**Read These Bible Passages**:

Ruth 3:1-13

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**INTRODUCTION**:

Sit back, put your feet up, and grab a cup of your favorite choice of hot coffee because today you are in for a real mouthwatering treat as we conclude this part of our quick tour in one of the two books in the whole bible that is named after a woman. The little book of Ruth, the exposition of which usually follows that of the book of Judges, consists of only eighty-five verses. However, do not be quick to write off this petite novel. These four chapters are jam-packed with wisdom, devotion, heroism, dedicated faith, redemption, steadfast loyalty, unconditional love, and the fingerprints of Jesus smother this book from beginning to end.

Throughout Jewish tradition we are told that the anonymous author who penned this redeeming love story was assumed to be Samuel. Whoever the author is, he wastes no time on fluff and cuts straight to an explosive story about redemption, whose main characters include an Israelite named Naomi (meaning *‘my pleasant one’*), an unexpected Moabitess named Ruth (meaning ‘*friend*’), and a redeeming relative named Boaz (meaning ‘*in him is strength’*) who also resembles Christ (the true Redeeming Relative).

**REVIEW:**

Last Sunday we were captivated and drawn in by the beginning of this great adventure and only one week later we will now be delivered from our suspense as we come to a close.

As the beginning pages of Ruth unfolded last week, the author narrows in his focus on a Jewish family who had left Bethlehem of Judah because of famine and traveled down the yellow brick road to the southeast of the Dead Sea, to the land of Moab. Elimelech and Naomi are the proud parents of two sons named Mahlon (married to Ruth) and Kilion (married to Orpah- and no we are not talking about Oprah Winfrey folks).

This was a mistake on Elimelech’s part to remove his family from the Promised Land (meaning fruitfulness) and immigrate to Moab, the land of pagans and false gods. The Moabite bloodline traces all the way back to the horrific story of Lot and his daughters in Genesis 19:30-38. After the older daughter rapes her father Lot, she gives birth to an illegitimate child named Moab; and you guessed it, Moab is the father of this generation of Moabites. They are not off to a good start, are they?

We also hear from God as He explains in Deuteronomy 23:3-6 His anger against the Moabites and His instruction for the Israelites not to allow the Moabites into the assembly of the Lord. So my question here is to Elimelech. Where were you in that part of Old Testament history class? Taking a nap? Regardless, that mistake not only cost him his life but God also took the life of Naomi’s two sons ten years after their father died. As Naomi, the widower, makes a smart decision to strap on her sandals and attempt to walk back to Jerusalem where she belongs, she is most likely dreading the estimated ten day hike (30-60 miles in distance).

She urges Ruth and Orpah to leave her side and return to their homeland of Moab. For me, this part stirs up judgment against this Israelite woman because Naomi, being a believer in the one true God,

is urging both of her daughters-in-law to go back to their region and worship the false gods of Moab. Where was Naomi’s desire to evangelize to her family and encourage them to follow the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Maybe she was too concerned about how the Jewish people would receive her after ten years of being gone and then she shows up with two Moabite women?

Nonetheless, Orpah kisses Naomi goodbye and when the dust settles all that is left standing is Ruth. She digs in her heels and with boldness tells her mother-in-law, “NO!” Ruth pours out her heart and tells Naomi, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay” (1:16). Never could Ruth have imagined that thirty two hundred years later there

would be a songwriter named Chris Tomlin and he would quote her exact words for millions to hear in a song titled “I Will Follow.” This phenomenon reminds me of **1 Corinthians 2:9**- “*No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind can conceive what the Lord will do for those who love Him*.”

When Ruth arrives with Naomi in Jerusalem just as the barley harvest was beginning, they quickly decide for Ruth to glean in the fields behind the harvesters. Under the law, Israelites were not allowed to strip the fields clean when harvesting. Instead they were to leave some of the grain as gleanings for the needy, for strangers, for the fatherless, and for widows (Lev. 19:9; 23:22; Deut. 24:19). God leads Ruth to the fields of Boaz, so she may glean. Boaz takes notice of her and treats her kindly. Last week we end the class with Ruth telling Naomi whose fields she worked in and the extra barley she had gathered because of Boaz’s kindness. She had gleaned the amount of an ephah, which is about 32 liters worth. Naomi speaks out loud to her beloved daughter-in-law with great joy and brings attention to the fact that Boaz is their “kinsman-redeemer” (2:20).

