



# **THE FIELDS OF BOAZ**

Terms of Endearment

# “Now Naomi had a *kinsman*”

- Verse 2: 1 “a kinsman” “a relative”
- Normal Hebrew word is “go’el”
- Redeemer
- Job 19: 25 “I know that my “go’el” lives
- The word implies a legal obligation to protect, defend, avenge the honor of someone
- If Boaz is the closest male relative, there may be a legal obligation to protect Ruth & Naomi

# Terms of Endearment

- The writer shuns the legal term and uses a form of the Hebrew word “yada” (The legal term “go’el is used later)
- To know
- Not just cognitive ability, but speaks to familiarity and experience
- To know can mean everything from a casual acquaintance to sexual intimacy

# BELONGING

- That Boaz is “known” suggests that he is recognized or acknowledged as “belonging”
- Ruth, the outsider, the Moabite, is beginning a process of belonging
- Vs 2 “in whose sight I may find favor”
- This is the beginning of a love story

# BOAZ

- Kinsman (potential help)
- Prominent and Rich (power to help)
- The family of Elimelech (potential husband?)
- Boaz (word means "in strength")
- When Solomon built the Temple one of the pillars at the entrance was named "Boaz"

# The House of Bread

- Naomi's journey in chapter 1 is motivated by the need for food
- Ruth's journey in chapter 2 is motivated by the need for food
- The journeys result in encounters that transform their identities
- 2:2 "Ruth the Moabite"
- "Go, my daughter."

# The Fields of Boaz



# GLEANNING

- **Leviticus 19:9-10**
- <sup>9</sup> When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. <sup>10</sup> You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for **the poor** and **the alien**: I am the LORD your God.
- Ruth was the poor, she was the alien

# Deuteronomy 24: 19

- When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the **alien**, the orphan, and the **widow**, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all your undertakings.
- Ruth is the alien and the widow
- She came and gleaned in the field behind the reapers. (Ruth 2: 3)

# “Her Hap Was to Light”

- KJV 2: 3 “and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.”
- “She just happened to end up in the field belonging to Boaz”
- “as luck would have it”
- TANAKH “an unplanned occurrence”
- Was it luck?

# “And Behold!”

- “Just then, Boaz came!”
- First, a blessing
- “The Lord be with You” “The Lord Bless You”
- “Goodbye” originally meant “God be with you”
- Boaz quickly moves from blessing to inquiry
- Who is that girl?

# The Moabite from Moab

- She is a foreigner (Moabite from Moab)
- She came with Naomi
- Foreigner or Relative?
- She's a hard worker, too (verse 7)
- Verse 8, Boaz addresses Ruth as “my daughter”
- A new identity
- Daughter is a term of endearment, the language of family

# Seven Commands, Vs. 8-9

- **Listen** my daughter
- **Do Not Go** glean in another field
- **Keep Close** to my young women
- **Keep Your Eyes** on the field
- **Follow After Them**
- When you are thirsty **Go** to the vessels
- And **Drink** from what they have drawn
- The Relationship has been established

# Boaz the Protector

- The young men are not to “molest” her, to “bother” her, to “harass” her
- She is a single woman
- No male protector
- A foreigner
- Boaz recognizes her vulnerability, and also her devotion and faithfulness to Naomi
- He is becoming the “go’el”

# From Foreigner to Daughter

- Boaz calls her “my daughter” Vs. 8
- Ruth responds with humble gratitude, “You have taken notice of me, a foreigner”
- Boaz counters with another blessing
- <sup>12</sup> May the LORD reward you for your deeds, and may you have a full reward from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge!”

# Your God, My God

- “The God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge”
- Poor, helpless widow
- Powerful, wealthy man
- Verse 13 conveys a sense of humble gratitude and an acknowledgement of unworthiness
- “The words strain as they cover all the possibility of polite speech and the language of courtship”

# Progression of Events

- Vs. 14 He invites her to a meal
- She was “satisfied” and there were leftovers
- In stark contrast to her past experiences of famine and death
- Vs 15 He authorizes additional grain be left for her so that she gleaned an abundance
- In one day there is an abundance of grain, blessing, and words

# Where Did You Glean Today?

- She returns home and shows Naomi what she has gleaned
- Naomi is overjoyed!
- Where did you glean today?
- His name is Boaz!

# Verse 20

- The LORD bless him!” Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. “He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead.” She added, “That man is our close relative; he is one of our guardian-redeemers.” NIV
- Blessed be he by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!” Naomi also said to her, “The man is a relative of ours, one of our nearest kin.” NRSV

# Hesed

- Verse 20 “Hesed” Kindness
- Chapter 1, Verse 8
- “May the Lord deal “kindly” with you
- The Lord’s Kindness or Boaz’s Kindness?
- Maybe both?
- Kin here is “Goal” redeemer

# Chapter 3—Seeking Security

- Naomi has a plan
- Is not Boaz our “kinsman”
- She does not use the word “Go’el” here, but the word used in verse 1, from “yada”—a more personal relationship
- Here is how you will encounter him

# A Conniving Plan?

- Boaz and his men will be winnowing the barley that night
- The work would be followed by meal, eating and drinking
- Then, Boaz, after a big meal with plenty to drink, would lie down to sleep

# Ruth

- Is to bathe and anoint her body with oil, then put on her “best clothes”
- The same preparation a bride would make for her wedding day
- Bathing was not an everyday practice, perhaps not even a weekly practice
- Anointing was even less frequent
- Clothing might indicate changing from the clothing of a widow, to one who is available

# To Know

- “Yada” occurs three times
- Verse 2 “our kinsman”
- Verse 3 do not make yourself “known” to the man
- Verse 4 when he lies, you shall “know” the place where he lies
- The writer is painting a picture full of sexual innuendo

# “Uncover His Feet”

- **Isaiah 6:2** Above him stood the seraphim; each had six wings: with two he **covered his** face, and with two he **covered his feet**, and with two he flew
- **1 Samuel 24: 3** And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to **cover his feet**: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.

# So What Happened?

- Did Ruth uncover the sleeping Boaz
- Or did Ruth uncover herself (vs 9)
- Or did Ruth do both?

# What's Going on Here?

- A passionate encounter between mutually desiring adults? (A steamy romance novel)
- A beautiful, but needy young Ruth forcing herself on an old rich man for the sake of her mother-in-law
- A wily, scheming Ruth cooperating with Naomi to entrap the richest man in town
- Or is it something more?

# Encounter at Midnight

- The encounter at midnight
- He is startled and asks who she is
- She answers, Ruth, your maidservant
- A different word than she uses in 2:13.
- This word indicates her availability as a wife
- Then she asks him to cover her.

# At this Point he has 3 Options

- Lust—
- Loyalty—Ruth uses the word “Go’el”
- Love
- Vs. 11 “you are a woman of worth”
- Same word that is used in 2:1

# Deeper Meaning

- The chapter opens with Naomi seeking security for Ruth
- The book of Judges ended with a lament that there was no security in Israel for there was no King
- The repeated use of the word “yada” to know has theological implications

# Theological Significance

- A desire that they may “know” I am YHWH
- Ruth will find her security in Boaz
- Israel will find its security in a King
- Ruth and Boaz will have a son, named Obed
- Obed will have a son named Jesse
- Jesse will have a son named . .
- David

# Ruth 4: 14

- “Blessed is the LORD who has not left you without a <sup>[a]</sup>redeemer today, and may his name <sup>[b]</sup>become famous (be renowned) in Israel.

# To Know God

