

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian  
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS**

**LESSON 4**

**RUTH**

**CHAPTER 4**

**INTRODUCTION**

This last chapter of Ruth brings the historical drama which began on a sad and sorrowful note to a very happy<sup>(1)</sup> and joyful finale. But the best is yet to come. The last section of the chapter<sup>(2)</sup> serves as a bridge to the books of<sup>(3)</sup> Samuel where we shall witness David, the grandson of Obed (son of Boaz<sup>(4)</sup> and Ruth), being chosen and anointed<sup>(5)</sup> as the king of all Israel by the prophet Samuel.

We recall that Elimelech brought his family to Moab hoping for a better life because there was famine in Bethlehem. However, he and his sons died in Moab leaving Naomi and the two daughters-in-law to fend for themselves. When Naomi heard that the famine in Bethlehem had ended, she returned to her hometown with her daughter-in-law, Ruth. When they arrived in Bethlehem, Naomi bitterly lamented that she had gone away "full" but had come back "empty." In the first three chapters, we saw the providential hand of the LORD working "for good to those who love Him" and do His will. Naomi was once again full of joy and hope. Her life had taken a

turn for the better and soon she might have a grandchild to continue the line of her husband.

In this chapter, Boaz successfully concluded the redemption process. The problem was amicably resolved before the ten witnessing elders of the city. It enabled Boaz to take Ruth as his wife. The LORD gave her conception and she had a son. The townfolks celebrated with them.

**OUTLINE**

The chapter can be divided into the following sections:

Transferring the rights of a kinsman-redeemer (4:1-6);

Ratification of the transfer (4:7-10);

Blessing from the Witnesses (4:11-12);

A son is born (4:13-17);

The Ancestry of David (4:18-22).

In the final analysis, we see God's wonderful work in the lives of His people. He turned Naomi's emptiness into fullness. He blessed Ruth's marriage to Boaz, and made her the great-grandmother of Israel's greatest king. He blessed Boaz with a wonderful wife and a happy marriage. Above all else, He continues His plan of salvation for mankind through the faith and obedience of a Moabitess lady during a period of spiritual decay in Israel where every man did what was right in his own eyes!

## COMMENTARY

### Transferring the rights of a kinsman-redeemer – 4:1-6

Boaz lost no time in finding out whether the nearer kinsman would redeem the late Elimelech's estate in accordance with the levitical law. He went to *the gate* of the town which was a reasonably large public area near the entrance of the city. It was where tradesmen met for business transactions, and where the leaders of the town met to adjudicate legal matters. Boaz went there to complete the process of redemption. When he saw the nearer kinsman, he called out "Ho, such a one..." (today's equivalent would be 'Hi, Mr So and So') and asked him to come and sit with him.<sup>1</sup> It is not clear why Boaz did not call him by name. Ten elders were called to be witnesses to adjudicate the case. This was necessary to render the proceedings as proper and legal.

Boaz went straight to the point. He began by stating that Naomi had come back from Moab and had sold a piece of land which formerly belonged to "our brother Elimelech" (v.3). In the presence of the town inhabitants and the ten elders, Boaz posed to the kinsman that he had the first option to redeem Elimelech's land. But if he declined to do so, Boaz would seek to redeem the land as he was the next in line. The kinsman answered right away

that he wished to redeem it (v.4). Boaz was not surprised. However, he immediately introduced the full implication of the nearer kinsman's decision. In no uncertain terms, Boaz stated that if the nearer kinsman chose to redeem the land, he had to marry Ruth, the Moabitess, the widowed wife of Mahlon, the son of Elimelech, and maintain the name of the deceased with his property as well (v.5). The redemption would make no sense without marriage. The reason is that the continuation would be lost if there were no children born of the line of Pharez! The marriage, however, would provide a son to continue this ownership in Pharez's family line.

The nearer kinsman replied that since he could not redeem the land for himself and that it would put his own estate at risk, he would abrogate his right and pass it to Boaz (v.6). It is easy to understand why the nearer kinsman changed his mind — initially he thought that the land would belong to him permanently because Naomi could not bear any more children. Buying the land on this term would be a plus for him. But when Boaz mentioned that he would be obliged to marry Ruth in order to maintain the name of Elimelech and his property, he reversed his decision at once.

