

Joke: Three friends, a turtle, a mole and a bear are drafted and have to join the army.

But neither of them want to go, so they need to provide medical proof why they can't join.

"It's easy for me", says the turtle "I am slow." He enters the examination room and when he comes out, he happily tells his friend that he is in fact too slow.

"Well", says the mole next, "I am literally blind. How would they want me?" And he's right. He comes out a few minutes later and hugs his friends that he doesn't have to join the army because they don't need a blind mole.

"Ok guys", says the bear terrified. "Let's face it. I am one of the biggest and most dangerous animals. I am the perfect soldier."

"I have an idea", says the turtle slowly, "the most dangerous part of you are your teeth. Without your teeth you are not really that dangerous. So if we just smash your teeth they won't want you!"

Reluctantly the bear agrees and they start smashing the bears teeth.

Without teeth the bear enters the examination room and after 10 minutes comes out again with a hanging head and sad face.

"So, you have to join army?", the turtle asks carefully.

The bear mumbles: "No, I'm too fat"

Today we continue our study in the book of Ruth. We are in chapter three.

And in case we've missed some let me catch you up on the context of the book. If you recall Ruth was a poor widow who just so happens, is what the text says, which simply means the providence of God was there to help it along.

Do you remember what the providence of God is? It's when God uses natural circumstances to accomplish his supernatural will.

And she just so happened to work in a field belonging to a godly landowner, a guy named Boaz, a man of standing who asked her on a date.

And we looked at that first date last week. The first date seemed to go pretty well. They talked for a little while. He gave her more than she needed. He made her laugh. There was no awkward silence.

But after that first date, there was nothing. This man of standing, that guy, Boaz, ghosted her. There was no follow-up call, no text asking if she made it home okay? He didn't send out a friend request on Facebook. Nothing. And she's a bit confused.

Seven weeks of harvest go by, and the harvest is almost over. And now she's scratching her head going, "Maybe I was wrong about that date. I thought it went pretty well. . .but." I mean, I know I didn't get to shower but there wasn't time. What did I do wrong?"

And so her mother-in-law, Naomi, gives her opinion. It starts in chapter 3 let's begin at verse 1. . .

And let me just say this before we get started this is going to sound a bit. . .well strange.

Ruth 3:1 (NIV) - One day Naomi said to Ruth, "My daughter, it's time that I found a permanent home for you, so that you will be provided for.

And in case you are uncertain what that Scripture is saying, in Hebrew, it means we gotta find you a man.

Verse 2. . .

Ruth 3:2 (NIV) - Boaz is a close relative of ours, and he's been very kind by letting you gather grain with his young women. Tonight he will be winnowing barley at the threshing floor.

What is a threshing floor? It's the place that after the harvest, you would go and then you would take everything and throw it up in the air. And the wind would separate the wheat from the shaft.

And that would determine, how much good stuff you have.

Here's what you can eat, here's what you can sell, basically they were determining the profit.

So you're at the end of harvest, and you've got Boaz at the threshing floor and he's about to gather all of the workers. Why? Because it's payday. And not only is it payday but he was also going to have a party to celebrate the harvest.

So, mother-in-law has an idea. . .She's thinking, "Okay, Ruth, Boaz is going to be there. He's going to be in a good mood. So, here's the plan and it's really a little funny, and here's when it starts to get a bit strange. Naomi says I need you to do what I tell you.

And in verse three. . .watch this.

Ruth 3:3 (NIV) - Take a bath and put on perfume and dress in your nicest clothes. Then go to the threshing floor, but don't let Boaz see you until he has finished eating and drinking.

She's begins to share the plan. . .

Step one take a bath. Now let me just say this, that's a good start, if you're trying to impress someone, start with a bath. Maybe she didn't smell all that good on the first date. So take a bath, put on perfume and dress in your nicest clothes.

Naomi's thinking, Last time he saw you, girl, you were a mess. Your hair was all ratty. You didn't look your finest. So this time I want you to look and smell good.

And then after you wash and put on the good smell and nice clothes I want you to go down to the threshing floor but don't let him know you are there until he's finished eating and drinking.

Why wait till he's finished? Well let's face it, we know guys are more responsive on a full stomach.

And then she says this and here's a little warning for you, this is about to get a little bit odder. That's a word right?

Ruth 3:4 (NIV) - Be sure to notice where he lies down; then go and uncover his feet and lie down there. He will tell you what to do."

Be sure to notice where he lies down. And he's going to lay down because he had a few drinks and his tummy is full, but notice where it lies down because he's going to lay down by the profits why? To make sure no one is going to steal any.

So he is going to sleep by the stuff. And then when he is asleep, go uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do.

So Ruth is listening to her wise mother-in-law and says this in verse 5. . .

Ruth 3:5 (NIV) - "I will do everything you say," Ruth replied.

And there's the plan. . .and Ruth agrees.

Verse 6. . .

Ruth 3:6 (NIV) - So she went down to the threshing floor that night and followed the instructions of her mother-in-law.

Now let me pause here and say this, I have not or will not as your pastor, or as my daughters father suggest anything close to this.

I would never tell my daughter. Sneak around, follow this guy and then when he lies down where ever that may be, lay down at his feet uncover them and wait till it wakes up.

Understand this is descriptive, not prescriptive. In other words, this is what happened in the Bible. This is not the Bible telling you to do the same thing.

But why then does the Scriptures even tell us this story. And let me first say this, I don't believe for a minute that anything happened that night between Boaz and Ruth.

The scriptural application of this story is simply that Ruth was interested in Boaz becoming her kinsman-redeemer and he wasn't proposing so Naomi has a plan to encourage him to either do that or find a husband for her.

