



# Reflections On Ruth

Don Merritt

## Introduction

I'm really not sure what to call this; is it a book, a Bible study, a devotional, a small group study, a commentary? To be honest, it isn't quite any of those things, yet it has aspects of all three. It's hardly long enough to be a book; it isn't complete enough to be a commentary. It's not quite a devotional, but it could be used for devotions. It's not quite a Bible study, but it could easily be used for that, too. If you're creative, it could also be used to teach a class, but it isn't in a proper format to be curriculum.

One thing differs here from the first two collections I have released. For this collection, I have not included discussion questions, but anyone could make up their own for use in a discussion or class setting.

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All blessings to you in Christ!

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## Ruth and Boaz, a Story for all Time

Are you ready for a little adventure? Good, so am I!

The Old Testament book of Ruth is often used as a women's Bible study, and I can see why when it shows the amazing faith of a young widow named Ruth. Yet, I think it is even better as a study for men, since the male lead is a real man's man: Boaz. Both characters show what faith looks like in action, both main characters demonstrate godly humility, devotion and service, and as I see it, the take away from the story is one that each one of us can learn from. What does a godly woman look like? Take a look at Ruth. What does a godly man look like? Take a look at Boaz... and guess what guys; Boaz didn't have to turn in his "man card" to faithfully follow God.

Ruth 1:1-5

The story begins in the days of the Judges, when God was the only King in Israel. While the text doesn't say which one of the judges was in office at the time, scholars tend to think that it must have been early in that period, since our text does not say "when there was no king" (Ruth 1:1). In any case, it seems that there was a famine in the land that should have been flowing with milk and honey.

It is important for us to bear in mind that famines were not supposed to happen, and that if one did occur, there were more problems in the land than just a famine. In the Law, God linked His statutes with blessings and curses; there would be blessings when the people obeyed the Law, curses when they did not, and one of those curses was famine (Lev. 26:19). That there was a famine in the land is indicative of disobedience afoot. It would seem that the situation became so bad that people were leaving Bethlehem, headed for more favorable areas where they could find food.

In our story, we find a man named Elimelech, his wife Naomi and their sons Mahlon and Kilion. As most of you know, it is always a good idea to find out what Bible names mean, and this is especially true in the Old Testament, so let's see... Elimelech means *my God a King*, Naomi means *amiable* or *pleasant*, and their sons' names mean *sickness* and *consumption*. Perhaps the boys were sickly children, unlikely to live long lives; certainly, if I wanted to go "old school" with you, I'd say that the lesson is that out of an amiable and pleasant life comes sickness and consumption (the old name for tuberculosis) but when do I ever go "old school" here?

Off they go to Moab, the land of the Moabites just across the Jordan River, which isn't really very far from Bethlehem, at least in terms of highway miles. Even so, it must have been night and day when it comes to the availability of food. Understand that for a Jew to leave the Promised Land to live among the gentile Moabites was a very big deal, and this family must have been very desperate to do this.

The family lived in Moab for 10 years. During this time, Elimelech died, and then the two sons married local Moabite women, and in turn each of the sons died leaving Naomi alone with her

two daughters in law. No reasons are given for the deaths of the men, but one thing is very clear: These events were disastrous. For a woman, or three women, to be left alone in the world without a man or an extended family in those days meant that one of three things would very shortly happen: The woman would find a man to marry, she would become a prostitute, or she would starve. Thus Naomi, Orpah and Ruth were in very deep trouble as our passage draws to a close. What will they do?

## ***Hardship and an Uncertain Future***

Ruth 1:6-22

We pick up the story in the midst of calamity for Naomi and her two daughters in law. All of their husbands have died and they have no way to earn a living in Moab without them and something must be done— and done quickly. Naomi resolves to return to Bethlehem, since she has heard that the famine has passed and the fields are once again producing in abundance. She announces to Orpah and Ruth that she intends to return home, and urges them to return to their families, in the hope that they will be taken in, but they protest. The text does not tell us exactly why they protested so much; what Naomi has urged upon them makes all the sense in the world; their only chance is to be reunited with their extended families... but will they have them back? Maybe Orpah and Ruth have just become so attached to Naomi that they can't bear to part and would prefer to take their chances back in Bethlehem, where there are certainly no guarantees that they will be accepted, since they are not Israelites.

