption, wor-

ship, walk, obedience, victory, failure, and ultimately, God's kingdom. But in between the failure of Israel, and the coming of God's kingdom - God calls out a gentile bride for His Son Jesus... thus, the book of Ruth. *Neat!*

Ruth is part of the Hebrew "*Meggilah*" - a collection of 5 books that were read at the different Hebrew feasts. The book of Ruth was always read at the feast of Pentecost. Later, Pentecost becomes the birthday of the Church. How fitting!

RUTH AND ALLEGORY

The book of Ruth is a romance - a real story about real people - but it's also a deeper revelation of spiritual truth. It's an allegory, and the Holy Spirit goes so far as to even arrange the names of the people to make His point.

Note the names in chapter 1, and their meaning... "*Elimelech*" means "*my God is king*". "*Naomi*" means "*pleasant*". "*Bethlehem*" means "*house of bread*". "*Judah*" means "*praise*". "*Ephratha*" means "*fruitful*".

Now check out the picture that's being painted... You've got a man whose God is king with a pleasant wife living in prosperity, in the house of bread. He's praising God and bearing fruit. What more could a man want! But a famine tests Elimelech's faith, and he bails. Rather than stay put in the will of God, and trust God to provide his needs, we're told in verse 2: "they went to the country of Moab and remained there." Here's an allegorical lesson for you and me.

In fact, the story as a whole is an allegory with personal implications. It paints an Old Testament picture of our relationship with Jesus.

God's Providence

Now the Hebrew welfare system consisted of more than passing out checks. When a field was harvested, the landowner was required to leave a little behind for the poor - but it was their responsibility to enter the fields behind the workers and glean, or gather, the leftovers. This is what Ruth does. She goes out to glean.

And notice what we're told in verse 3, "And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech."

Notice: she *"just so happened."* The rabbis have a saying, "Coincidence is not a kosher word." The writer is using a figure of speech, because in reality nothing just happens.

Every roll of the dice - every bounce of the football - is determined by God's providence. Proverbs 16:33 puts it, "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD." There's no such thing as luck or chance. God is at work behind the scenes manipulating circumstances to accomplish His purposes.

Here the Holy Spirit is playing cupid. He's at work on behalf of Ruth...

Jesus in the book of Ruth

Now when Boaz comes home from Bethlehem, guess who catches his eye? He rushes to the foreman in charge of the gleaners, and asks about the new girl, *"who in the world is the beautiful babe?"* God is working on both ends of this deal.

Boaz instructs Ruth to glean only from his field, and commands his men not to touch her. He offers her protection. Then he commends her for the devotion she's shown Naomi. He even invites her to the hacienda to eat with his household.

When she leaves to go back into the fields, Boaz says to the men in charge, verse 15, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her..." In other words, if she starts to glean what hasn't yet been harvested, don't stop her. He even instructs the men to toss out a few bundles of grain on purpose to make it easier for Ruth.

Guys- all of this and more is how our Boaz, Jesus Christ, has treated us.

We caught His eye long before we decided to follow Him. He chose us before the foundation of the world. He wants us to glean only from His fields - in other words, bring all our needs to Him. Let Jesus be the source and sustenance of your heart's deepest longings. Jesus offers us protection, a place at His table, and He even delights in tossing little bundles of blessing our way, from time to time.

Hebrew Heartthrob

In Ruth 2:1 we're introduced to Boaz, "There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz."

Did you hear about the young man who said to his sweetheart, "Darling, I'm not wealthy, and good looking, and I don't have a mansion, and a Mercedes, and a yacht, like Gerald Green, but I love you with all my heart." The girl replied, "Well, I love you too, but tell me more about this Gerald Green?" Boaz was a Gerald Green. He was a *Hebrew heart throb*. A barley baron and an eligible bachelor. Many a girl would've loved to have had *Boaz as a beau!*

The meaning of the name Boaz is also interesting. It means *"Lord of the harvest"*. And guess who he represents?... Jesus is our Lord of the harvest!

Devotion Box - Waiting on God

In the last verse of chapter 3, Naomi gives Ruth a near impossible command: "Then she said, "Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day."

Ruth's life, and future, and love of her life is in limbo, and she's expected to sit still!

