

Note from Kathy

No part of Ruth's story is sweeter than the kinsman-redeemer. Ruth is a foreigner, a mere servant with nothing to offer on her own, and yet, Boaz looks on her with compassion. This story is a beautiful picture of our kinsman-redeemer, Jesus, our savior and redeemer. He paid the price in full and the invitation is open to all. The invitation is extended over and over throughout God's word all the way from Genesis to Revelation. In Revelation 22:17, again we read the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" If you are reading this, the Holy Spirit is confirming the invitation is open. Come and experience the love and care of our Redeemer.

Observation

Before you begin this lesson, pray, asking your heavenly Father to show you what he wants you to understand and apply to your life from this chapter of Ruth.

1. As we begin this chapter the harvest was over and the winnowing had begun. What was Naomi's concern?
2. Who did Naomi consider a suitable husband for her precious daughter-in-law Ruth?
3. Notice the plan Naomi presented to Ruth beginning in Ruth 3:3. List the steps below.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
4. What was Ruth's response to this plan?
5. How well did Ruth carry out Naomi's instructions?
6. Winnowing was often done in the evening when there was more likely to be a gentle breeze. To winnow barley they would take the bundles and thresh them to loosen the grains, then with a large fork, similar to a pitchfork, they would toss the stalks in the air and the breeze would blow away the chaff and the heavier grain would simply fall into a pile. This was very labor-intensive work. Boaz would have eaten late in the evening and probably went to sleep later than usual. Notice Ruth waits until he is asleep, and then what did she do? Why do you suppose she did this? (If you are like me, you are smiling as you think about this scene.)

7. Boaz awoke with cold feet and reached for his covers only to find someone lying at his feet. This would have been a surprise, since he had gone to the far end of the grain pile away from everyone to sleep. What pleasant surprise did he receive?
8. Notice the humility in her words. How did Ruth describe herself?
9. What did she ask Boaz to do?
10. What fact did she bring to his attention? (Oh, yes, ladies this is such a beautiful love story!!)
11. Did Boaz understand what she was saying to him?
12. Notice his continued protection. It was the middle of the night. If he had sent her home she might have met with some kind of trouble. He instructed her to wait until just before dawn to go home. What did he give Ruth as a gift to take to Naomi?
13. I love verse 3:18. Naomi was older and wiser about men. She was not at all concerned about Boaz handling this matter. What did she tell Ruth?

Ruth 3:18

"Wait my daughter, until you find out what happens. For the man will not rest until the matter is settled today."

Application

1. Things have been going well for Ruth and Naomi during their first couple of months back in Israel. Ruth has gone to glean each day, and with Boaz's help, her work was much more prosperous than the average gleaner. But now it is winnowing time. It is time to think about what they will do when the harvest season is over. There were only so many ways a woman could earn money in that day. Remember, it is the time of the Judges, when everyone did what seemed right in their own eyes. What are some of the ways an unmarried woman could have earned money?
2. Naomi understands very well the Israelite customs, and she knows the heart of Boaz, her relative. There is nothing improper here. It is a beautiful picture of love and protection.

Have you ever taken someone into your heart and home so they would experience feeling loved and protected? Perhaps it was an aging parent or a relative or friend going through a difficult time, or

a foster child who needed a home. There are many who are scared and lonely and in need of protection. If presented with the opportunity, would you spread your garment of protection over someone else? Have you extended this love and protection to someone else? Briefly state the details.

Ruth 4:10

"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."

- Because Boaz was so much older than Ruth, he would need to know that this was something she wanted. How did he view her request? Look at verse 10. There is an old saying, "kindness breeds kindness." What do you think that means? Are you busy breeding kindness to those around you? Let's practice showing kindness this week. Then share in our small group any kindness that came back our way.

Ruth 4:11-13

"And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character. Although it is true that I am near of kin, there is a kinsman-redeemer nearer than I. Stay here for the night, and in the morning, if he wants to redeem, good; let him redeem. But if he is not willing, as surely as the LORD lives I will do it. Lie here until morning."

- Boaz was not the nearest relative to Ruth. There was another man who would have first right of refusal in the matter of buying Elimelech's property and marrying Ruth. Boaz is a smart man. I can almost hear the wheels turning in his head, as he thinks how he will present this matter in order to secure the result he wants. He assured her, she would be redeemed, either by the nearer kin or him (Ruth 4:11-12). This was not a possibility that Ruth had entertained. She had come to propose to Boaz. Do you think this might have been a concern for her when she heard that there was someone else, someone she did not even know who might become her husband? How do you handle it when you present a plan that you believe would be perfect, and then facts come to light that might change your perfect plan? How do you face obstacles that pop up? Do you fuss and fret, or can you, like Ruth, lie quietly until morning and allow God to work out the details?
- Ruth is an amazing woman. She has shown herself to be a woman of great faith and love. Fill in the chart below.

Examples of Ruth showing faith.	Examples of Ruth showing love.

- Ruth arrived home and presented Naomi with Boaz's gift, then she told her all the details of her evening and night on the threshing floor. She may have been a bit saddened by the thought that there was another relative that she did not even know who could become her husband. Notice Naomi's calm advice. Do you think Naomi knows a bit more about men than Ruth? Are you the type of person who brings calm to a situation like Naomi? Are you good at helping others wait and believe that God has their best interest at heart? When we have done all we can what is the next right step?

Psalm 32:8

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye upon you."

Proverbs 16:3

"Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established."

- Have you been amazed at God's care and provision for Naomi and Ruth? God has shown them great favor by leading Ruth to the fields owned by Boaz. Do you believe God enjoys caring for and leading you as he did these women? Read Psalm 32:8 and Proverbs 16:3; God longs to be the source of counsel for his children.
- Let's look at some of the character qualities we admire in the people we have been studying. If you cannot think of a quality you admire for one of the characters just move onto the next.

Person	Character quality I admire
Elimelech	
Naomi	
Mahlon	
Chilion	
Ruth	
Orpah	
Boaz	

Psalms 91:2-4

*"I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'
³Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. ⁴He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart."*

- What needs do you have today that you could talk to God about? Are you in need of provisions like Ruth and Naomi? Have you felt like you have been off in a distant land for a while and lost everything? Are you experiencing a lack of security?

Read Psalm 91:2-4 the next time you need to lift yourself up and put your trust in the only one who is worthy. He will save you, cover you, and protect you. He is your only true refuge.

10. This is a wonderful time to stop and consider all we know about our God. Fill in the chart below. Think of an attribute of God that you have personally experienced.

God is...	God does...
Faithful	When awakened by worry I called out to God and was given his peace

11. How are you different, better, for your time studying Ruth?

12. Are you challenged to love others in a new way? Think of one way you will express your faith in God and your love for him by caring for someone else this week.

