



The kinsman redeemer

■ READ: A selection from Ruth 3:1-4:12

Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, I need to seek some security for you, so that it may be well with you. Now here is our kinsman Boaz, with whose young women you have been working. See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. Now wash and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down, observe the place where he lies; then, go and uncover his feet and lie down; and he will tell you what to do." [Ruth] said to her, "All that you tell me I will do."

■ REFLECT:

If you read the whole book of Ruth, you may notice where the action takes place: in Bethlehem. It's not the last time we'll find ourselves in that town this Advent.

Maybe you know this story as a story about a woman uncommonly devoted to her mother-in-law. Or a story about a woman humble yet bold enough to find favor with Boaz, who could make life easier for these two widows. And certainly it is a story about Ruth's faithfulness. But it's also a story about Boaz's faithfulness, which points to the faithfulness of one who was born in Bethlehem years later.

In Israelite law, there was a provision for widows with no sons. The brother of the deceased man was commanded to take the man's widow as wife, both redeeming the man's land and providing a son to carry on the family name. Without this man, called a kinsman redeemer, the widow would be left with nothing, and the family would cease to exist.

In the book of Ruth, Boaz steps up as the kinsman redeemer, a relative of Naomi's husband with the power to redeem the land, marry Ruth, and carry on the family.

Who else do we know who steps up as a kinsman redeemer? Indeed, Jesus Christ is our kinsman redeemer. By virtue of his humanity, he is our brother, our kinsman, and he is willing to become the bridegroom in order to redeem us. He faithfully steps up to save us. He lovingly joins himself to us, impoverished though we are, and makes us his own. Thanks be to God.

■ PRAY:

Jesus, how humbling it is that you would consider yourself my kinsman, a member of my family. And how humbling that you would pay the price with your life to redeem me. Thank you. Amen.