The nearer kinsman was selfishly thinking in terms of profit and loss. He was not interested in the future welfare of Naomi and Ruth, or the family name of Elimelech. In fact, he became worried that the

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<sup>1</sup> The New International Version translated the phrase as "my friend" which is contrary to the original script. An accurate translation is imperative.

redemption might jeopardise his own estate. The option of redeeming the land was not attractive in light of the obligation to marry Ruth and to maintain the name of the deceased. This cleared the way for Boaz to redeem the land and marry Ruth. Boaz must have been a very happy man indeed! He knew what he wanted and he did it in a proper and legal manner.

The nearer kinsman did not realize what he had lost. The spiritual blessings that could have been his were given to Boaz. The Messianic line continues from the Moabitess, Ruth. This episode was a spiritual exercise, not an issue of material gain or loss.

#### **Ratification of the transfer – 4:7-10**

Before Boaz could exercise the right of redemption, there had to be a formal and legal transfer: the kinsman had to take off his sandal and give it to Boaz. If Ruth had been there, she would be the one to take off the kinsman's sandal, spit in his face, and rebuke him for not willing *to build up his brother's house*.<sup>2</sup> Fortunately Ruth was not there so he was spared the ordeal.

The nearer kinsman took the sandal off his foot and gave it to Boaz. He confirmed the transfer by telling

Boaz that he could redeem the land for himself (v.8). Although the "letter of the law" was partially fulfilled, it was the "spirit of the law" that was upheld.

Boaz ratified the transfer by saying to the ten adjudicating elders: "Ye are witnesses this day." This was repeated at the end of his speech (v.9). Boaz confirmed two things with regard to the transfer. The first was that he had purchased the whole estate that belonged to Elimelech, his two sons Chilion and Mahlon, and his wife Naomi. The second was that he had purchased Ruth, the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon (this is the first mention that Ruth was married to him) to be his wife, and to keep the name of the family and its inheritance so that its name would not be cut off from among his brethren (vv.9, 10).

#### **Blessing from the Witnesses – 4:11- 12**

All the inhabitants and elders who were at the town gate affirmed the transfer, saying, "We are witnesses" (v.11). There being no other contestants, Boaz now formally received the rights of a kinsman-redeemer. He gave his acceptance speech. He had fulfilled Naomi's confidence in him that he would not rest until the matter concerning the kinsman-redeemer was resolved. Boaz was motivated by lovingkindness for the family of the late Elimelech, in particular, the only two surviving members, Naomi and Ruth, who were both widows. Boaz chose to take upon himself the obligation to exercise in accordance with and obedience to

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<sup>2</sup>Deuteronomy 25:9 Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house.

the biblical law set up by God to protect the continuation of the existence of Israel. Israel was THE only nation that was given a spiritual purpose – to be the nation through whom the Messiah would ultimately come.

The people blessed Boaz and Ruth, his soon-to-be wife. First, they blessed Ruth that the LORD would make her to be like Rachel and Leah, and make Israel great. These two women had produced a great line of descendants, yea, even the house of Israel — for out of them came forth the twelve tribes of Israel. Second, they blessed Boaz that he might be famous in Ephratah (the ancient name of Bethlehem). Third, they blessed the house of Boaz and Ruth that it would be like that of Pharez, whose family was considered the most important family line within Judah. Pharez was the direct ancestor of Boaz, who was from the tribe of Judah.<sup>3</sup> This was the prayer of blessing by the Bethlehemites!

#### **A son is born – 4:13-17**

So Boaz married Ruth. The marriage was consummated. After a year, the LORD “gave her conception” and she gave birth to a son. The purpose having been achieved, Boaz and Ruth took no more verbal part in the subsequent flow of events. We learn that the LORD is the One who

give children. Without Him there will be no conception and no life. With regard to Ruth, it was significant because she did not have any children from her previous marriage.

Now the women of Bethlehem, who earlier had whispered in astonishment “Is this Naomi” when she came back to the city, blessed the LORD for her. That the LORD had not left her without a kinsman. That the kinsman might be famous, “a restorer of life” and a “nourisher of thine old age” (v.15). That her daughter-in-law, who loved her and gave birth to a son, was better for her than “seven sons” (the ideal number of every Hebrew family). The “kinsman”, “restorer of life” and “the nourisher of thine old age” that these women were referring to was not Boaz, but her grandchild. Whenever Naomi looked at her grandson, she would be reminded of her own redemption. Without a doubt, the grandchild would be a great encouragement to her because he would have inherited the qualities of both his parents, Boaz and Ruth, who displayed faith, love, kindness and loyalty. Naomi joyfully took the child and carried him in her bosom and nursed him (of course, she was not his wet-nurse). This was a great contrast to how she felt when she came back to Bethlehem-Judah from the land of Moab. The LORD was gracious and kind to her.

