

God's Kindness in a Promise

1. Intro

- Birthday cards
 - Read funny parts

- Great to receive gifts and cards on birthdays and at Christmas etc with nice words (or not so nice words!)
 - It's a sign of that person's love towards you
 - It's a mark of that person's kindness towards you
 - That's a great thing

- In Ruth 4 ... going to see God's gift to Ruth and Boaz
 - Greater than any gift we'll ever receive or give to others
 - What we see is that God's gift is sign of his love towards his ppl
 - And a mark of his kindness to the world that is in desperate need of saving
 - Gift that God gives them is the gift of a son

2. Context

- Last week in chapter 3 ...
 - Naomi sending Ruth down to the threshing floor to lay at Boaz's feet
 - Boaz clearly Cleo Most Eligible Bachelor of 1100BC
 - Not because chiseled jaw, bulging biceps and ripped abs
 - But because he was their kinsman-redeemer
 - Someone who
 - must be a blood relative
 - must be willing and able to redeem / rescue Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi > both widows

- As we moved through chapter 3 we were expectantly hoping Boaz would fulfill his promise to Ruth and Naomi of becoming their kinsman-redeemer
 - However, there was an unresolved tension – there's a kinsman-redeemer more closely related than Boaz who has the first right of refusal who could stand in the way of Boaz
 - But in chapter 4 the tension was resolved when Boaz approached this other kinsman-redeemer, explained the situation and he refused to redeem them > the cost was too high
 - But Boaz was willing and able >

- he paid for Naomi's land > redeemed Naomi out of poverty > who now had nice big superannuation pay out to live off
 - at the same time Boaz acquired Ruth as his wife
- In doing so Boaz has rescued both women out of poverty
 - Costly sacrifice for him
- All the ppl went ... ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!
- Big point of last week
 - God uses a kinsman-redeemer Boaz to rescue his ppl
- Of course ... the kindness and sacrifice of Boaz as kinsman-redeemer points us to our Great redeemer - Jesus
 - Who pays and even greater price to rescue you and I from the poverty of sin, death and hell
- But there's more to the story ...
 - And you don't need to worry
 - It's not like the Bachelor where Blake and Sam got engaged and then just when everyone was getting excited ... they broke it off
 - No ... this story finishes well
 - Boaz and Ruth don't fall apart
 - In fact the story has an amazing and wonderful twist

3. Gift of a redeeming son to bring restoration [SLIDE]

- ¹³ *So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. Then he went to her, and the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.*
- Here we see 9 months crammed into 1 verse
 - Ruth and Boaz finally get married
 - They consummate their marriage
 - 9 months later they have a baby
 - Honeymoon baby!
- Notice we're told *'The LORD enabled her to conceive'*
 - Remember Ruth had been married to Mahlon (first husband) for 10years before she was widowed ... but they had no children > it seems Ruth was barren!
 - She's been with Boaz 5 mins ... and now she's having a baby
 - Ruth's having a good day > married AND pregnant!
 - Clearly ... it was the miraculous intervention of Lord enabling her to conceive
 - Her time of emptiness ... now replaced with God's blessing and fullness

- We see the prayers of the elders in v11-12 are quickly answered
- But from this point on ... the focus of the story shifts completely to Naomi
 - Ruth and Boaz fade to the background
 - Naomi becomes the centre of attention
- Recall ...
 - Chapter 1 > Naomi's life thrown upside down > widowed > sons died > return to Bethlehem destitute > call me Mara = bitter
 - *Ruth 1:20-21* ²⁰ "Don't call me Naomi," she told them. "Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. The LORD has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me."
 - Chapter 2-4:12 > all about Ruth and Boaz > his kindness to Ruth and Naomi, acting to fulfill his role as kinsman-redeemer
 - Chapter 4:13ff > focus returns to Naomi
 - Women of Bethlehem gathered around Naomi > friends church / GG
 - Naomi has her grandson on her lap
 - She's over the moon at being a grandma
 - Nursing him > tickling him > raspberries on his tummy
 - Talking in silly voices to him
 - We see how life is has been wonderfully restored for her
- Great contrast in her fortunes from Ch 1 > Ch 4
 - Returned to Bethlehem empty and bitter
 - Now full of joy > she has a grandson
- Once she was bitter and empty > but now no longer Mara
 - She's Naomi again > pleasant > lovely
 - God's restored her life
- When all Naomi's friends and neighbours see she has a grandson, they get super excited
 - ¹⁴ ... "Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a kinsman-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! ¹⁵ He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth."
- But who is this kinsman-redeemer who God has provided for Naomi?

