Jesus our Kinsman Redeemer – Ruth

1. Introduction

a. When we read the Old Testament, especially the story of Ruth, we see what is defined as a kinsman-redeemer. This is not only a beautiful story but it is a wonderful foreshadowing of our redemption. If we just read the story without truly understanding what a kinsman-redeemer is then it is possible we will miss the beauty in the story. That's why it is important for us to know what a kinsman-redeemer is.

2. What Is a Kinsman-Redeemer?

a. The concept of a kinsman-redeemer comes out of the book of Leviticus.

Lev.25:23-28 *"The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine. For you are strangers and sojourners with me.* ***24*** *And in all the country you possess, you shall allow a redemption of the land.* ***25*** *"If your brother becomes poor and sells part of his property, then his nearest redeemer shall come and redeem what his brother has sold.* ***26*** *If a man has no one to redeem it and then himself becomes prosperous and finds sufficient means to redeem it,* ***27*** *let him calculate the years since he sold it and pay back the balance to the man to whom he sold it, and then return to his property.* ***28*** *But if he has not sufficient means to recover it, then what he sold shall remain in the hand of the buyer until the year of jubilee. In the jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his property.*

b. By definition, a kinsman-redeemer was someone who redeemed what was lost. This could be the other persons' property, their freedom, or even their name. The kinsman might also be called upon to exact revenge on someone who may have killed their relative.

c. In short, the kinsman was a **rescuer** and **restorer**. This was not a passive obligation, nor was it something that should be entered into lightly. As we will see shortly there were some obligations necessary for the person who would be the kinsman-redeemer.

3. Kinsman Redeemer in the book of Ruth

a. We see what a kinsman-redeemer is by looking at the story of Ruth and Boaz. The book of Ruth tells the story of Naomi and Ruth, a mother and daughter-in-law who returned to Israel from Moab as widows on the verge of losing the family inheritance. Naomi had gone with her husband and sons from Bethlehem to Moab during a time of famine. The story is set in the time of the judges.

Ruth 1:1-5 *In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.* [2] *The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there.* [3] *But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons.* [4] *These took Moabite wives; the name of one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years,* [5] *and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.*

b. Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law, has lost both her husband and two sons leaving both Naomi and her two daughters-in-law as widows. There were few things worse in those days than being a widow with no sons. To be in this position meant loss of income and support, loss of possession and ultimately loss of property. In short, they were desperate and destitute. The

only hope they had was for someone to see their plight and be willing to pay the price of redemption. This would prevent them from losing everything.

c. Naomi decides to return to Bethlehem and Ruth insists on accompanying her. On arriving in Israel Ruth goes and cleans grain in the fields of Boaz who befriends her and feeds her. On returning home Ruth enquires who has been so kind to her and Ruth tells her it was Boaz.

Ruth 20:21-22 *[20] And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed by the Lord, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!" Naomi also said to her, "The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers."*

d. Since they needed a family member to step forward and help Ruth approaches Boaz, now knowing he was a relative of her dead husband, inviting him to redeem her and the property. After clearing it with an even closer relative, Boaz gladly agrees. The widows who had lost hope suddenly found it again. Naomi's bitterness over her hardships gave way to joy. The family's inheritance remained in the family, and God restored their lives.

e. The interesting thing about Boaz was he was not the first in line to be the redeemer. There was another relative who was in line for this position. This person was willing to redeem the property, until he realized there was a widow that he would also have to redeem. This he did not want to do, so he gave up his right to redeem. Upon doing this, Boaz was next in line and he became the kinsman-redeemer, ultimately redeeming her property and her name.

Ruth 4:9-10 *"Then Boaz said to the elders and to the crowd standing around, 'You are witnesses that today I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Kilion, and Mahlon. And with the land I have acquired Ruth, the Moabite widow of Mahlon, to be my wife. This way she can have a son to carry on the family name of her dead husband and to inherit the family property here in his hometown. You are all witnesses today'"*

4. The Requirements of a Kinsman-Redeemer?

a. To be a Kinsman redeemer there were four requirements that had to be met.

i **You had to be kin.** The only way you could be a kinsman-redeemer was that you had to be of the same family. There had to be some relational tie. You had to be of like kind.

ii **You had to be willing.** In the Ruth and Boaz story the person who was the next redeemer in line was simply not willing to follow through with the redemption. If the person was not willing, they could not be forced to do it. Being willing is at the heart of what a kinsman-redeemer is.

iii **You had to be able to redeem.** Willingness alone was not enough to be a kinsman-redeemer. You actually had to be able to follow through with the redemption. If you did not have the financial means to make the redemption, then you could not be the redeemer. It did not matter how good your intentions were.

iv **You had to pay the price in full.** There was no such thing as partial redemption when it came to being a kinsman-redeemer. Unless the full price was paid, there was no redemption. It was truly an all or nothing proposition.

5. How is Jesus our Kinsman Redeemer

a. As we look at the story of Ruth, we can clearly see the parallels between her plight and ours. We were just like Naomi and Ruth, desperate and destitute. We had no hope, and we were

all lost in our sinful condition. We needed someone who could step in and become our redeemer.

b. Jesus meets all the requirements of our Kinsman-Redeemer.

i **Jesus Became Like Us.** Because the redeemer had to be of like kind, Jesus had to become like us. If Jesus did not take on humanity, there would be no way of redemption for us. Since sin came into the world through one man, it would take another man to bring about our salvation and righteousness. This would require the infinite God to take on human flesh. This is what Jesus did, and in the Gospel of John we see this spelled out very clearly.

