Open in prayer

Read Ruth 3

1 Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, 'My daughter, shouldn't I find rest for you, so that you
will be taken care of? 2 Now isn't Boaz our relative? Haven't you been working with his female
servants? This evening he will be winnowing barley on the threshing-floor. 3 Wash, put on perfumed
oil, and wear your best clothes. Go down to the threshing-floor, but don't let the man know you
are there until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 When he lies down, note the place where he's
lying, go in and uncover his feet, and lie down. Then he will explain to you what you should do.'

5 So Ruth said to her, 'I will do everything you say.'

6 She went down to the threshing-floor and did everything her mother-in-law had charged her to
do. 7 After Boaz ate, drank, and was in good spirits, he went to lie down at the end of the pile of
barley, and she came secretly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.

8 At midnight, Boaz was startled, turned over, and there lying at his feet was a woman! 9 So he
asked, 'Who are you?'

'I am Ruth, your servant,' she replied. "Take me under your wing, for you are a family redeemer.'

10 Then he said, 'May the Lord bless you, my daughter. You have shown more kindness now than
before, because you have not pursued younger men, whether rich or poor. 11 Now don't be afraid,
my daughter. I will do for you whatever you say, since all the people in my town know that you
are a woman of noble character. 12 Yes, it is true that I am a family redeemer, but there is a
redeemer closer than I am.

13 Stay here tonight, and in the morning, if he wants to redeem you, that's good. Let him redeem
you. But if he doesn't want to redeem you, as the Lord lives, I will. Now lie down until morning.'

14 So she lay down at his feet until morning but got up while it was still dark. Then Boaz said,
'Don't let it be known that a woman came to the threshing-floor.'

15 And he told Ruth, 'Bring the shawl you're wearing and hold it out.' When she held it out, he
shovelled six measures of barley into her shawl, and she went into the town.

16 She went to her mother-in-law, Naomi, who asked her, 'What happened, my daughter?'

Then Ruth told her everything the man had done for her. 17 She said, 'He gave me these six
measures of barley, because he said, "Don't go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed."'

18 Naomi said, 'My daughter, wait until you find out how things go, for he won't rest unless he
resolves this today.'

Introduction

Evans and Chido got engaged last week. Yay! Now, I don't mean to brag, but Liezl and I set them up. We invited Evans to a lunch. And we invited Chido to the same lunch. And we seated them next to one another. And Chido talked the whole meal through. And Evans sat and smiled like he'd won the jackpot. The rest is history!

But, why did Liezl and I set these two kids up in the first place? Because we care about both of them. Because we want them both to be happy.

This morning we're going to see an older woman with a desire to set two kids up. Because she cares about both of them. Because she wants them both to be happy. It's a love story. But spoiler alert, there's a twist in the tale.

This morning, the authorial point I'm going to uncover is, Rest requires bold initiative and patient submission to God's appointed means.

And the three points that we'll look at are: 1) The Rest we long for (Ruth 3:1-5). 2) The Rest we risk for (Ruth 3:6-13). 3) The Rest we wait for (Ruth 3:14-18).

There is a kind of rest we all long for. Which brings us to our first point.

1) **The Rest we long for** (Ruth 3:1-5)

Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, 'My daughter, shouldn't I find rest for you, so that you will be taken care of? Rest. What does Naomi mean when she uses the word rest here? She means comprehensive security. A permanent home. A husband who provides. Children who carry on the family name. A place where you belong. Where you feel safe. Where you are known and loved. This is a universal human longing. We all long for rest. And those of you who are parents and grandparents, long for rest for your children and grandchildren too. Naomi's desire for her daughter-in-law is a good desire.

Now what Naomi should have done was invite Ruth and Boaz to Sunday lunch at her home like Liezl and I did. A nice meal. Some nice conversation. Create the opportunity for things develop naturally. That would have been proper. That would have been safe. That would have been wise. And that might have resulted in an engagement. But instead, Naomi hatches a scheme.

Now isn't Boaz our relative? Yes. Boaz has already been introduced to us as the family redeemer. A go'el. I explained what that meant last week. A go'el was the nearest family member with the legal right and moral duty to rescue. To redeem land that had been sold. To restore a family line that was dying out. To secure provision for destitute widows. He had to be a blood relative. He had to be willing. He had to be able to pay the price. Boaz ticks all three boxes.

Before we get to Naomi's reckless scheme, I want you to know what is motivating her. Haven't you been working with his female servants? Here is the first motivation. There's competition for Boaz's affection. Naomi mentions the other young maidens Ruth works alongside. Young, attractive women. Ruth is a foreigner. A widow. Naomi knows the clock is ticking.

