

**NOTES FROM TIM GAMSTON'S SERMON- Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2024 am**  
**TITLE: "Our history in Christ" TEXT: Ruth 4 verses 13-22**  
**SERIES: "There is a redeemer Pt 5 Scripture references from the ESV**

*Ruth 4:13-22 So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son. <sup>14</sup> Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! <sup>15</sup> He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him." <sup>16</sup> Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. <sup>17</sup> And the women of the neighbourhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.*

*<sup>18</sup> Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez fathered Hezron, <sup>19</sup> Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab, <sup>20</sup> Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, <sup>21</sup> Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed, <sup>22</sup> Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David*

Many people like to research their family history. Maybe you have taken time to sit with grandparents and listen as they tell you about their parents and grandparents.

**They tell you about their history which is also your history.**

Imagine if you could trace your family history back thousands of years! If you are a believer in Christ, you can. Old Testament narratives like the book of Ruth are our family history too.

In this last chapter, we have a picture of community life in an ancient world. A man and a woman fall in love. They publicly declare their love in marriage, and then cement their marriage through enjoying sexual, emotional and spiritual intimacy. They bring their firstborn, a son, into the world, all the while surrounded by a community who witness their marriage and rejoice with them in the birth of their child.

It is the perfect happy ending to a story that began with tragedy because of an unwise decision. It is not, however, the main point of the narrative. We are to look behind the

scenes to see how God is providentially and sovereignly at work to grow his covenant family and to bring into the world the one who would redeem us from our sin:

### **The Lord Jesus Christ,**

God had promised to send a redeemer back at the beginning of time because our first parents, Adam and Eve, had rebelled against him, bringing the curse of sin and death on all humanity.

**The narrative of Ruth, Boaz and Naomi is one chapter in the narrative of the human history of Jesus.**

The genealogy above (v18ff) is picked up in **Matthew ch1**, where the family tree of Jesus is traced back through David, Obed, Ruth and Boaz and then even further back to Isaac and Abraham. If you are united to Christ by faith, then this history in Ruth is also your history.

**Through Christ you are united to these people.**

**They are members of God's covenant people and we, by faith in Jesus Christ, are members of the same covenant family.**

The Old Testament is so important because it not only forms the history of our Redeemer Jesus, but also because the people in it form our history as members of the same family of faith. God is at work in Ruth's story, bringing about marriage, family and community. This foreshadows what he is doing in building his eternal family of faith through Christ.

**We belong to that family as the bride of Christ, the family of Christ and the church of Christ**

Human marriage, family and community all get their meaning from God's covenant with his people, so all three matter and that has implications, not just in the ancient world of Ruth's story, but also for us today.

**1. Marriage matters. (v13).** The order of events is important. Boaz and Ruth marry and it is only after this public commitment of marriage that they have sex, and then the Lord enables Ruth to conceive so that she gives birth to a son. That is God's order.

Right from the beginning of time, we can see how God created Eve from Adam's side, and brought them together in the first marriage, within which they enjoyed sexual intimacy. Sexual union is God's good gift to a man and a woman within the confines of

heterosexual marriage, creating and deepening the lifelong, one flesh union between husband and wife. This gift has been undermined in two ways: we have sex outside marriage, or, within marriage, we deprive our spouse of sex.

We live in a culture where marriage is not valued, treating it as something that is old-fashioned and unnecessary in a modern world. We have made it something that is optional for couples who want to live together, and redefined it to mean something that God never intended.

In so doing, we have lost the beauty and the underlying meaning of human marriage, which points to the covenant relationship that exists between Christ and his church. Paul speaks of this in **Ephesians 5:22-32: Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.** <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> so that he might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. <sup>28</sup> In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup> "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." <sup>32</sup> This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

Here is the greatest reason for those who are married to work at their marriages.

- In Christ, the eternal God has entered into a covenant relationship with his people, and those marriages derive their significance from this intimate covenant relationship between Christ and his church
- The church enjoys spiritual intimacy with Christ and therefore husbands and wives are to enjoy sexual, emotional and spiritual intimacy with each other.

Healthy marriages are a showcase to display the beauty of Christ's relationship with his church to both the physical and spiritual world. That will only happen when both husband and wife are in relationship with Christ.

- As a husband looks to Christ, so Christ will enable him to sacrificially love his wife because he will be filled with Christ who sacrificially loved the church, dying to secure her salvation.
- As a wife looks to Christ, so Christ will enable her to submit to her husband because she will be filled with Christ who submitted to his Father, even to death on a cross.