John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*

John 1:14 *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth*

Jesus became just like you and me, which put him in position so that he could redeem us.

ii **Jesus Was Willing to Do It.** In Philippians we see the willingness of Jesus to become our redeemer.

Phil.2:5-8 *In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross!*

John 10:18 *No one takes it (life) from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father*

Jesus gave up his life as a sacrifice of his own free will. No one twisted his arm to do it – he was willing to be obedient and see this process all the way through to the end.

iii **Jesus Was Able to Redeem.** Having the willingness as we said earlier means nothing if you did not have the ability to redeem. Thankfully for us this was not the case. The death and obedience of Jesus was everything that was needed to bring about our redemption.

Rom.5:18-19 *Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.*

iv **Jesus Paid the Complete Price for Our Sin.**

Titus 2:14 *He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing good deeds.*

The beautiful thing about our redemption is that it is a complete redemption. There is nothing else needed to complete it or bring it to pass other than us putting our faith in the redeemer of our soul. When we do that, then the work is finished and the sin debt that was owed on our account will be paid in full.

6. Paid, Once and for All

a. When you think about what a kinsman-redeemer is, it is all about what was lost being found. You and I were lost and on the verge of losing everything, but Jesus stepped in. He restored what was lost and gave us a new identity in Christ. The beautiful thing is we never have to worry about having to be redeemed again. He paid the price of redemption once and for all.

b. We also long for redemption, just as Naomi's family left the Promised Land and nearly lost everything, the human race left Eden and lost many of the blessings God wanted to give us. We've each experienced this; we know about brokenness and loss. Life is not as it should be.

c. Yet God is gracious to sustain and bless us anyway, even when we aren't living in our Promised Land. Still, we crave a deeper, fuller restoration. We need someone to buy us back, to restore what we've lost, to keep our inheritance safe for us by bringing us back into the family. We need a redeemer.

d. That's what Jesus does for us. He buys back what we lost. He is the member of God's family who steps in and provides what we could not provide for ourselves. He brings us back to God who adopts us into His family and promises us the full inheritance of His kingdom. Jesus restores our lives in full!

7. Jesus a descendent of Ruth

a. Not only does Boaz point to Christ, but Christ is actually descended from Boaz and Ruth.

Ruth 4:22 *Boaz fathered Obed, Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David.*

b. Jesus, being a direct descendant of David (Matthew 1:1), is therefore a direct descendant of Ruth and Boaz. Matthew 1:1-5 includes them in Jesus's genealogy.

c. How incredible is this? The promised Messiah, the Saviour of the world is a descendant from this unlikely union between a gentile and a Jew. They were brought together by God's sovereign hand in order to accomplish his divine plan. God foreknew this plan involving Ruth and Boaz before the creation of the world. He brought it to a climax in the fullness of time with the coming of Christ to earth.

d. We can see God's sovereign hand guiding all these events. From Naomi and Ruth's tough times and loss, to Boaz's redemption of Ruth, we can see God at work. Ultimately the book of Ruth points to Christ and his gospel as it reveals to us our God who works all things for the good of those who love him.

8. Redemption of all things

a. Not only has He redeemed us but He will also redeem the land as Boaz did for Naomi and Ruth. Just as God provided a way through a redeemer to buy back the land that had been lost, so He has provided a redeemer to pay the price to purchase all things back to God once more. The price was paid on the cross for all humanity to be redeemed if they would believe and accept that provision made on their behalf.

b. The price was also paid to redeem all of creation and undo the consequences of the curse that was placed upon it. That involves the ground, the plants and trees, the animal kingdom as well as humanity. It shall all be redeemed and returned to what God intended when the true King rules.

Isaiah 59:17-20 *He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak.*
18 *According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render repayment.* ***19*** *So they shall fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; for he will come like a rushing stream, which the wind of the Lord drives.* ***20*** *"And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the Lord*

c. Now anytime we see 'vengeance' in a passage such as this, we know it is talking about the time when Jesus returns. If it just said that He put on 'righteousness like a breastplate' and 'a helmet of salvation' it could be talking about Jesus' first coming. But when He slips on the clothing prepared for the last days - the 'garments of vengeance', then we know we're on 'second coming' ground.

d. This passage shows Jesus preparing to take back His possession from His enemies. He is the redeemer, coming to Zion, with wrath and recompense for His enemies! Remember a redeemer had to be able to pay the price, they had to be willing to pay the price, and they had to have the power to take possession of that which was redeemed.

e. Jesus Christ was willing and able to pay the price and did so when He came 2000 years ago. And this scripture reveals that He also has the power to take possession of that which He redeemed even if it means taking it by force. And again, that includes not only people but this entire earth. He will come to take possession of it again. Only then, as Revelation tells us will 'the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God'.

9. Conclusion

a. Many of us have areas of our life where we have experienced loss and brokenness. The story of Naomi and Ruth should encourage us that God's plan is to restore us to life in its fullness. It should renew our hope that God is working out His purposes in our lives. Even when the world is a dark place we have a Kinsman-Redeemer who will restore all things.

b. The story of Ruth takes place during the times of the judges. As we saw last week this was a dark time in Israel's history. Yet, in the mist of this time we have this glorious story of Ruth and Boaz which points us towards our glorious redemption through Jesus.

c. We can know that redemption now as we put our faith in Jesus our Kinsman –Redeemer and look forward to the complete redemption of all creation when He returns.