And then, This evening he will be winnowing barley on the threshing-floor. Here is the second motivation. Harvest time is done. The window of opportunity is closing fast. Boaz hasn't made any advances, and if Ruth doesn't act soon, the moment will pass. Naomi feels the urgency. And urgency leads to a bad plan.

Wash, put on perfumed oil, and wear your best clothes. Go down to the threshing-floor, but don't let the man know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down, note the place where he's lying, go in and uncover his feet, and lie down. Then he will explain to you what you should do.'

Let me tell you why this plan was reckless. The threshing floor was an open-air platform where men winnowed grain. They slept there to guard the harvest. And they were known to drink and indulge in sexual license. Hosea 9:1 makes

that clear. The period of the judges was characterised by moral chaos. Everyone did what was right in their own eyes. Covenant unfaithfulness was everywhere.

Now some scholars try to soften this by saying there is a unique cultural context that has been lost to history. A special meaning to the uncovering feet of feet. I don't buy that. I take the text at face value. A trusted commentator I consulted, Paul Apple, notes, When a woman bathes, puts on perfume, dons her best dress, and then secretively climbs under the covers with a man who has had his fill of food and wine, I don't think anyone in any culture would read this any other way.

Naomi wanted the right thing. But she was willing to use the wrong means to get it. She may have wanted to speed up the process. She may have grown tired of waiting for providence to catch up with their circumstances. So she resorted to expediency. Good intentions. Reckless methods.

So Ruth said to her, 'I will do everything you say.' Now is Ruth agreeing to Naomi's reckless scheme? I don't think so. I think Ruth is innocent. And trusting. She trusts her mother-in-law's motive are pure. And she trusts that Boaz's character is honourable. And above all, she trusts in the providence of God. She does not see the danger. Or perhaps she sees it and chooses obedience anyway. Either way, she submits.

Here is the main idea in Ruth 3:1-5. Ruth agrees to take a bold initiative towards rest. But Naomi's means are not God's appointed means. Her plan is flawed. Her plan is risky. Her plan could end in disaster. And yet Ruth goes along with it anyway. Not because she's following a perfect plan. But because Ruth's following a perfect God.

The kind of rest we long for, is worth risking for. Which brings us to our second point.

2) **The Rest we risk for** (Ruth 3:6-13)

She went down to the threshing-floor and did everything her mother-in-law had charged her to do. After Boaz ate, drank, and was in good spirits, he went to lie down at the end of the pile of barley, and she came secretly, uncovered his feet, and lay down. Boaz's heart was merry. I take this to mean he enjoyed a pint or two with the men after a hard day's work. Nothing excessive. Nothing dishonourable. Just the honest refreshment of a man who has laboured long in the sun.

I was at a birthday party yesterday. When I got up to go, Kevin said, *That's it,*

the pastor's leaving, the party can start now. Now, our SOS group can be a little loud, but I can assure you Kevin's comment was in jest. But at the same time, I understand why Boaz went and lay down at the end of the pile of barley. Maybe the festivities were going to continue into the night. Maybe the younger workers were waiting for the boss to depart so their enjoyment could ramp up. There's a time for a leader to leave.

Ruth comes in secretly. Quietly. Stealthily. Covertly. She uncovers Boaz's feet and lies down. Now I must be honest, if someone came and lifted the top of my duvet late at night and climbed in at my feet, I would wake up. I keep a baseball bat next to my bed for moments just like that. But Boaz doesn't stir. I think the most likely explanation is that he worked so hard that day that not even wild horses could wake him.

But At midnight, Boaz was startled, turned over, and there lying at his feet was a woman! So he asked, 'Who are you?' Liezl has a tendency to steal all the blankets at night. So I can relate to Boaz groping in the dark, wondering why his feet are so cold. But then realised he is not alone. His blood ran cold. He was startled. He was caught totally off guard. And then it turns out to be a woman.

'I am Ruth, your servant,' she replied. "Take me under your wing, for you are a family redeemer.' Note Ruth's submission. I am your servant. Note her plea. Take me under your wing, for you are a family redeemer. First, Take me under your wing. Last week in chapter two, Boaz prayed, May you receive a full reward from the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge. It cannot be an accident that Ruth uses the same language now. She is asking Boaz to be the human instrument of God's shelter. Second, for you are a family redeemer. Ruth is stating, Boaz is a blood relative. She knows, Boaz is able to pay the price. She hopes, Boaz is willing.