Naomi's thinking is pretty simple; she is too old to marry again, and even if she did she may be past childbearing. Even so, if she could bear more sons, and found a man who would take her as a wife in his old age, Orpah and Ruth can't wait around for years on end while the sons grew up. No, their only hope would be to return to their families and hope for another chance. Orpah finally sees reason and heads back to her clan, but Ruth, well that is another matter.

For whatever reason, Ruth declares her unyielding intention to stick by Naomi, to worship the God of Israel and to go where ever Naomi goes and to share her fate. Seeing Ruth's determination, Naomi gives in and lets her travel with Naomi to Bethlehem and an uncertain fate.

What will happen to them when they return? Will the family take Naomi in after all these years of living among the Moabites? Without a doubt, many families would turn their backs on her at this point, particularly with a gentile in tow. When they arrive, the people in Bethlehem are amazed to see them. Naomi tells the women (for men did not normally speak to unattached women) that they should call her Mara from now on, which means *bitter*, for God had turned against her.

Interesting isn't it? From Naomi, which means amiable or pleasant, to Mara which means bitter because of all the family calamity she had suffered. The chapter ends with the notice that they had arrived just as the barley harvest was beginning.

## ***Working in the Fields***

Ruth 2:1-17

Chapter 2 begins with a statement:

*Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side, a man of standing from the clan of Elimelek, whose name was Boaz. (2:1)*

This verse seems to come out of left field; it interrupts the narrative, yet it is used to set up what will shortly come into the story. His name means *in him is strength*, and he is a man of standing, meaning that he was mighty in wealth and in godliness, a rare combination.

Ruth asks Naomi if it would be all right if she went out to glean; Naomi consents. Gleaning was something that only the poor and destitute would usually do, and it was very hard work. A large farmer would allow poor and desperate people to follow behind his harvesters and pick up whatever the harvesters missed in the harvest. Sometimes they would leave the corners of a field unharvested so that the poor might have something to eat, and this is what Ruth was asking to do. Notice in verse 2 that Ruth was not approaching this as some kind of an entitlement, but rather that she was hoping to find favor that she might be allowed to do this back-breaking work to keep her mother in law and herself from starving; she was demonstrating in this a level of humility that might seem foreign to us today.

In verse three she heads off. Remember that she is a stranger to this land and would have no idea which farmer owned which field, yet somehow, she finds herself in the field of Boaz.

Coincidence?

While Ruth is toiling, Boaz returns from town and greets his workers, and then asks the boss if he knows who this woman was who was gleaning. Some commentators suggest that Boaz was curious about her because of her great beauty, but if our text has mentioned her being beautiful, I missed it; probably he just didn't recognize her. The overseer tells him who she was, and from there forward, our text records the kindness Boaz affords Ruth. Boaz, it seems, views Ruth as a part of his extended family and recognizes that he has a responsibility to care for her in some way. Now let's be clear about that; Boaz has no legal responsibility for Ruth because her husband was dead, and she is free to marry anyone who will have her. In addition, she is a Moabite, and in that case, he would have no responsibility for her at all, yet because of the loyalty that she has shown to Naomi, Boaz goes out of his way to help her.

Notice that Boaz orders his men to leave her alone, that he gives her a seat at the table with the rest of the household (a household in the OT would include the servants) and that he arranges for her to receive considerably more grain than she would have received just from gleaning. Also, please take note of Ruth's attitude of humility; even now she assumes no rights or entitlements.

These are two very unusual people!

Yesterday, I called Boaz a “man’s man” and here you begin to see what I mean by that. A “man” at least in the old-fashioned sense, was not a grown up child, he was someone with character and integrity who would do the right thing toward others even when it wasn’t convenient or advantageous... but because it was right. He would take care of his own and treat others with respect; I might add that he was a person most notable for his restraint, so to be succinct, Boaz was not working an angle or with any ulterior motive.

By the time she was finished with her work, Ruth carried home about 30 pounds of grain, plus her leftovers from the meal that Boaz had provided her with, an impressive haul to say the least. I have a hunch that Naomi will take notice when she finds out what has taken place...

## ***Naomi's Reaction***

Ruth 2:18-22

After the events of Ruth 2:1-17, Ruth returns home with the grain she had obtained from her gleaning in the fields of Boaz. First, she gives the leftovers from her meal to Naomi to eat, and then Naomi, noticing how much she had brought back, asked her where she had been allowed to glean. Ruth tells her that she has been gleaning in the fields of Boaz, and Naomi is quite pleased.