- Ch 3-4 > Boaz was the kinsman-redeemer > bought Naomi's land and married Ruth
- But here ... the women are saying this son / the child is Naomi's kinsman-redeemer
- Obed is Naomi's kinsman-redeemer they say ... because "*he will renew you in your life and sustain you in your old age*"
 - Literally = sustain you in your grey hair
- They know and can see how God has restored Naomi's life
 - He's provided her with a son, a kinsman-redeemer
 - It was the Lord who provided him
 - She returned empty and bitter > now God has made her life full and blessed
- But the birth of Obed is much more significant than just bringing joy to a doting grandma
 - The birth of a grandson guarantees Naomi's future well being
 - Two reasons
 - Firstly, the OT law for kinsman-redeemers meant that the first son born to Ruth & Boaz is considered Mahlon's son > Naomi's grandson
 - Means he's able to carry on Naomi's & Elimelech's family line (v10)
 - Secondly, the land that Boaz redeemed will now be inherited by Obed
 - It will remain in the family and ensure an inheritance for future generations to come (v5)
 - This is why the women say in v17 that Obed is Naomi's son
 - Not her grandson ... but son who will carry on the family line and secure her land for the future
- Big idea
 - Obed is God's gift of a redeeming son to bring restoration to his people
- **Implication**
- Steve said last week ... a kinsman-redeemer is blood relative who's able to restore the life of a family member in need
 - Boaz > kinsman-redeemer for Ruth
 - Obed > kinsman-redeemer for Naomi
 - They're types / examples / shadows ... of our great redeemer Jesus
 - They point forward to an even greater redeemer who brings redemption
 - Not just for one woman
 - Not just for one family

- But a redeemer for all ppl
- Obed was God's gift of a redeeming son to bring restoration to Naomi
- Jesus is God's gift of a redeeming son to bring restoration to the world

- We see this about Jesus when we get to the NT
- Anna > meeting Jesus
 - Mary & Joseph take Jesus to temple for circumcision > 8 days old
 - Meet Anna > God fearing prophetess > 84 yo > widow most life
 - Never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.
 - She meets Jesus and says [SLIDE]
 - *Luke 2:38 - gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the **redemption** of Jerusalem*
- He was going to redeem his ppl > once and for all

- Pages of NT show us how he did this [SLIDE]
 - *In him we have redemption ... through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace - Ephesians 1:7*
 - Rescued us through his blood, shed on the cross
 - What he rescued us from ... [SLIDE]
 - *Colossians 1:13-14 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

- Christ redeems sinners like you and me from darkness > sin > death > judgment
- If you're a Christian ... Jesus has restores your life
 - Transferred you from a life facing certain judgment and eternal bitterness
 - To life of joy, peace, forgiveness, reconciliation, adoption, inheritance of eternal life
 - Totally restored and transformed
 - Steve talked about that last week

- At the cross ... a transaction took place where Jesus exchanged his life, paid with his blood ... to buy you back and give you a new life
 - That's why if you're a Christian you've been born again
 - Like Naomi life ... he's restored your life / made it new / empty to full = born again
- If you're trust is in Jesus ... you are redeemed
 - Like Naomi ... your future and your inheritance is secure

- Not a Christian ...
 - You can share in all that > rescue / salvation / secure eternal future
 - But you need to come to the great redeemer Jesus
- But the redemption that Jesus brings is not just for the future
 - As our great redeemer ... Jesus restores lives now
 - Naomi's life was restored > went from bitterness to happiness
 - Emptiness to joy
 - God's gift of a redeemer restored her life
- Jesus brings restoration to our lives now
- [SLIDE]
- *Titus 2:13-14 the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to **redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.***
 - Saying ... he's not just redeeming us for eternal life
 - Jesus is redeeming us from all wickedness and purifying us / changing us / cleansing us ... to be his ppl
 - The redemption Jesus brings ... actually leads to renewed lives
- When you know Jesus he redeems your life > he transforms
 - Marriages
 - Strengthens struggling marriages and turns broken marriages around
 - Couple puts Jesus first > submits to Jesus > marriages transform
 - When a husband loves his wife like Jesus loved the church
 - When he cherishes her, loves her, sacrifices his preferences and desires to uphold and care for her ... marriages turn around
 - When a wife respects her husband > submits him as his head just as Jesus submits to his Father ... marriages stay strong
 - When couples practice humility, repentance and forgiveness like Jesus calls on his ppl to do ... marriages stay strong and broken marriages are healed
 - If you're marriage is struggling / needs strengthening ... you need to come under the wings of our redeemer Jesus
 - Restoration from addiction
 - Alcohol, pornography, drugs, sex, shopping ...
 - Jesus brings redemption from that > How?