Then he said, 'May the Lord bless you, my daughter. You have shown more kindness now than before, because you have not pursued younger men, whether rich or poor. Now don't be afraid, my daughter. I will do for you whatever you say, since all the people in my town know that you are a woman of noble character. Yes, it is true that I am a family redeemer, but there is a redeemer closer than I am.

It seems clear from the text that Boaz is an older man. Old enough that he did not expect her to want him. In fact, he sees her affection as a noble kindness. Hesed. Kindness. Covenant loyalty that goes beyond duty. She could have pursued a younger man. A richer man. A more obvious match. But she chose him. And he is humbled.

I love rom coms. It is a bit of a joke in our house, because if dad chooses the

Netflix movie, it is probably going to be Remarkably Bright Creatures or When Harry Met Sally. Most rom coms have a fairly standard format. Boy meets girl. Boy likes girl. Something comes into the story to tear them apart. And the whole movie comes together when they find each other at last.

What is keeping Boaz and Ruth apart is a legality. There is a relative closer than Boaz. He is to be given first option on the property, and therefore first option to marry Ruth. I think it is clear Boaz likes Ruth. He thought he was out of the running because of his age. But now it turns out she likes likes him too. The complication is his honour. Unlike Naomi, who wanted the right thing the wrong way, Boaz will adhere strictly to the laws of his people. He will trust God for the outcome. He will only accept the right thing the right way.

Stay here tonight, and in the morning, if he wants to redeem you, that's good. Let him redeem you. But if he doesn't want to redeem you, as the Lord lives, I will. Now lie down until morning.' Ruth, you will be redeemed by the closer relative. Or, as the Lord is my witness, I will redeem you. Now, rest. Until morning.

Naomi's plan was flawed. Driven by expediency, not faith. But God's sovereignty is not paralysed by our scheming. Ruth submits to Naomi out of love. Boaz acts out of honour. And God weaves their obedience, and even Naomi's impatience, into His perfect tapestry. God uses flawed means to accomplish divine ends. Ruth is not following a perfect plan. She is following a perfect God.

Rest requires bold initiative and patient submission to God's appointed means. Here we see Ruth's bold initiative and her submission to Boaz. And we see Boaz's patient submission to God's appointed means. And the result? Ruth gets to rest. Sleep until morning.

The kind of rest we long for, is worth risking for. And the kind of rest worth risking for, is worth waiting for. Which brings us to our third point.

3) **The Rest we wait for** (Ruth 3:14-18)

So she lay down at his feet until morning but got up while it was still dark. Then Boaz said, 'Don't let it be known that a woman came to the threshing-floor.' Pre-dawn twilight. Ruth rushes away at the last possible moment of anonymity. And Boaz guards her honour. But Boaz doesn't stop there.

He told Ruth, 'Bring the shawl you're wearing and hold it out.' When she held it out, he shovelled six measures of barley into her shawl, and she went into the town. About 20 kgs

of grain. A heavy load. The gift is a tangible pledge of his commitment. Its weight signals the seriousness of his oath. Boaz is not playing games. He is not leading her on. He puts his money where his mouth is.

16 She went to her mother-in-law, Naomi, who asked her, ‘What happened, my daughter?’
Then Ruth told her everything the man had done for her. 17 She said, ‘He gave me these six
measures of barley, because he said, “Don’t go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.”’

Empty-handed. Same word Naomi used to describe her own bitter return from Moab. I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty. That was her testimony. That was her pain. But now? Now her daughter-in-law comes home with thirty kilograms of barley. A pledge. A promise. Provision. Is Naomi ready to see? God's providential hand is in her life. The emptiness is being filled. The bitterness is being sweetened.

18 Naomi said, ‘My daughter, wait until you find out how things go, for he won’t rest unless
he resolves this today.’ Wait. Sit still. Remain quietly. It is out of your hands. You have done all you can do. Now we must wait.

And Boaz? Well the man won't rest. Boaz is Disturbed. Boaz cannot be at peace. Cannot be at rest. Because there is a promise to keep. There is a woman counting on him. There is a legal matter to settle, and he will not sleep until it is done.

Remember Ruth 3:1. Naomi desired Ruth find rest. Here is the shift. Ruth has taken her bold initiative. She has done what Naomi asked. She has risked everything. And now she rests. She sleeps. She waits. The shift is Boaz now cannot rest. The restless one is now the redeemer.

And Naomi is no longer manipulating. She is trusting. The bitter woman is becoming a woman of faith. She does not say, Let me think of another plan. She does not say, Let me speed this up. She says, Wait. Sit still. Remain quietly. Trust. God's got this.