Naomi knows that Boaz is a kinsman-redeemer, which comes from the Hebrew word *ga'al* which means "kinsman-redeemer", rendered by the NIV as "guardian-redeemer". A kinsman-redeemer is a relative who is obligated to "redeem" the property, and sometimes the life or marriage, of a relation who has fallen into severe distress. For example, if there is real property that is owned by a widow, the kinsman-redeemer might buy that property so that the widow, who couldn't farm it herself, has an income to live off of. They might also pay off a mortgage, take the person into their household, or marry a brother's wife if they have no children so that the brother can live on through the children. In the case of Boaz, he was a kinsman-redeemer for Naomi, since he is related to her husband. In the case of Ruth, he is a relative of her husband as well, but the fact that Ruth is a Moabite would give Boaz an "out" if he wished to avoid his responsibilities to the family. Finally, we must remind ourselves that there had been a famine in the land 10 years earlier, and we do not know how long it lasted. A famine in the Promised Land would tell us that God's Law was not being obeyed in that generation, thus Boaz may or may not be the kind of man who would honor this obligation. Naomi seems to think that he will do his duty, based upon Ruth's report.

As a result of all of this, Naomi advises Ruth to continue gleaning in Boaz' field, and to visit no others, since Boaz has decided to see to her safety... and that is exactly what Ruth did.

## **What Was She Thinking?**

*One day Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, "My daughter, I must find a home for you, where you will be well provided for. Now Boaz, with whose women you have worked, is a relative of ours. Tonight he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. Wash, put on perfume, and get dressed in your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do."*

*"I will do whatever you say," Ruth answered.*

Ruth 3:1-5

Naomi! Really? What are you thinking?

How could you put Ruth in this position after she has been so loyal to you? For that matter, how can you put Boaz in this position? Seriously??

Well, that's my knee-jerk reaction anyway...

Over the years, there have been commentators who have suggested that Naomi was interested in trapping Boaz into marriage, but to be quite fair, there is no evidence in the text to support that. Others suggest that this is how the Law says a claim should be made by a dead brother's wife to a kinsman-redeemer and they cite Deuteronomy 25:7-9, but that isn't quite what it says there, for the Law was quite a bit more conventional. However, we can infer from the Deuteronomy passage that a claim was to be made by the widow... but Ruth was not the wife of Boaz' brother, he was a relation, and as we will see soon, Boaz was not the closest relation.

It might be that the custom of the time was that a claim be made in this way, with a widow throwing herself at the kinsman's feet, but if that were so then the evidence of this would seem to be lost. Yes, there is some theological significance to this act of humble submission, but neither Naomi nor Ruth could have known it at the time, and we will discuss the theological significance of this story in due course, but they certainly do not involve any literal reenactments of this scene.

To be sure, I do not know what Naomi was thinking. We can all have our theories, but as always in cases like this, my best advice to you, dear reader, is to beware of a preacher, teacher or commentator who claims to know for certain.

In any case, it is valuable to note Ruth's reaction to this unusual motherly advice. Bearing in mind that Ruth was not likely to have been fully acquainted with Jewish Law or custom, all of her actions up to this point would seem to indicate that she was neither immoral nor stupid, yet she submitted herself willingly and with the utmost humility; she was willing to trust both Naomi and Boaz.

The question we are left with is this: How will Boaz react? Will he succumb to temptation and take advantage of the situation, will he be angry, or will he be honorable?

## ***Ruth Acts***

Ruth 3:6-18

Naomi gave Ruth some unconventional advice in the first 5 verses of chapter three, now Ruth takes her advice and acts upon it. After the harvest is complete, it is winnowing time, and after the winnowing is complete, a dinner is held. During all of this, Ruth stays out of sight, but when all is said and done, and Boaz retires for the night, Ruth creeps up on him, uncovers his feet and lies down at his feet (vv. 6-8). At some point during the night, Boaz awakens and says, "Who are you?"

Before we go further in the story, please note that Ruth is "at his feet." It seems to me that when two people sleep together, they are side-by-side, aren't they? Yet in this case, she is "at his feet." It would appear to me that Ruth has not placed herself in the position of a seductress, but instead has positioned herself in a posture of subservience to Boaz, being "at his feet." It is as though she is placing herself at his mercy, not so much at his pleasure. Of course, he can still take advantage of the situation and then send her packing, should he choose to do so. Now, notice her reply to his question:

*"I am your servant Ruth," she said. "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family." (3:9)*

In these words, she makes her claim for his redemption as a kinsman-redeemer. It is made with complete humility and meekness, with submission and perfect trust. When she says "spread the corner of your garment over me" she is not saying something like, "take me I'm yours," she is asking for his redemptive protection; quite a difference. Yet, even now, she is entirely at his pleasure, trusting in his integrity.

