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Amazing Love by Gary Rivas (25.8.2019)

Sermon link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5pUzW6KHYw>

Scripture

Ruth 4

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

Spend some time in worship. Here are the song links:

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| Malibongwe | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBYsU4zu3HM |
| Counting every Blessing | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6Y91axwxfI |
| Victory is Yours | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCJkL0bP1bE |
| You are my King | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MA_cSFdUMqk |

Observation

Boaz knew Naomi's 'near kinsman' would go to the city gate at some time during the day, for it was the meeting place where business matters were discussed. When the man arrived, Boaz greeted him and invited him, together with ten others to sit down with him. Ten men may have been the number of witnesses required for any important business agreement.

As Boaz tells the group what is on his mind, it is evident that he has had more conversations with Naomi and Ruth than is recorded. It is the first indication we have that Naomi has land to sell. Initially the man was keen to take up the proposition. Boaz handled the situation with skill as he explained the matter. In order for the land to remain in the family, the near kinsman would not only have to purchase it but take Ruth - 'the Moabitess' – as his wife too. This was enough to put the man off the idea. It was believed that Naomi's sons died because they had married Moabite women. Having to marry Ruth as part of the agreement was not only a perceived risk but in addition, any son she would bear him would inherit the piece of land in question. The man hastily withdrew his offer with the excuse that he could not afford to purchase the land. He suggested Boaz take on the right of redemption as a kinsman, which Boaz promptly did.

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In response the near kinsman took off his shoe in confirmation of the successful completion of the transaction, rather as we would sign a written agreement today. Once the business was fully completed, Boaz would have returned the shoe to him.

Boaz then declared to the elders gathered to witness this event that he had not only purchased the land but would also honour the right and obligation to take Ruth to be his wife so she could bear an heir for Elimelech's family.

The elders and the people agreed they had witnessed the transaction, which gave Boaz the legal right to move forward with his plan to marry Ruth. The witnesses gave their blessing and prayed that Boaz and Ruth may have many children, (like Leah and Rachel did see Genesis 30 and 35), and that their sons may be successful.

Tamar's name was raised as she was also a non-Israelite, just like Ruth. Both women are mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus, so, in hind-sight, we can see this blessing given by the women, was later fulfilled.

Ruth and Boaz married and had a son. The author makes it clear that this child was a gift from Yahweh. On the day of his birth, the women of Bethlehem blessed and encouraged Naomi. In terms of the Law, the child was seen as Naomi's grandson and his arrival altered Naomi's prospects in that he offered the support she would need in her old age. These women paid Ruth an amazing tribute as they spoke of her love for Naomi, declaring she was of more value than seven sons. This was praise indeed for sons were valued more highly than daughters at that time.

Ruth still cared for Naomi and brought her into the new family circle by inviting her to look after the baby.

At the women's suggestion, the child was named Obed (servant), indicating how he would serve Naomi in her old age. But the writer may also have used the word to indicate that Obed would be a servant of God. The author ends his story on a note of triumph as he lists the influential names in the baby's genealogy from Perez through the baby himself to his descendent David.

Icebreaker:

Share briefly with the group your favourite memory of a recent fun event you had with your family – or those you call family. Why is that particular incident so special for you?

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Application

- What does the concept of family mean to you? How close are you to your family? Physically? Emotionally? Spiritually?
- Choose one branch of your family – spouse, parents, siblings, children – how can you deepen this relationship?
- What does your church family mean to you?
- What does ‘fortune’ mean to you? How important is it? How much is enough for you?
- Where have you seen God’s provision for you and your family when you, personally, could not see how you were going to make ends meet at the end of the month? What does His provision mean to you?
- Are you well known in your circle of influence – work, social, social media, church life? What does being known mean to you? Would it help you or hinder you to be famous? Why do you respond this way?
- What does your future look like right now?
- What role does God have in your future? Can you see Him there? Where do you want Him to be? How involved will you allow Him to be?
- What do you need to do – one step – to make the future you dream about come a little closer?
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

Prayer

Pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time, and in regard to other needs of the group.

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Thank You, God that we can put our future in Your hands – that we can trust You enough for You to shape our future. Guide us, direct us.

Thank You, God that we can bring all our worries and concerns to You.

Thank You, Father that we can be part of a loving and caring family.

Thank You, for all the blessings You pour out on us. You are gracious and kind.

We love You with all of our hearts.

In the name of Jesus.

Amen.

Service

Where can you be of service this week? How can you help your family; use your fortune or fame; or share God's role in your future with someone who does not know Him? Where will you witness God's goodness to you as a result of what you have discussed this week?

Bibliography

<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/ruth-4.html>

<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/pet/ruth-4.html>

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