Rest requires bold initiative and patient submission to God's appointed means. Ruth took the bold initiative. Boaz will submit to God's appointed means. And Naomi, for the first time, seems content to wait. The restless schemer is learning to trust. The bitter widow is learning to hope. Ruth is home. She is safe. She has a promise. And now she waits. Boaz is in the city. He has a legal battle ahead. And he will not rest until it is done.

The rest we long for is worth risking for. And the rest we risk for is worth waiting for. How does this story connect to Jesus?

Connect to the gospel

So here we are. Three movements. One story. The rest we long for. The rest we risk for. The rest we wait for. And through it all, one truth. Rest requires bold initiative and patient submission to God's appointed means.

But where is the gospel in this story? Where is Jesus? The answer is in the wings. Ruth asks Boaz to spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer. She echoes Boaz's own prayer that she would find refuge under Yahweh's wings. Boaz's wing is the human instrument of God's wing. He is the redeemer who shelters. Who covers. Who provides refuge.

But Boaz is not the ultimate redeemer. He is a pointer. A pattern. A preview of something greater. Jesus, the ultimate redeemer, takes up this same imagery. How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings. The same image. The same longing. The same shelter. But now it is the Son of God extending His wing.

Ruth approached Boaz empty-handed. She had nothing to offer. She threw herself on his mercy. She received his promise. Sinners come to Jesus the same way. Nothing to offer. No righteousness. No bargaining power. Just need. Just a plea. Cover me. Protect me. Redeem me.

Ruth's bold initiative secured a human promise. Christ's decisive action secured eternal redemption. What was that decisive action? It was the cross. Jesus did not merely promise to redeem. He paid the price. He bore our sin, our restlessness, our curse, so that we could receive His righteousness, His peace, His rest. He died in our place. And He rose again. The triumphant proof that death is defeated. Because He lives, we can rest. Ruth found rest in the arms of a redeemer. We find rest in the finished work of the Redeemer.

Jesus' great gospel call is, Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Come to Jesus to find rest.

The rest we long for is worth risking for. And the rest we risk for is worth waiting for. But now we hear the gospel call. Come to me to find rest. What does that look like in application?

Application for believers

Believer. You long for rest. You have waited for rest. But where are you still scheming like Naomi? You want a good thing. A marriage. A child. A promotion. A reputation. A ministry. A financial breakthrough. You want it so badly you are willing to use the wrong means to get it. A little manipulation. A little shortcut. A little pressure. A little dishonesty.

It feels urgent. The clock is ticking. The window is closing. So you push. You force. Stop. Ruth did not scheme. She submitted. She trusted her mother-in-law's heart. She trusted Boaz's character. She trusted God's providence.

Good intentions. Reckless methods. And you are exhausted from holding it all together. Here is the call. Stop controlling what only God can provide. Stop manipulating the timing. Stop acting as if the outcome depends on your cleverness. Let go. Wait. Let the Redeemer do His work.

Ruth rested. Boaz was restless. The woman slept. The redeemer did not. You are not the redeemer. You do not need to be. Your job is not to secure your rest. Your job is to trust the One who already has. So identify one situation. One relationship. One decision. One future. Name it. Confess your scheming. Release it to Jesus. And rest in Him.

Application for unbelievers

Unbeliever. You have been trying to find rest. You looked for it in a relationship. A job. A degree. A house. A bank balance. A reputation. A number of followers. A moment of approval. And every time, you came up empty. Just like Naomi. You are exhausted from trying to earn what you cannot buy.

Ruth came to Boaz empty-handed. She had nothing. No status. No money. No bargaining power. No righteousness. Just a plea. Cover me. Protect me. Redeem me. And Boaz said yes. The Redeemer spreads His wings over all who come the same way. No résumé. No negotiation. No deal. Just a plea. Just need. Just trust.

Jesus is not like the world's offers. He does not promise rest if you perform. He promises rest because He performed. He died in your place. He rose for your justification. The debt is paid. The refuge is open. Will you come? Nothing to offer. No conditions. No fine print. Just your empty hands and your exhausted soul. Ask Him. Cover me. Protect me. Redeem me. He will.

Conclusion

Evans and Chido. They got set up. They got engaged. A good desire. A proper plan.

Naomi set Ruth up too. Good desire. Reckless plan.

But God is not paralysed by our scheming.

The rest we long for. The rest we risk for. The rest we wait for. They all lead to one place.

Come to Jesus to find rest.

Believer. Stop scheming. Release control. Rest in the Redeemer's completed work.

Unbeliever. Stop striving. Come empty-handed. Find refuge under His wings.

The Redeemer will not rest until He has resolved it. Come to Jesus to find rest.