In verses 10-14, Boaz responds by saying that *she* has shown *him* a kindness!

At this point, we know that Boaz is older than Ruth, but we don't know how much older. We can surmise that Ruth is probably in her late teens at the most, and we know that the life expectancy was probably 30-35. If this sounds way too young to you, please bear in mind that in the US and many other countries, the age of consent to *be married* was 10 (not a typo) until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it rose to 14! My point is that we shouldn't think Boaz considered this a kindness because he was getting a 22-year-old wife when he was 72!

She hadn't been chasing "younger men," (children from our perspective) instead she had come to him; a kinsman-redeemer and given him an opportunity to do his *duty* to the family. Let's also recognize that a kinsman-redeemer who takes on Ruth also takes on responsibility for Naomi who is past her productive working life, and thus no economic bargain.

There is also a complication, for Boaz is not first in line to redeem Ruth, so this must be worked out as well, and Boaz assures Ruth that he will sort things out for her. He allows her to remain unmolested through the night, and sends her home early the next day with a gift for Naomi, who is beyond delighted with the result of the evening's work.

Before I end for now, there is one other element that we should consider in all of this: I have referred to the redemption being offered here as being that of Ruth, the young widow, but in truth it is much more than that. The real redemption from the Hebrew point of view is the redemption of Ruth's dead husband. Mahlon and Kilion died childless, and in the Old Covenant, there is no promise of eternal life as there is in the New. People lived forever *through their children*, and to die childless was a great tragedy, for that was the end. When a brother or kinsman-redeemer married the widow and offspring resulted, the deceased man was "redeemed" because he was able to live on in those children. To give this life to the dead was the duty that Boaz considered to be such a kindness. But that isn't all: since both of the sons of Elimelech had died childless, he was done for, and likely so was his father and his father's father... All were, in this sense, to be redeemed by Boaz.

## **Boaz Acts**

Ruth 4:1-12

After Ruth left Boaz and returned to the place where she and Naomi were staying, Boaz went to town. He stopped at the town gates where the Elders were to be found, which was a customary place for them to conduct their duties. When the other kinsman-redeemer came along, he asked the man to sit with him in the hearing of the Elders to discuss the situation. You will no doubt recall that the night before, Boaz had mentioned to Ruth that there was a closer relative who was first in line as kinsman-redeemer, and this is the matter Boaz brought up that morning.

It would seem, from verses 3 and 4 that Naomi had inherited her husband's property, so Boaz mentioned this to the man first. Previously, I mentioned that a kinsman-redeemer would buy the land of the dead husband from the widow so that she would have money in her old age with which to live, since she probably wouldn't be able to make a living from the land by herself, and this other kinsman-redeemer, whose name is never mentioned in the text, agreed to buy it. If he had the cash, then why not buy it? He could do his duty to the family and add to his own income in the bargain; so far, so good. Then something strange happens:

*Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the land from Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property."  
(3:5)*

Oh dear, there's a catch – that *Moabite* woman!

*At this, the guardian-redeemer said, "Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it." (3:7)*

Did you notice that as long as Boaz just mentioned Naomi and her property, the other guy was willing to redeem, but when he mentioned the *Moabite* woman was part of the deal, the other guy backed out? Why do you suppose Boaz mentioned that she was a Moabite, of all things?

For an Israelite to have a gentile in their household was problematic enough, but a Moabite woman was really too much; they had experience with Moabite women in the past; these women were trouble! No way, the man was not going to redeem, even though it was his duty; Boaz could have the deal. Thus, with all of the Elders as his witnesses, Boaz acquired the right to redeem, and bought the land and Ruth from Naomi, and Ruth thus became his wife. I know that to the modern reader, this transaction sounds pretty weird, but this took place a very long time ago, and was proper and binding. The Elders agree and gave their blessing to the arrangement: Done.

