

Who are You, My Daughter?

Ruth 3



Background

As we enter the third chapter of Ruth, we encounter more bold and daring examples of *hesed* (“unfailing love to the helpless”) that, at first glance, appear dangerous and deceptive—a midnight encounter on the threshing floor that is loaded with sexual overtones and double meanings. Warning bells go off—“Parents Be Warned: Mature Subject Matter.” True, the scene is riddled with sexual tension, but I believe we need to teach our children how God’s people are perpetually confronted with difficult situations and hard choices and how they must decide whether they will be guided by self-interest or *hesed*. The choices made by Naomi, Ruth and Boaz are exemplary and compel us to constantly re-negotiate the complexities of moral decision making in a world where everyone is in some way threatened or compromised. Carolyn Custis James suggests that this is “one of the most powerful gospel encounters between two people in all of Scripture.” I believe it also gives a radical understanding to what it means “**submit** to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Eph 5:21).

Sermon Text: Ruth 3 (ESV)

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.”

6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her. 7 And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. 8 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. 11 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."

14 So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." 15 And he said, "Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city. 16 And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did you fare, my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her, 17 saying, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, 'You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'" 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."

Discussion Questions

1. Preparation

- a. What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- b. What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?
- c. As you reflect on the sermon, what stands out to you the most?

2. Sermon questions

- a. One of the main themes of Ruth 3 is identity. Ruth gets to name her identity in verse 9. If someone were to ask you, "Who are you," how would you answer it?
- b. Brian made the point that Ruth is a story that beautifully combines "God's grace and human initiative." Name a time in your life where you saw a beautiful combination of God's grace and human initiative.
- c. Do you have an example of a Proverbs 31 woman (like Ruth) impacting your life? If so, share what attributes made her a Proverbs 31 woman.
 - Do you have an example of a high character man (like Boaz) impacting your life? If so, share what attributes you particularly saw in him.
- d. Ruth, Boaz and Naomi are "a trinity of hesed love." Where have you been touched by hesed love in your life?
- e. The good news is that we can all learn to love. Where do you want to get better at loving others?