Guys, here's the acid test of faith. After we've done all that we can do are we willing to sit still and trust God to do His work?

In Psalm 46:10 the Lord Himself tells us: *"Be still and know that I am God."* We need to learn to wait on God!

Devotion Box - Principle above Privilege

It's interesting that when Ruth left Moab, she thought she was forfeiting her best opportunity for marriage in order to be loyal to Naomi, but not so. When she reaches Bethlehem, God's providence leads her to Boaz - her "goel", or "near kinsman". According to Hebrew culture, it was the obligation of a family member to take a brother's widowed wife, and raise up a child to preserve his lineage.

Isn't it just like God to reward a person who puts commitment ahead of convenience - loyalty before license - who acts on devotion instead of emotion. God is prone to bless a person who forfeits a privilege to remain true to a principle.

How to Approach a Boaz

In chapter 3, Ruth and Naomi are tired of his *barley*, they want the *boy*. It's been said: "It takes two people to make a marriage – a single girl, and a desperate mother." Naomi is not quite desperate, but she knows the time has come to make a move. It's the end of the harvest, and Naomi knows where Boaz will be – he has only a short time to process his grain, so he'll be sleeping at the threshing floor.

The threshing floor was a large outdoor pavilion where the oxen would beat down the grain and process the wheat. The men slept there to protect the crop.

Naomi tells Ruth what to do in verses 3-4: "Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do."

Here's Naomi's plan. Ruth needs to doll herself up – take a bubble bath – dab on some Chanel # 5, put on a designer dress, and go down to the threshing floor. After Boaz has dinner, and settles down to sleep, Ruth needs to slip up, uncover his toes, and lie at his feet until he wakes up. Exposing his toes to the night air will make sure that at some point in the evening, his cold toes will wake him up.

Guys, here's also how you and I can abide in Christ.

First, make sure you're washed. Your spirit has been washed in the blood, but we also need to cleanse our minds and thoughts with God's Word.

Second, make sure you're anointed. Dab on the oil of God's Spirit. Rely on the Spirit. Ask Him to fill you, and make you aware of God's presence and love.

Third, make sure you're dressed for success. Put on Christ. Begin to form a new identity. Learn to see yourself as God sees you – holy, righteous, blameless, a joint-heir with Jesus, a child of God. Realize you're a new person in Christ.

And fourth, make sure you lie down at Jesus' feet. Humble yourself before the Master. Spend time in His presence. Do whatever He tells you to do.

For Singles...

How do I know He loves me ?

Notice the precaution Boaz takes in 3:14: "So she lay at his feet until morning, and she arose before one could recognize another. Then he said, "Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor."

Boaz did all he could to save Ruth's reputation from the rumor mill. He didn't want to give the town gossips anything to chew on.

Ladies, a guy who really loves you will do everything he can to protect your reputation, not put it in jeopardy.

Romance of Redemption

The Law of the "*kinsman redeemer*", or "*goel*", factors into the book of Ruth. In ancient times when a parcel of land was lost it could be redeemed, or bought back, by the family. If the land belonged to a widowed wife, her nearest family member could redeem the parcel, just as long as he took her as his bride. The land and lady were a package deal.

Guys, all this strikes closer to home than you might think. We've just celebrated Christmas, and I'll bet you didn't think once about the story of Ruth. Actually, the book of Ruth and Christmas go together.

This wicked world – the land we tread – once belonged to God. But when the Creator made man He gave us dominion over the earth. Of course, man sinned and forfeited that dominion and control over to Satan. In John 16:7, Jesus called Satan "*the ruler of this world*". But according to God's law, when a parcel of land is lost, there's always the possibility of redemption. It can be bought back.

But as illustrated in the story of Ruth, it has to be redeemed by a blood relative – a near kinsman. That's why Jesus was born of Mary. He joined the human race to become our near kinsman. As our relative He was in position to redeem a world that had been lost to sin and Satan. On the cross Jesus paid the redemption price.

The question though is why did He do it? Jesus is not only citizen of Earth – He's Lord of the universe – He owns billions of planets just like ours. I'm sure if the only thing Jesus had to gain by going to the cross was just another planet He would've spared Himself the trouble. No, Jesus, like Boaz, was not as interested in a piece of land as He was a particular lady. The land and lady were a package deal. Jesus redeemed the earth to marry the bride that came with it. And we are that lady. Jesus is our Boaz, and we are His Ruth – His gentile bride.