 **Focus on This Theme**:

 All throughout history we are faced with tales of redemption. If you look closely they are everywhere for the seeker to gaze upon with pure admiration. Whether we find these true-life stories from the pages of King James, or from biographies perfectly captured and edited for the viewer to witness on the Oprah Winfrey network, hopefully you see it in your own story of redemption that is staring you square in between your eyes as it plays out in your own life. We have all heard or experienced redemption to a certain degree. Yet no account can even come close to the true redemptive work that was completed on the cross by Jesus Christ for all who have chosen to believe. Today we will explore the story of when Boaz redeems Ruth and compare it with other stories of redemption. As we study together on this day, ask yourself one question… ***Have you been redeemed***?

**BIBLE PASSAGE # 1**

**Ruth 3:1-13**

 **3**One day Ruth’s mother-in-law Naomi said to her, “My daughter, I must find a home[[a](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth+3%3A1-13%2CRuth+4%3A13-22%2CLuke+6%3A17-26&version=NIV#fen-NIV-7174a)] for you, where you will be well provided for. 2Now Boaz, with whose women you have worked, is a relative of ours. Tonight he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. 3Wash, 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. 4When 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.”

5“I will do whatever you say,” Ruth answered. 6So she went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law told her to do.

7When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down. 8In the middle of the night something startled the man; he turned—and there was a woman lying at his feet!

9“Who are you?” he asked.

“I am your servant Ruth,” she said. “Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer[[b](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth+3%3A1-13%2CRuth+4%3A13-22%2CLuke+6%3A17-26&version=NIV#fen-NIV-7182b)] of our family.”

10“The Lord bless you, my daughter,” he replied. “This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. 11And now, my daughter, don’t be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All the people of my town know that you are a woman of noble character. 12Although it is true that I am a guardian-redeemer of our family, there is another who is more closely related than I. 13Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to do his duty as your guardian-redeemer, good; let him redeem you. But if he is not willing, as surely as the Lord lives I will do it. Lie here until morning.”

**COMMENTARY:**

 Talk about faith! Ruth, being completely unaware of the Jewish customs relied on her mother-in-law to point her in the direction of redemption by suggesting what Ruth probably considered a silly request. Let’s not forget that this counsel is coming from a woman who only twenty five verses earlier, declared for all people to stop calling her Naomi and instead call her “Bitter” (1:20).

How would you feel about taking life-changing advice from this kind of person? I mean let’s face it, judging on how Naomi’s life has ended up, I do not know if I would be so quick to want to follow in her footsteps. Yet Ruth made the right choice and did just as “Bitter” requested. Since Ruth was a stranger to the Israelite customs, she had to put all her trust in Naomi and be precise in the directions she was given. Ruth would now prepare herself to go to where no woman was allowed to go… the threshing floor!

Before we can move on, a question may arise: What is a kinsman-redeemer? The definition of kinsman is “nearest male blood relative.” If anyone from poverty was unable to redeem their inheritance, it was the duty of the kinsman to redeem it. The Hebrew word for kinsman is “goel” (go’el). Redeemer is defined as “one charged with the duty of restoring the rights of another and avenging his wrongs.” The Hebrew word for redeemer is also “goel” (go’el). In biblical times, these words were interchangeable. If a man was the redeemer of a family, he must have been a kinsman. If he was a kinsman, then it followed that he was a redeemer for the family. Back in Ruth’s day, the kinsman redeemer avenged deaths, claimed inheritances for poor family members, and married the widow of a dead male relative. He played a role similar to the one of Jesus Christ.

In **Ezekiel 16:8** the Lord speaks from His heart about His redeeming love for His first beloved, the Israelites. He says,

“*Later I passed by, and when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love,* ***I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your naked body****. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign Lord, and you became mine.”*

I love this verse! Our God is in the business of redeeming people and this verse in Ezekiel is one of many accounts in the bible that prove it. This scripture gives us a tiny peek into the love affair God has with His people. I bring this verse in Ezekiel to your attention because this is exactly what Ruth asks her kinsmen-redeemer to do at the threshing floor. In Ruth 3:9, Ruth says to Boaz,

“Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer[[b](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth+3%3A1-13%2CRuth+4%3A13-22%2CLuke+6%3A17-26&version=NIV#fen-NIV-7182b)] of our family.”

This practice is exactly what the Lord did to redeem the Israelites to Himself in Ezekiel. How perfect!

