

The Hesed Love of God

Ruth 3

Despite the kindness of Boaz, Naomi and Ruth are still in a desperate situation, with no husbands or sons their future is uncertain.

Elimelech's land in Bethlehem will have to be sold (4:3) because there's no one to inherit or work it. The women face poverty. But Naomi has a plan...

Read Ruth 3:1-5

What does Naomi want to do?

How is this an act of self-sacrificial, faithful love (hesed) toward Ruth?

Read Ruth 3:5-10

Ruth obeys Naomi's instructions. When Boaz questions who is laying at his feet, Ruth makes two proposals when she answers:

"I am your servant Ruth. Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family."

What are the two proposals?

[leaders note: Ruth proposes marriage in the statement: Spread the corner of your garment over me. Secondly, she proposes Boaz acts as Naomi's guardian-redeemer in the statement: ... since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family.]

In these proposals how is Ruth expressing self-sacrificial, faithful love (hesed) toward Naomi?

How does Boaz's response reveal his understanding of Ruth's request?

Read Ruth 3:10-18

How does Boaz express hesed toward Naomi and Ruth?

Taking a deeper look

Elimelech's family faced two disasters. But God's law provided a way of rescuing Israelite families from both...

Heirless

This family would die out because there were no heirs.

But read [Deuteronomy 25:5-10](#). If an Israelite man died without any heir, the nearest relative was to marry his widow to provide an heir for the dead man. Refusal to do this was considered shameful.

Landless

The land given to Elimelech's ancestors under Joshua would have to be sold. But read [Leviticus 25:25](#). If poverty forced a family to sell inherited land, the nearest relative was to buy it back from them—to "redeem" it for them.

The all-important close relative was called a kinsman-redeemer (2:20 also called a guardian-redeemer). But why such concern to protect an Israelite family from oblivion? Because at stake was God's faithfulness in keeping His promises to Abraham (Genesis 17:7-8).

Read [Hebrews 2:11](#); [Romans 8:16-17](#); [Galatians 3:13-14](#).

How is the kinsman-redeemer a picture of Jesus Christ?

APPLY

In Naomi, Ruth and Boaz, and most clearly in Jesus, we see God's hesed expressed for his people. Hesed is the way of life for Christians.

Who is God calling you to notice?

What opportunities is God giving you to express hesed?

What difference could it make to others around us, if they see Christians behaving this way?

PRAY

Pray God will grow your hesed.

Pray for forgiveness when you have not loved as you ought.

Pray God may be known through you.

Pray for those you are seeking to share the love of God with.