Ruth is all about the romance of redemption.

Devotion Box -

What God Births in Us

Boaz and Ruth have a baby boy, named "*Obed*", which means "*servant*". And in keeping with the allegorical aspects of the book, here's another interesting point. It's no accident that the union between Boaz and Ruth produces a child named "*servant*".

Guys, that's exactly what happens when you and I embrace our Boaz, Jesus Christ. He births within us a desire to serve God by serving others.

Bible Scan - Ruth 1-4

Calvary Chapel

If you have questions on tonight's study, email Pastor Sandy: sandyadams@calvarychapel.org

Calvary Chapel Announcements - January 30, 2000

→ Next Bible Scan - February 13 - 1 Samuel 1-8

Deadline today to register for **Youth Ski Trip- High Pastures, N.C. February 11-13** Cost: \$130 per person/\$50 deposit
Tuesday, February 1st: Ladies Morning Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Ladies Evening Bible Study Begins 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 2nd: HS Impact 7:00 p.m. Café (Bible Study Pastor Randy & Special Music Eddie King) 7:30 pm

Friday, February 4th: Horizons (Meets at Steve Lee's Home) 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 5th: Crossroads (Meets at David & Denise Brown's Home) 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 6th: Worship & Bible Study 9:30 a.m. & 11:15 a.m. MS Youth Bible Study 6:30 p.m. & Evening Service 6:30 p.m.

Monday, February 7th: Calvary Chapel Christian School Open House 10:00 a.m.

February 25-26: CCSM Women's Conference- God's Design Cost: \$20/Registration begins February 6th.

Guest Speaker: Kelly Bell, Calvary Chapel Murrieta, CA

March 25-31: Adult Mission Trip- Reynosa, Mexico Cost \$765/\$45 deposit due by Feb 1st. Register at Info. Counter.

"Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her..."

- Ruth 2:16

Bible Scan Memory Verse

RUTH AND THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES

Remember: the story of Ruth takes place in the days of the Judges when "everyone did what was right in his own eyes." Everyone that is, except Boaz and Ruth. In an age of compromise, it's so refreshing to find two people willing to do things God's way - by the book.

Doing things right was risky business. Bo and Ruthie are in love. Marriage is the goal. What if this nearer kinsmen exercises his right? Boaz will be busted.

But Boaz believes in God. He trusts that God is in control, and if God wants him and Ruth to marry, God will see to it that it happens. Boaz knows the worst move he can make is to take a short-cut. If he takes matters in his own hands to manipulate the situation, he can foul everything up. He believes what's done God's way will gain God's bless-

ing.

Do you believe that truth? Do you really believe that what's done God's way will gain God's blessing? When will we learn that our short-cuts usually become long detours. Guys, the shortest distance between two points is the will of God.

Remember the last 5 chapters of Judges - nasty, ruthless, barbaric things are occurring in the country. Yet here are two people who choose to live life and do a marriage God's way... God blesses them, and anyone else who follows their example. Guys, always trust God and do the right thing. If Boaz had not been a man of conviction, he would've ended up like the rest of the nation - *ruthless*.

RUTH AND NAOMI

Relationships with mothers-in-law are notoriously rocky. It's been said: "Behind every successful man is a good woman and a surprised mother-in-law."

Once a friend and I were talking about our mothers-in-law. I mentioned that mine lived in Oregon. He said, "Wow, I love my mother-in-law so much, that if she lived that far away, I'd try to get her to move." I said, "I have, but she won't go to Japan." Hey, I'm just kidding. I love my mother-in-law, and we have a super relationship. And so did Naomi and her two daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah.

In fact, when she announces that she's moving back home to the land of Israel, the girls weep. They don't want to see her go. Naomi assures them it's okay, and explains that they'll probably have a better chance to remarry if they

stay behind in Moab. Orpah kisses her mother-in-law and says good-bye, but not Ruth.

Ruth says to Naomi in 1:16-17, "Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me." What a true friendship.

These verses are often read at weddings. It surprises people to discover that originally they had nothing to do with a husband and a wife. They depict the devotion between two friends - specifically, a woman and her mother-in-law.