

Ruth 3

Five Ways to Draw Closer to God

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) As believers, we should desire a closer relationship with the Lord.
- b) Ruth, a Moabite and a Gentile pagan, is brought to faith in the Lord and has a redeemer named Boaz, whom she marries.
 - i) Boaz from Bethlehem pictures the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - ii) Ruth and Boaz are a true illustration of the church and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- c) Ruth 3 tells of a very close and intimate relationship between Ruth and Boaz, the church and the Lord Jesus.

d) Ruth 3:1-5

1 Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you?"

2 Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.

3 Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.

4 But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do."

5 And she replied, "All that you say I will do."

- e) Christianity is not a code, a cause, a creed, a conduct; it is Christ.
 - i) The mark of a Christian is a love for Jesus Christ.
 - ii) The desire of every child of God should be to know Jesus Christ more intimately.
- f) Every child of God wants more than redemption; we want a relationship with our Lord. We desire more than gifts; we want the Giver, Jesus Christ, to be real to us.

i) Philippians 3:10

10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like Him in his death,

- (1) Paul already knew Him intellectually and spiritually, but He wanted to know more about the Lord Jesus.
- ii) We don't want to just know about Jesus, we want Him to be real in our lives.
 - (1) When we see Him face to face, we want to have already known Him heart to heart.
- g) Naomi's advice to Ruth shows us five ways to draw closer to Jesus.

2) BE FRESHLY CLEANSED (*Ruth 3:3*) *Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.*

- a) We must be clean if we are to draw near to our Lord.

i) James 4:8 *Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

(1) We cannot worship with dirty hands, a defiled heart and double minds.

ii) 2 Corinthians 7:1 *Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.*

iii) Many complain that their prayer life is fruitless, and their prayers go unanswered.

Isaiah 1:15-16

16 *When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.*

16 *Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil,*

(1) This is not referring to “yesterday’s bath;” be freshly cleansed.

iv) How are we cleansed?

(1) By the Word of God.

(a) Ephesians 5:25-26 *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,*

(i) The Word of God is to our spirit what wash is to our body.

Psalm 119:9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.

- (b) The Bible reveals sin.
 - (i) Not only do we read the Bible, the Bible reads us.
 - (c) The Bible reveals the solution to our sin.
- (2) By the blood of Jesus Christ.
 - (a) 1 John 1:7-9 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***
 - (b) When we confess our sins, we name them specifically and agree with God about our sins.
- (3) When God cleanses us, what He calls clean no man can call unclean.

3) BE FRAGRANTLY CONSECRATED (*Ruth 3:3*) *Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.*

a) In Old Testament times, brides and priests were anointed. The anointing of a priest meant a consecration, a setting aside.

i) Song of **Solomon 4:14** *nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all choice spices—*

(1) The fragrance speaks of love and intimacy.

b) Our anointing is the Holy Spirit.

i) The Holy Spirit gives us the fragrance of Christ.

ii) If we want to draw near to God, then we must be surrendered to the Holy Spirit of God so that He can make us a sweet-smelling savor; that our lives will be like incense to Him.

4) BE FITLY CLOTHED (Ruth 3:3) *Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.*

a) Ruth has been a widow and is wearing her widow's garments.

i) She has also been gleaning in the fields, and her clothes are dusty and dirty.

b) Naomi advised Ruth to wear her best, to dress up; in essence, to put off the garments of mourning.

c) Naomi's advice must have been wonderful news for Ruth, just as the Gospel is good news.

Isaiah 61:1-3 *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me*

*to bring good news to the poor;
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
3 to grant to those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.*

- (1) How is Ruth to dress up and how are we to dress up for the Lord?
 - (a) Put off your ashes of sorrow; He will give beauty for ashes.
 - (b) Put away mourning; He will give joy for mourning.
 - (c) Put off the garments of heaviness; He will give garments of praise.

Isaiah 61:10 *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God,*

- ii) We need to trade the groans from our prayers and put in some hallelujahs.

Psalm 100:2 Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!

iii)

iv) Put on the garments of praise and salvation.

5) BE FULLY COMMITTED (*Ruth 3:3-4*) *Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do.*

a) Ruth was to place herself at the feet of her redeemer.

i) The most sacred place is at the feet of our redeemer, Jesus Christ.

b) Ruth placing herself at the feet of Boaz was a sign of full commitment.

i) This was Ruth's way of telling Boaz that she was willing to take him as her redeemer husband.

(1) This passage should not be interpreted in light of modern-day America.

(2) There is nothing wrong or unseemly about what Ruth did when she laid down at the feet of her kinsmen redeemer.

(3) This was not done in secret: there were other people on the threshing floor, including entire families.

ii) Ruth is placing herself under his protection.

(1) Ruth 3:9 *He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer."*

(a) The word for "skirt" is translated "wings" in an earlier chapter where Ruth came under the wings of Jehovah.

c) We cannot have an intimate relationship with Jesus unless we are fully committed to Him.

6) BE FAITHFULLY COMPLIANT (Ruth 3:4-5) *But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do." 5 And she replied, "All that you say I will do."*

a) Ruth is compliant; she is ready to obey.

i) She is ready to not only be a hearer of the Word but also a doer of the Word.

b) Obedience is necessary to having an intimate walk with Christ.

c) John 7:17 *If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority.*

i) When we surrender to the will of God, He will teach us.

(1) We should not say, "Lord, show me Your will, and I'll decide whether or not I'll do it." We should say, "Lord, I'll do it. What is it?"

d) John 14:21 *Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."*

- i) This is one of the greatest texts in the Bible about knowing Jesus intimately.
- ii) This shows full compliance.
- e) Bible study alone will not help us know God.
 - i) Bible study gives us knowledge about God; obedience gives us knowledge of God.
 - ii) **Luke 6:46** *"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?"*

7) CONCLUSION (THREE TAKE-AWAYS)

- a) In Boaz's response to Ruth, we see our Lord's response to us as we draw near to Him.

i) He received her.

(1) *Ruth 3:8-10 At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! 9 He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer." 10 And he said, "May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich.*

(2) He also blessed her.

(3) I say again, the most blessed place on Earth is at the feet of Jesus.

ii) He reassured her.

(1) *Ruth 3:11-13 And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy*

woman. 12 And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. 13 Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the LORD lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning."

(a) He spoke peace to her.

(b) Ruth knew that he loved her.

(i) Boaz took the initiative and loved Ruth before she loved him.

(2) *1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.*

(a) It is God's perfect love for us that casts out fear.

iii) He replenished her.

(1) *Ruth 3:18 She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."*

(a) Boaz loaded her down with provisions, with the grain.

Psalm 68:19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up; God is our salvation.

(2) *1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.*

(3) Ephesians 3:20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,

b) Ruth 3:18 She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."

i) Naomi advised Ruth to be still; she had done her part.

Boaz would not rest until the thing was finished.

ii) Ruth's responsibility was her response to his ability.

c) Jesus, our Heavenly Boaz, has finished the work of our salvation.

i) John 9:4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.

(1) He will not rest until He has finished the thing.

(a) Ruth 3:18 She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."

ii) Jesus was taunted and mocked at the crucifixion to come down from the cross.

(1) Ruth 3:18 She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."

iii) John 19:30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

(1) He did not rest until He had finished the thing.

d) Because Jesus finished the work of salvation, we can now rest.

- i) We have entered into the finished rest of our Redeemer.
- e) Are you experiencing that rest today?
- f) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- g) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31

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