All of a sudden Naomi is “redeeming” herself from a woman who called herself “Bitter!” She was spot on in her advice to Ruth! By the way, how many times in the bible do you witness a woman asking a man to marry her, like Ruth just did? This is one bold lady!

**ILLUSTRATION:**

Teachers, for this illustration you will need to bring in your laptop, i-pad, or use church equipment to play a video of an amazing testimony of Josh Hamilton, an American professional baseball player. Josh is a member of the Texas Rangers (2008–present); he also played for the Cincinnati Reds (2007). He is a five-time MLB All-Star and won the American League Most Valuable Player in 2010. Josh has an incredible story of redemption as he battled drug addiction in his own life. Play this video clip for your class:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jI9NrNHQIP0>

**LIFE APPLICATION**:

 Like Josh Hamilton, have you ever had sin creep into your life and then allowed it to destroy the core of who you are and all you are striving to be? Has it ever been so bad, that the only way to get out is to look UP! I am not sure where you are in this season, or how you wound up in the very place you sit today. Yet one thing I know from experience is the only redemption we are looking for comes from the gift of Jesus Christ. “Whoever confesses with their mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and BELIEVES in their heart that God raised Him from the dead, they will be saved!” (Romans 10:9).

**BIBLE PASSAGE # 2**

**Ruth 4:1-13**

4 Meanwhile Boaz went up to the town gate and sat down there just as the guardian-redeemer[[a](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth+4%3A1-13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-7192a)] he had mentioned came along. Boaz said, “Come over here, my friend, and sit down.” So he went over and sat down.

2Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said, “Sit here,” and they did so. 3Then he said to the guardian-redeemer, “Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. 4I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of these seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you[[b](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth+4%3A1-13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-7195b)] will not, tell me, so I will know. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line.”

“I will redeem it,” he said.

5Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the land from Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the[[c](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth+4%3A1-13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-7196c)] dead man’s widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property.”

6At 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.”

7(In earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel.)

8So the guardian-redeemer said to Boaz, “Buy it yourself.” And he removed his sandal.

9Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, “Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Kilion and Mahlon. 10I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon’s widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses! ”

11Then the elders and all the people at the gate said, “We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel. May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. 12Through the offspring the Lord gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.”

13So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.

 **COMMENTARY:**

 When I first read this passage the first thing that crossed my mind was, “Thank the good Lord that times have changed and when I go to a title company to close on my mortgage I do not have to seal the deal by giving up my beloved shoe.” I mean for crying out loud they already sucked my pockets dry and now I have to give up one of my diamond encrusted Jimmy Choo stilettos? In that case, I would gladly wear my Wal-Mart flip flops to closing (you ladies know what I am talking about!)

We learn something about Boaz in this passage; he is a pretty clever, yet sneaky guy. Notice how he spines the story to the original kinsman-redeemer who stands before him along with the ten elders. Boaz wants to fulfill Ruth’s request to marry her and he knows that the only proper way to inherit Naomi’s daughter and her real-estate, would be to convince the other guy to back out. So Boaz decides to entice him by dangling a raw, juicy sirloin in front of this hungry vulture and right as he opens his mouth to satisfy his greed, Boaz yanks the steak back and feeds him with the whole truth. Pay close attention to the way Boaz refers to Ruth in 4:5. He does not just call her by name alone; instead he brands her name with a stigma. By referring to her as Ruth the Moabite, Boaz is purposely creating a bitter taste in the mouth of this relative; and guess what? It works! Boaz moves forward with his covenant with Ruth and God blesses them with a baby boy named Obed. Only in a story of redemption can someone go from being discriminated against one day, to being elevated and compared with the two Matriarchs of Israel (Rachel and Leah 4:11) by the next day!

**COMPAIRING OTHER BIBLE STORIES**:

Open your bibles to **Hosea 1:2-3** and feast your eyes on a redeeming love story that reaches to the core of your heart and leaves you shaking your head in disbelief.

“*When the Lord began to speak through Hosea, the Lord said to him, “Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land (Israel) is guilty of unfaithfulness to the Lord.” So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son*.”

Could you imagine if the Lord asked you to do that? Would you marry a prostitute in obedience to God? Or would you just chalk it up to the fact that you must have not heard from Jehovah Jireh correctly?

Well Hosea was a man after God’s own heart. He was faithful to the Lord and acknowledged Him in all he did. Only because of God’s specific request, Hosea redeemed a prostitute and bought her out of slavery, for a price. After they married, Gomer (the harlot) bore Hosea two sons and one daughter.