**Christ will be glorified in our marriages as we look to him to enable us to model our marriages on his covenant relationship with his church.**

**2. Family matters (v13).** Although this is a story of human activity, behind it is the unseen hand of a sovereign God who is working out his purpose to redeem Ruth and Naomi from shame and poverty and to redeem us through his son, the Lord Jesus Christ. **v13** shows us clearly that God oversaw the conception, formation and birth of Obed. The writer wants us to know that this is not just a function of biology.

**This child was a gift of God.**

The same is true for every human being conceived in the womb. David, Obed's grandson, offered these words of praise:

**O Lord... you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.**

**<sup>14</sup> I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:13-14).**

- Every child conceived in the womb of a woman is a gift given by God, is formed by God and bears God's image.

That is why Christians are to be pro-life and to grieve the death of the 73 million babies aborted every year, in the same way that we grieve for people who have had life and then die.

- Every murder, whether in the womb or out of it, is an attack on the image of God who gives life

God sovereignly enabled Ruth to conceive and she gave birth to Obed. His name means servant, and he is significant, not only to Ruth and Naomi, but also for us. (**vv14-15**) The women praise God for providing Naomi with a redeemer who could ensure she would keep her land in Israel, and keep her dead husband's name alive.

- We might easily assume the redeemer is Boaz, but it is Ruth who has given birth to Naomi's redeemer.

### Naomi's redeemer is Obed

It is through him that Naomi's inclusion among God's covenant people has been restored. Her future has been secured through Obed, but he points forward to:

### our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ

Our Redeemer would also be born in Bethlehem, albeit around 1000 years later. He would ensure our inclusion among God's covenant people and secure our future by giving us eternal life in God's holy presence. The conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary is described in Luke's Gospel (1:31-35): **And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.** <sup>32</sup> **He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,** <sup>33</sup> **and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.** <sup>34</sup> **And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"** <sup>35</sup> **And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.**

- The wonder of Jesus is that he is both Son of God and Son of Man
- The eternal Son of God clothes himself in our human flesh in order **to redeem us to God**, so that we come into his family as his children.

Even more astonishingly, **Hebrews 2:10—17** tells us this:

<sup>10</sup> **For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.** <sup>11</sup> **For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,** <sup>12</sup> **saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise."** <sup>13</sup> **And again, "I will put my trust in him."** **And again, "Behold, I and the children God has given me."** <sup>14</sup> **Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,** <sup>15</sup> **and deliver all those who through**

fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. <sup>16</sup> For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. <sup>17</sup> Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

- Take a moment to consider, and be amazed, that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God clothed himself in our flesh and became our elder brother.

As our elder brother he willingly sacrificed himself so that the wrath of God could be removed from us, and we could come into God's family as his adopted children.

- Every family on earth is to reflect this eternal family of God
- By God's grace and with the help of Christ, we are to seek to govern our family in a way that will display the beauty of this eternal family of God.

You may not be married or have children, but, because marriage and family both matter in the work God is doing:

**Be encouraged that, if you are a believer in Christ, you belong to a better family.**

**3. Church matters.** Every other marriage and family is a pale reflection of the eternal marriage of Christ to his church and the eternal family in which Christ is our elder brother.

The whole community comes to celebrate with Ruth, Naomi and Boaz. We see this in 4:11-12: **Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem, <sup>12</sup> and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the Lord will give you by this young woman."** This communal celebration happens again in vv14-17.

Church is not a club that you attend. It is a family to which you belong. Just as Israel were in covenant community, so Christians are to be in a covenant community, publicly committing themselves to one another. At BBC, this commitment is called membership and it is vitally important. We enter into covenant life together, having promised to love and serve one another. We celebrate life events together by giving glory to God for his goodness. We support one another by worshipping together, through teaching and by

praying for one another. Though we are members of the global church, as covenant members of this local church, we are to show the beauty of God's covenant family to those around us.

**We do all this in anticipation of the day when Jesus returns to the earth for his bride, the church**

Do you have the assurance that:

- You are a member of the bride of Christ?
- Jesus is your elder brother who died for you to redeem you from all sin?
- You are a member of Christ's true church?

If not then, as Ruth, though an outsider to Israel, did, you simply need to place yourself under the care of God's redeemer. This family is open to **all** who, **by faith**, will entrust themselves to Christ. When we come into this family, we are under the sovereign care of:

- Our Heavenly Father who provides for us
- Christ Jesus, our husband who has committed himself to love us forever, and our brother who has laid down his life for us and leads us in praise.

We can say, (with J I Packer):

I am a child of God.  
God is my Father;  
heaven is my home;  
every day is one day nearer.  
My Saviour is my brother;  
[and] every Christian is my brother too.