- He gives us a better alternative to what we're addicted to
 - Much better than the temporary high of an addiction that corrupts our mind, health, lives, our relationships ... and just leaves us craving more ...
 - Because its temporary > doesn't satisfy
 - We feel like we need to go searching for and pay for more and more of it until it destroys us
 - But redemption through Jesus means we have an eternal high > never-ending joy of forgiveness, eternal life, salvation ...
- Jesus restores lives
 - Sex lives
 - Work lives
 - Broken hearts
 - Hard hearts
 - Restores and renews all our life
 - Because he is God's great gift of a redeemer who brings restoration

4. Gift of a saviour king to fulfill a promise [SLIDE]

- Book of Ruth finishes with a genealogy
 - Seems like an anti-climax
 - Ruth and Boaz together > had a son > God has restored Naomi's life
 - Why spoil it with an list of names from the Hebrew phone book
 - Tempting when we get to lists like this in the Bible to blow it off / pass over it / ignore it
- Well in fact ... the genealogy is actually the highlight / climax of Ruth
 - Romantics want to say ... "no, no, it's all about Ruth and Boaz and getting married and having babies!"
- The historical significance of Obed doesn't lie in
 - The fact Ruth and Boaz get together and have a son
 - Nor is it the restoration Obed brings to Naomi's life
 - Significant because he's the grandfather of King David
 - So important is this information ... the writer tells us twice (v17 & 20)
 - He wants us to get the historical significance of what's going on here
- What we see in this genealogy ... is that through the restoration of Ruth and Naomi ... God has been sovereignly at work bringing about his plan for the restoration of Israel and ultimately the restoration of the whole world

- What's happening here in Ruth is not just a cutesy love story of some random Israelite family
- What's happening here has eternal consequences
- See in v17 ... Obed the father of Jesse, Jesse the father of David
 - Read about Jesse being the father of David in 1 Samuel
 - Of course the David we're speaking about is King David ... the greatest king of Israel
- To understand the significance of this we need to remember the historical context of Ruth
 - Ruth set in time of Judges
 - Constant refrain towards the end of Judges was this
 - *"In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit"*
 - That's because the time of Judges was time of downward spiralling morality and spirituality > it was bad
 - You think what we see on the news is bad ... that's like Disneyland compared to the times of Judges
 - Ruth and Boaz were a rare highlight in that dark time
- It's out of that situation ... that God raises up a king to lead and rescue his ppl
 - Man after God's own heart
 - David defeated all Israel's enemies who had remained in the Promised Land and brought peace to the ppl
 - Restored spiritual life of Israel
 - He was the pinnacle of OT history and the climax of Perez's family genealogy¹
- Obed's birth ensures that God's promise to Abraham centuries earlier that he would
 - Make Israel into a great nation
 - Give them a land to call their own
 - Bless them and bless all the nations through them
 - All this seemingly comes to fulfillment in King David
- Through Obed comes the gift of a saviour king ...
- It's through this saviour king that God's promises are fulfilled

¹ Perez was the son of Judah to whom is promised - *Genesis 49:10* ¹⁰ *The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his. The king of all nations will come from line of Judah. Descendent of Judah would have the legitimate right to hold the sceptre over all the nations*