They named the child “Obed” (Hebrew, means “serving”). Obed grew and became the father of Jesse. Jesse

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<sup>3</sup> Genesis 46:12 And the sons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zerah: but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Pharez were Hezron and Hamul.

in turn became the father of David. In other words, Boaz and Ruth were the great grandparents of king David.

**The ancestry of David –  
4:18-22**

This last section of the book of Ruth gives the genealogy of David, who was the godliest king that Israel had ever known. Modern Israel has the blue star of David as the emblem of the nation.

Ten generations were given here although the listing is not necessarily in chronological order. The generations began with Pharez (Perez) and ended with David. Pharez was the direct son of Judah.<sup>4</sup> He too was an offspring of a “levirate” marriage.

This section (vv.18-22) legitimately establishes the genealogy of David. It serves as a bridge to the books of Samuel in which David was chosen and anointed by God through the prophet Samuel to be the king of Israel. It also shows how the LORD blessed His people through their co-operation and prayers. God’s people had shown love and kindness to one

another reflecting God’s lovingkindness. As a result the whole nation of Israel was blessed because of this family. Eventually, through David, a greater Son of David would become the Kinsman-Redeemer in keeping with God’s plan and purpose to bring hope not just to the nation of Israel but to the whole world. Centuries later in the fullness of time, the great news came to a company of “country shepherds abiding in the field (of Bethlehem!), keeping watch over their flock by night” (Luke 2:8). The angel who appeared to them said, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” His name would be called “Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). Jesus Christ is our Kinsman because “He was made in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7); and our Redeemer because He has purchased us with His Blood (Acts 20:28). The account of Ruth illustrates that salvation comes to those who turn to the LORD!

**PRACTICAL VALUE**

Someone commented that the book of Ruth mirrors the heart and mind of God. God’s dealings with Naomi, Ruth and Boaz demonstrate His grace, mercy, love and kindness towards ordinary people who love and obey Him. Naomi and Ruth were in bereavement and yet they never renounced their belief and trust in God, although Naomi had expressed that God had “dealt very bitterly” with her,

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<sup>4</sup> Genesis 38:26 And Judah acknowledged *them*, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more. 27 And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins *were* in her womb. 28 And it came to pass, when she travailed, that *the one* put out *his* hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first. 29 And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken forth? *this* breach *be* upon thee: therefore his name was called Pharez

while Ruth determinedly affirmed her faith and love for the God of Israel despite a bleak foreseeable future for herself. They had honoured God and He was pleased with them, and He worked in a wonderful and mysterious way to bring joy, security and a bright future for them. It was not by pure “luck or chance” that Ruth happened to glean in the field that belonged to Boaz, who was a kinsman. The friendship and bond which began in the field between Ruth and Boaz blossomed unexpectedly resulting in a marriage that was celebrated by the people of Bethlehem-Judah.

Naomi was old and faced a hopeless future. Ruth was young but a Moabitess despised by the Israelites. Boaz, though wealthy and influential, was in his fifties and had no wife or family. But in the end, all things worked for good for all of them because they loved God (expressed by being obedient to Him), and God led and blessed them to fulfil His purpose. And so through them we see the lovingkindness and tender mercies of God. If God had dealt with them in this way, does it not comfort us and encourage us to love, obey and serve Him? The God of Boaz, Naomi and Ruth is the only one true and living God, who is the God whom the Lord Jesus Christ came to manifest, and in whom we all believe! He is the LORD God Almighty. Let us walk blameless before Him, and He will bless us.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> 2 Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble

There is another lesson here for us to express in practical terms. We can learn from Boaz and his workers, Ruth and Naomi, and the people of Bethlehem. Boaz was a powerful and wealthy man but he was kind, generous and godly. He treated his workers in a way that glorified and honoured God. He prayerfully wished them “the LORD be with you.”! Let us similarly be kind and generous to those who are poor and in need.

His workers followed his example by prayerfully wishing him “the LORD bless you.” They were exemplary workers. They co-operated with him when he instructed them to treat Ruth, the Moabitess, kindly. They did not raise any dissenting voice that she was a Moabitess but obeyed him unquestionably, trusting the good judgment of their master. This is a good model for church leaders and members. Members should co-operate with the deliberation and decisions of their leaders unless it involves something that seriously contradicts the Word of God. This mutual trust and co-operation is essential in building a strong, united, and vibrant church.