This is potentially the man that can help provide for her and protect her and be a spiritual covering to her. And so her mother-in-law is saying, "Hey, you might want to give a little hint that your interested in him."

And to do that she comes up with this plan.

And I'm going to let you ladies in on a little secret. Most of us guys sometimes need a little encouragement because we are a bit insecure. I know your thinking that's no secret I've known that for years. Please just think it and don't say it out-loud it will make us feel a lot better.

And just when you think the story can't get any stranger. . .

Ruth 3:7-9 (NIV) - After Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he lay down at the far end of the pile of grain and went to sleep. Then Ruth came quietly, uncovered his feet, and lay down. Around midnight Boaz suddenly woke up and turned over. He was surprised to find a woman lying at his feet! "Who are you?" he asked. "I am your servant Ruth," she replied. "Spread the corner of your covering over me, for you are my family redeemer."

He was in good spirits. . .what do you suppose that means?

And this is kind of funny it said, Around midnight Boaz suddenly woke up and turned over. . .and surprise !!!

And she says, "Spread the corner of your covering over me, for you are my family redeemer."

What is a family or as some translations say guardian or kinsman redeemer? Remember from last week, It is a relative who had the responsibility and privilege to provide for a family member in time of need.

If there was a widow, her husband who would've died, would typically have a brother, and that brother would have the spiritual responsibility to provide for and protect that widow and so he would become the guardian or the kinsman-redeemer.

Who is Boaz? He is a potential guardian-redeemer, but this is very important. He is a distant guardian redeemer. He is not the closest relative and did not have the legal right or obligation to provide for her.

And so here we see what's going on. She says, "Hey, would you cover me up? Would you be my. . .

And what many scholars believe is she was saying, "Would you be my spiritual covering? Would you be my redeemer?"

Boaz is in good spirits. She's by where he has laid down and she grabs the covers. And again let me repeat I don't believe for a moment anything happened between them that night.

And I'll show you why. . .

Boaz treats Ruth honorably. Look what he says. . .

Ruth 3:10 -11 (NIV) -"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. And 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.

The plan worked. Great news. Naomi was brilliant. Ruth hinted, Boaz picked up on it. And now, they can get married ride off in the sunset and live happily ever after, right?

Well unfortunately, not yet.

We find the problem out in verse 12. . .

Ruth 3:12 (NIV) - Although it is true that I am a guardian-redeemer of our family, there is another who is more closely related than I.

In other words, Boaz says, "I'm not legally the closest one, there's someone else closer than I am, sorry just can't do it. I'd love to but. . .There's an obstacle.

Actually this is what he says. . .

Ruth 3:13 (NIV) - Stay 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."

(Talk about Joy and I dating experiences).

There's another relative who has the legal right to be her guardian redeemer.

Let me just share a little of what we will be looking at next week.

Next week We're going to watch how Boaz schemes very wisely how to overcome this obstacle.

But as we close out today let me close with a lesson I'm sure there's more but let me share one and then I'm also going to give a spiritual application to our story today as well. . .

The lesson is this, even if you don't get it right, God can still make it right.

In our story Boaz and Ruth were in the same room all night just the two of them. That is not what I would suggest as your pastor.

But just so you don't get the impression I'm only taking about dating let me say this as well. There may be some of you that may feel like you've messed up too much.

I want you to know even if you don't get it right, God can still make it right. He can still redeem, recover, revive, and restore. God can work all things out for good. He is a God of second chances, and third, and so many more.

Romans 8:28 (NIV) - And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

So if the enemy try's to tell you that you've messed up too much, that there is no hope, that you've made too many mistakes, and that you will never measure up. You need to remember that even if you don't get it right, God can still make it right.

Now let me summarize and bring this in for a landing.

Spiritually, we see Boaz he wants to be her guardian redeemer, her kinsman redeemer, but he was not obligated to care for Ruth in that fashion. Why?

Because he wasn't a brother to her husband. And she was a Moabite, not even from Bethlehem, but because he loved her, He chose to make a sacrifice for her.

And here's what's incredibly powerful. I want you to notice this. Because of Ruth's one decision, that we looked at in week one, to leave Moab and return to Bethlehem, because of her one decision and because of Boaz's one decision to commit, to pursue her, to provide for her, to protect her as her guardian redeemer, because of her one decision and because of his one decision that led to a covenant of marriage that resulted in a son named Obed. And in case you didn't realize this from the lineage of Obed came our guardian redeemer, Jesus, the Son of God, who is our savior, our king and our Lord.

And in the same way, Jesus wasn't obligated to give His life for you. But because of His love, He chose to be stripped of heavenly glory and become a lamb of God, who shed His blood for the forgiveness of your sins and mine.

And after He gave His life, He did not stay dead, but God raised Him from the dead so that anyone, and this includes you, and it doesn't matter what you've done, anyone who calls on Him would be saved.

Jesus, your guardian redeemer, His door is open. His heart is for you, and He is pursuing you longing for you to lay at His feet.

And what I'm really afraid of is that some of you are missing Him by about this much 12 to 14 inches. You know about Him in your head, but you don't know Him in your heart.

You know the book but not the author.

See here's the truth church He didn't just come to make you religious, He came to have a relationship with you. He didn't come to get you to join a church. He came to set you free.

He didn't come to make you follow a bunch of rules. He came to give you life abundant.

His name is above every name. He is king. He is savior. He's my redeemer. He is Lord. He's the the Lamb of God, and He's the lion of the tribe of Judah. Jesus, there's just something about that name.

And one decision is where it all starts.

Prayer