- Through Obed ... not only was Naomi restored ... but Israel was restored
- For a time ... David was the saviour king of Israel
 - But as history unfolded ...
 - We find that David is not the perfect king
 - He and Israel continue to sin
 - God's ppl still in need of a full and proper restoration
- As the God's plan to redeem his ppl unfolds we see it's another descendent of Obed who is the real saviour king
- At the start of Matthew's gospel ... we see another genealogy
 - Genealogy of Jesus [SLIDE]
 - Shows not only was Obed the grandfather of David
 - Shows he was the many time's grandfather of Jesus
- Not only was Obed a kinsman-redeemer who pointed forward to our great redeemer Jesus
 - But in Obed, God's gift of a son to Naomi allowed the coming of God's greatest gift to the whole world ... of Jesus
- **Implications**
- What we see happening here is that God is working way beyond the minutiae little details of Ruth and Naomi's life
 - Not only is he working to restore their lives
 - He's working to bring about the restoration of the world
- God's sovereign hand was at work in this entire story to bring about his great salvation plan
 - Death of Elimelech and Mahlon
 - Conversion of Naomi to follow him as the one true God
 - Ruth happening to end up in Boaz's field picking grain
 - Kindness of Boaz towards Ruth and Naomi
 - Unwillingness of the other kinsman-redeemer to buy the land and marry Ruth
 - Miraculous birth of Obed ...
- All the work of a sovereign God ensuring that his great promises made to Abarham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses. Joshua and all the Israelites ... actually come to fruition in God
 - reversing the effects of the fall

- overcoming human sin
- bringing eternal blessing to his ppl instead of the eternal curse of judgment
- From before the creation of the world, God had a plan to restore and redeem > and he was always going to do it in and through Jesus
 - And here in the time of the Judges ... he works through a godly and faithful couple to ensure his promises and his plan for a saviour king was fulfilled

- When you stand back and see God working in and through Ruth and Boaz to on a cosmic and eternal scale ... it blows your mind
 - How great is our God?!
 - How powerful is he?!
 - How amazing is he that he sovereignly works out his cosmic and eternal plans in the details of ordinary people's lives?!

- **Application**
- God's gift of a saviour king in and through Obed ... ensures he fulfills his promises
- God will never renege on his promise to bring his people into the new creation where they will enjoy him forever
- This ought to be a great encouragement to us to know that God works in and through all things to bring about his plans and promises

- He is at work in the minutiae of life ... bringing about his plans and promises
- Examples
 - Me > going to boarding school > heard the gospel
 - Liana's mum > sick > church > family converted > all in ministry
 - Martin Luther > tormented over sin > justification by faith ...
 - Hudson Taylor > 51 yrs China as missionary > 100 years later > 70 million Christians in China
 - Tammie > weak faith > breast cancer > 5 years on > v strong faith
 - Billy Graham > 1959 Billy Graham crusade > 1000's converted
 - Two brothers / Jensens > converted at 1959 crusade
 - Peter > lecturer / Principal Moore College / Archbishop
 - Phillip > St Matthias / UNSW chaplain > MTS > men & women in ministry
 - Example after example

- God works in the minutiae of life to bring about his plans and purposes
 - Often / most of the time we won't have a clue what he's doing
 - We won't see the bigger picture
 - Ruth and Boaz would've had no idea King David and Jesus were going to come from the son they bore
 - But God is working to bring about his good plans and purposes
- Sometimes it's on a grand scale
 - bringing revival to a city
 - mass scale conversions
 - creating new movements of missionaries and church planters and
- Other times ... it will be the individual transformations he will be doing
 - Working in and through you
 - To bring you to faith and make Jesus Lord of your life
 - To raise and teach your children and grandchildren to know and love Jesus
 - To disciple a new Christian who needs encouragement in their Christian walk
 - Be a witness to someone who's seeking answers to life and death and wants to know more about what God has to say about these things
- God is at work in and through his ppl
 - May not see how
 - But we see that in the gift of a son to Naomi ... how he is working to fulfill his promises of a saviour king
 - We can trust that he is continuing to work out his promises
 - in your life
 - in the lives of people around you
- So continue to
 - trust him
 - submit to him
 - follow him and
 - love him
- He's God's gift to us
 - He's our great redeemer
 - He's our saviour king

PRAY

Our sovereign Lord and saviour, we praise you that you have given us the gift of a son who brings guarantees our eternal future and eternal inheritance. We praise you for Jesus who redeems us at great cost so that we can be rescued from death. Thank he was willing to put aside his own self-interest to serve and die for us. Help us live lives of godliness, obedience, love and faithfulness as we seek to honour you – our great redeemer. AMEN