Boaz was a very sharp man; he knew how to get things done in this world. He did so with wisdom and intelligence, and by the rules of the day. In the process, he did his duty to his family, to Naomi, to Ruth and to their husbands' family line, and he did it with justice for all concerned. In so doing, he provides all of us with an excellent example of what it means to be a godly man.

## ***Endings and Beginnings***

Ruth 4:13-22

After the scene that takes place in verses 1-12 of chapter four, Boaz and Ruth are married. There is not a single word in the text about their life together; other than they had a son named Obed. From what the text has told us, Ruth is humble and loyal, Boaz is kind, of high character and righteous, so we can infer that they lived happily ever after. Certainly, there is nothing to cause this inference to be brought into question. It's probably safe to infer that Naomi lived out her years in happiness as well.

The text mentions a son as the only specific about the lives of Ruth and Boaz because that son becomes a direct ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is a very big deal indeed. It places Ruth in that same lineage; a Moabite. Of course, she is not the only gentile woman in that lineage, and I suppose that we should pause to clear up any confusion resulting from this point, since ultimately this line will pass to Jesus through Mary.

The Old Testament Law states that to be a Jew, someone must be of the seed of Abraham, a quaint old-fashioned way of saying Abraham's genetic descendant. This "seed" passes from the father, thus Obed is Jewish by birth even though his mother was a gentile. The Father of Jesus was not strictly speaking a Jew; instead He was God. So how could Jesus be a Jew?

I hope you were sitting down when you read that; it is not a joke. You see, unless something happened first, Jesus would be the Son of God without being a Jew.

But something did happen.

During the captivity in Babylon, Jews began to intermarry with gentiles. After the return from captivity, many Jews chose not to return, while others returned and continued intermarrying. It seems that men were much more likely to take a gentile bride than women a gentile husband and eventually, after much controversy and confusion, the Law was changed, so that descendancy from Abraham came through mothers instead of fathers. Thus, you could only be born a Jew if your mother was Jewish. If your mother was gentile and your father was Jewish, you were considered to be a gentile, and this is so to this very day. Thus, Jesus was Jewish because Mary was Jewish.

If you read this book again carefully, there would seem to be either a lot of coincidence or a lot of luck in the story. I think the biggest one of these took place when Ruth went out to work in the fields that first day, and somehow came upon the fields of Boaz. Why didn't Naomi tell Ruth where to go? By all rights, shouldn't she have directed Ruth to the fields of the other kinsman-redeemer, the one with first right of redemption? No, somehow Ruth just got lucky and stumbled into Boaz' life!

You can be quite sure that there are no coincidences here, and no dumb luck either, for God was at work in the lives of these people. Now here's a question for everyone to ponder: Why did God choose Naomi, Ruth and Boaz to be in this story, and thus to be part of the lineage of His Son? (Hint: it's in the text)

## ***Naomi, Ruth and Boaz Have Much to Teach Us***

Looking at our adventure in the book of Ruth, it should be obvious to anyone that this story has much to teach us. I'm not going to say that the things I mention about them are an exhaustive and encyclopedic analysis, but I hope that what follows will give you a pretty good picture of the kinds of people they were.

### *Naomi*

Here is woman who went through a terrible time; she can almost be compared to Job in her affliction. First there was the famine that tore her family away from their lands and lives in Bethlehem, forcing them to move to Moab just to try and survive. She was an outsider there, not knowing the customs or the people, being a foreigner in a foreign place. Thus, she had only her family to cling to; her husband and two sons. The sons then come of marrying age and they marry foreign women, a cultural problem that their parents had to deal with, and then her husband and two sons die leaving Naomi destitute with two foreign daughters in law. In this time of trial, Naomi becomes an embittered old woman, by her own estimation, and begins making drastic decisions. She tried to do right by her daughters in law, releasing them from their obligations to her and urging them to return to their own, and one finally does so, while Ruth insists on being loyal to Naomi, and then Naomi returns to her homeland and her God and family. Upon her return home with Ruth, Naomi guides Ruth on several occasions, and even though some of her advice was risky, it turns out that Naomi was a very good judge of character and gave advice that can only be described as "harmless as a lamb and crafty as a serpent."

Naomi, while she had her low points in a life marked with tragedy and adversity, overcame that adversity by returning to her God and making very wise choices. I'd say we can learn from her example.