Naomi felt that the LORD had dealt bitterly with her, and yet she did not renounce the LORD whom she believed and trusted. And when she knew that Boaz was her kinsman, she quickly acknowledged the goodness of

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themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

the LORD! And armed with this knowledge, she took full advantage of the opportunity given by the LORD. She gave Ruth valuable and specific instructions on what to do. We should all be like Naomi, and continue to hope and trust in the LORD God despite all the sufferings and sorrows that we may face. God is no debtor. He will care for His children if they do not give up on Him. How many have given up on Him and yet expect Him to bless them?

Ruth was humble, sincere and resolute in her belief in the LORD God. She was willing to do the back-breaking work of gleaning the field. Her demeanour was one of courtesy and humility towards the other workers and Boaz. She obeyed Naomi, her mother-in-law, because her suggestion was in compliance with the levirate law. Indeed this is a testimony of the unseen providential hand of God working in the lives of Ruth and Boaz. We learn that character traits like those of Ruth build strength and fortitude. And when we are in God's will, we are confident that He will protect and preserve us.

The inhabitants of Bethlehem-Judah were typical of people in general. One moment they would criticise and the next moment they would applaud. They whispered amongst themselves in disbelief when Naomi came back to Bethlehem—"Is this Naomi?" They should have organized a "Help Naomi" action group but they did not. After that we hear

nothing of them. Then when Naomi was blessed with the birth of a grandson, Obed, they praised the LORD for her. They were correct with regards to their observation and praise. But they were not consistent in their attitude towards others. They looked down on those who needed help and looked up to those who were doing well. Let us not be like them but instead sought to treat others the same in our heart and mind whatever the circumstances.

Finally, we must not be like the nearer kinsman who had no consideration for the plight of Naomi and Ruth. He was only motivated by dollars and cents. Rather we should be like Boaz. If we reflect the character of God by being kind, sincere, honest, true and caring, God will recompense us in many varied ways. If God did it for Boaz, He would do the same for us.  
AMEN

**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION  
QUESTIONS**

**Daily Readings**

**MONDAY:** Ruth 4:1-12; 1 Corinthians 14:40.

**TUESDAY:** Ruth 4:13-22; Psalm 106:1-5.

**WEDNESDAY:** Ruth 4:1-22;

**THURSDAY:** Ruth 4:13-22;

**FRIDAY:** Ruth 4:13-22.

**Analysis:**

Text	Practical Value
Ruth 4:1-6	
Ruth 4:7-10	
Ruth 4:11-12	
Ruth 4:13-17	

Ruth 4:18-22	
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**Discussion Questions**

1. Why did Boaz go to the gate of Bethlehem to resolve the matter at hand (vv. 1-3)?

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2. Why did Boaz ask ten elders of the city to sit with him and his unnamed kinsman (vv. 2-11)?

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3. What would you write as a character reference for Naomi, Ruth and Boaz (vv. 1-16)?

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4. What was the significance of the sandal exchange? What did the unnamed kinsman do (vv. 7-8)? What is its equivalent, if any, in today's context?

7. What personal sacrifices was Boaz willing to make to fulfil the law of the levirate marriage (vv. 1-13)?

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5. What was the reaction of the women of Bethlehem toward Naomi when Ruth bore a son (vv. 14-16)?

8. How were the people's blessing on Boaz and Ruth fulfilled (vv. 11-22)?

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6. What was the name of the son of Boaz and Ruth? Who was his son? Who was his grandson (vv. 17-22)? What do we learn about God?

9. The nearer kinsman missed out on the spiritual blessing because he saw only the physical instead of the spiritual picture. Is this true of believers too? Please cite an example in your own life.

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can Boaz's example be followed in church life (vv. 1-6)?

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10. Why did the nearer kinsman withdraw his right to redeem Elimelech's property (vv. 1-10)?

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13. In what way is the Gospel of salvation typified in the book of Ruth?

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11. In what ways might the child Obed have been "a restorer of life" and a "nourisher of old age" for Naomi (vv. 15-17)?

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14. What has the book of Ruth taught you about deepening your relationship with the LORD?

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12. How much importance do we attach to acting honourably when something is important to us? How