Hold onto your seats as scripture reveals what happened next, in this sticky love saga, captured for the reader in **Hosea 3:1-3**

*“The Lord said to me, “Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes. ”*

*2So I bought her for fifteen shekels[*[*a*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea%203:%201-3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22131a)*] of silver and about a homer and a lethek[*[*b*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hosea%203:%201-3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22131b)*] of barley. 3Then I told her, “You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will behave the same way toward you*.”

This scripture communicates to the audience that after Gomer had been redeemed by Hosea and bought out of slavery and handed a “get-out-of-jail-free-card,” she still desired to go back into slavery (prostitution). Does this sound familiar? Do you remember in Numbers 14:1-4 the Israelites begged God to send them back to Egypt so they could live in slavery instead of walking through the desert to get to their Promised Land? If we were honest with ourselves, I believe we could admit times in our own life that we would rather crawl back to our own sin instead of doing the work for complete restoration?

**ILLUSTRATION:**

Every four years our television sets are graced with the most talented athletes in the world. Only pure hard work, talent and determination is what allows them the honor to join the ranks of other previous Olympians. This is one achievement in life that is gained only by putting in the full effort and cannot be obtained because you know someone or you bought your way in. Before I continue with an illustration, here are a few trivia questions you can ask your class about the Olympics:

1. What year did the first Olympics take place? Olympics started in 776 BC in Olympia, Greece and it went on until 393 AD. The games were revived in 1896.
2. How many times has London hosted the modern games? 3 times (1908, 1948, 2012)
3. How many athletes competed this year? 10,500
4. What was the total dollar amount London spent on the 2012 Olympics? 14.46 Billion
5. How many tickets were sold this year? Over 7 million
6. How many medals were produced for the 2012 games? 4,700 (The value of the materials in the gold medal is about $644, the silver about $330, and the bronze about $4.71 on the current market)
7. Where will the 2016 games be held? Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

 My most treasured sport to watch is hands down the women’s gymnastics. My husband and I would curl up on the couch and bite our nails as the “Fab Five” would twirl and spin, jump and leap, tumble and summersault across our high definition screen. When team USA lunged her body to the right or left, I would jolt in the same direction, in fear they would make a dreaded mistake. Our favorite girl was also the world’s favorite gymnast, seventeen year old Jordyn Wieber! She defied all the odds with her raw talent and captivated every heart in America.

We were stunned as we watched the reigning world champion display her uncontrollable emotions for the numerous television crews recording her every move. Jordyn fell from the number one all-around qualification spot, to a position that eliminated her from competing in this event. In the blink of an eye, she fell from the judge’s grace. The next day Jordyn entered the arena to compete; she had wiped away her tears and put her best foot forward. She landed every one of her routines and had Russia shaking in their leotards.

The “Fab Five” moved all the way up to the tip top of the podium and wrapped themselves in gold! Jordyn could finally smell the sweet aroma of redemption in the air!

**LIFE APPLICATION**:

 Where in your own life have you experienced redemption? Have you witnessed it in your marriage or through a turn of events in your job? Has someone personally redeemed you like Boaz and Ruth or Hosea and Gomer? Or have you received it by the grace of God? The day I turned to Christ and asked Him to be my savior, I was redeemed. I was a new creation; the old had gone and the new had come. I had been set free and all of this is from God, who reconciles us to Himself through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5).

How appropriate of a time to drink in the lyrics to one of my most favorite Gospel songs ever written:

The Lord has promised good to me...

His word my hope secures.

He will my shield and portion be...

as long as life endures.

When we've been here ten thousand years...

bright shining as the sun.

We've no less days to sing God's praise...

then when we've first begun.

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,

That saved a wretch like me....

I once was lost but now am found,

Was blind, but now, I see.

**CONCLUSION**:

 The truest form of redemption is through the work of Jesus Christ. Every other story is second class to the redeeming love story of our Savior! 1Peter 1:18 says, “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.” I came up with an acronym for what is promised when we are redeemed by the blood of Christ:

Redemption

Unlocks

The

Holy Spirit

 When we are redeemed by Christ, we are promised to receive a helper, comforter, the Spirit of God (Act 1:8). The Holy Spirit comes to take up residency in our hearts and He will always be there to guide and help us! What better way to end this lesson on redemption than to close with an excellent illustration of what God’s grace looks like to those who are stuck in a pit and have nowhere to look but up! Are you ready to receive His help? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pUUVdwpaxA>