### *Ruth*

Whole books have been written on Ruth's character, so I'll keep it short; Ruth had the heart of a servant. She was loyal to the family of her husband, she was humble, she worked hard and without complaint, and she was submissive to her elders. In all of this, Ruth shows us what it means to deal with self, for there is no "self" on display in her story. To top it off, let us not forget the fact that Ruth made a conscious choice to follow the God of Israel. How different she was from the way we are today, and great was her reward.

### *Boaz*

Boaz was a leader of men, but he was not like many leaders of men, for Boaz was a servant-leader. Remember when, on Ruth's first day in the fields, Boaz returned from town and "greeted" his workers? Maybe you recall that he told his men not to lay a hand on Ruth. Was there any mention of an incident taking place, or of any grumbling about that? How about when Boaz went to the village gate and asked the elders to come and listen to his discussion with the other kinsman-redeemer; did they say they were too busy? Did they tell him to buzz off? No! They immediately did as he asked because they respected him, just as his workers did. Yet in everything we know of Boaz, there is no indication at all that anybody's respect was borne out of

fear, for Boaz built relationships with other men that enabled him to lead them by gaining their trust.

I once knew of a man who was working in an office in which he was quite high in the management. Other managers criticized him because he took the time to get to know his subordinates as people. He helped them solve problems and listened to their complaints and helped them work things out when necessary without yelling or being obnoxious. Other managers simply made demands of people and demanded explanations, yelling and carrying on in the belief that they needed to control everything. In a crisis, the other managers hollered and made threats to motivate their teams, but our guy would call his crew together and ask them for their help in meeting an impossible deadline. His team gave their all and always met impossible deadlines early, because they wanted to do their best for the man they respected, while the other managers' teams could never seem to come through in a pinch. Which type of manager was Boaz?

On that fateful night when Boaz awakened to find Ruth lying at his feet, how did he react? He reacted with mercy, kindness and gratitude for the opportunity to serve. That all of this must include a healthy dose of humility should go without saying...

Now dear reader, when you put the characteristics of these three people together, what do you have?

You have the type of person who is a disciple of Jesus Christ.

I would submit to you that this is why God chose to work through these three people, and why their story has resulted in their names being forever associated with the lineage of the Son of God.

## ***Some Final Thoughts***

Thinking about the story of Ruth, it's hard to come away from it without the sense that God really does work in the lives of His people. He certainly did so in ancient times, and maybe we sometimes feel like they were more "special" than we are because of this. Yet upon reflection, we should know better. The Bible is full of stories of amazing men and women of faith, and it also has many stories of men and women who were ungodly in their lives and characters, and isn't this really the same condition that we see around us today?

I would actually like to go a step further and suggest that there are more amazing men and women of faith today than there were in Bible times, since unlike those in the Old Testament, God's people in our time are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and Old Testament Israelites were not. The problem we have today is that we aren't having these people pointed out to us, and in the busy day-to-day we might not notice what is really going on around us. If nothing else, we might at least ponder the possibilities.

As for the specifics of the Ruth story, one thing is quite clear: Boaz was no ordinary man, for he was a "type" of Christ as a kinsman-redeemer. The fact that the text includes "redeemer" in it should bring this into focus for most readers. To review, a "type" is a term that comes from a manner of interpretation called "Typology"; a "typological interpretation", and is a natural element of Old Testament writing since the Old Covenant itself is a "type" of the New, a fact brought out and referred to again and again in the New Testament book of Hebrews. Ruth is a type of the redeemed, which is to say of you and me. The humility that she demonstrates over and over is the behavior that is supposed to be seen in us, and when she lay down in total submission and humility at the feet of Boaz portrays our coming to Christ in humility and submission and receiving redemption from our sins and the gift of a new life in Christ.

The result of Ruth's actions was that she was redeemed from widowhood and received a new life as the wife of Boaz, ultimately giving birth to a son in the direct lineage of the Son of God. For us, we are redeemed from sin and receive a new life in Christ, as I said, but we also join the family tree of Jesus as his brothers and sisters in the household of His Father... and our Father. While we remain on this earth, we are servants of His, but when we inherit this birthright, we have not only eternal life with Him, but that life is lived as His brother or sister in the Father's house. It is because of this significance that we can say that the story of Ruth is much more than an inspiring tale of overcoming adversity and of godly role models, for it is a significance that leads us to the very source of life itself.

I hope that you have enjoyed our little adventure through this story, and I hope that you have found it to be an adventure that is worthy of more thoughtful contemplation. May all of us walk more closely with our Lord as a result of our adventures with Him!