Amen.

Close in prayer

Benediction

Benediction.

Homiletic indicators

- The operative word in the sentence is underlined.
- Ꞧ – Instruction
  - **Body:** Natural, one hand gestures.
  - **Voice:** measured, firm.
- ˉ – Unction
  - **Body:** Forward, expressive.
  - **Voice:** Raised, faster.
- ∂ – Fear
  - **Body:** Narrow eyes, still shoulders, lift your chin slightly (exposed posture).
  - **Voice:** Breathy, higher pitch, quick shallow breaths. Speak into the back of the throat.
- Oˀ – Anger
  - **Body:** Jaw forward, stable feet (no shifting weight), sharp hand strikes (karate chop motion).
  - **Voice:** Hard attack on consonants. Drop pitch slightly, but increase volume on key syllables. Staccato.
- P – Happiness
  - **Body:** Relax shoulders, soften the brow. Open palms, wider stance.
  - **Voice:** Rise in melody at the end of phrases. Bright, forward resonance (smile while speaking).
- Å – Sadness
  - **Body:** Heavy eyelids, slight forward slump, hands still or clasped low.
  - **Voice:** Lower volume, monotone descent (each phrase ends lower than it started). Use mostly single-syllable words.
- □ – Disgust
  - **Body:** Wrinkle nose, pull back your head, sharp turning away from the pulpit.
  - **Voice:** Nasal, sharp, with a "negation cadence" (rising then falling sharply on the sin's name). Hard glottal stops.
- ơ – Surprise
  - **Body:** Eyebrows up, slight backward step or open-mouth inhale.
  - **Voice:** Bright, high onset. Use a sudden upward interval (a leap in pitch on the unexpected word).
- ● – Pause
  - **What it does:** Allows the last sentence to land, convict.
  - **Length:** 1 second (colon), 2 seconds (period), 3+ seconds (after a weighty statement).
  - **Body:** Stop moving. Hold eye contact. Do not smile or nod. Let the silence be uncomfortable.
  - **Delivery note:** A pause feels longer to you than to them. Trust it. Hold one more beat than you think is comfortable.

The plot hatched (Ruth 3:1-5): Naomi wants to find rest for Ruth, so she instructs her to approach Boaz, which Ruth commits to.

[1] Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, 'My daughter, shouldn't I find
rest [mā·nō·w·aḥ, comprehensive security associated with marriage and a permanent
home] for you, so that you will be taken care of? [2] Now isn't Boaz our
relative [already revealed to us, Ruth 2:1, 3, 20]? Haven't you been working
with his female servants? This evening [the barley and the wheat harvests have
ended, Ruth 2:23, this evening is time to act with urgency]. he will be winnowing
barley on the threshing-floor [an open-air platform where men winnowed grain,
slept to guard the harvest, and, were known to drink and indulge in sexual license,
Hosea 9:1]. [3] Wash, put on perfumed oil, and wear your best clothes. Go
down to the threshing-floor, but don't let the man know you are there
until he has finished eating and drinking. [4] When he lies down, note the
place where he's lying, go in and uncover his feet, and lie down. Then he
will explain to you what you should do.'

[5] So Ruth said to her, 'I will do everything you say.'

Naomi instructs Ruth to go to the threshing floor and lie at Boaz's feet. Ruth commits to follow her advice.

The obstacle revealed (Ruth 3:6-7): Ruth identifies as Boaz's servant, him as a family redeemer. He blesses her, revealing a closer redeemer.

[6] She went down to the threshing-floor and did everything her mother-in-
law had charged her to do. [7] After Boaz ate, drank, and was in good spirits
[Lit: his heart was merry], he went to lie down at the end of the pile of barley
[isolated], and she came secretly [quietly, stealthily, covertly], uncovered his feet,
and lay down [submission].

After Boaz ate, drank, and was in good spirits.

On the threshing-floor, at the end of the pile of barley.

Ruth lies down at the feet of Boaz.

The pledge given (Ruth 3:8-13): Boaz will ensure the matter is resolved.

[8] At midnight, Boaz was startled [he trembled, was caught totally off guard],
turned over, and there lying at his feet was a woman! [9] So he asked, 'Who
are you?'

'I am Ruth [identification], your servant [submission],' she replied. "Take me
under your wing [a practical metaphor echoing Ruth 2:12], for you are a family
redeemer [gō'ēl, the close family redeemer with the legal duty to buy back family land
and perpetuate the family name].'

[10] Then he said, 'May the Lord bless you, my daughter. You have shown
more kindness [ḥeseḏ, covenant loyalty that goes beyond duty, Ruth 1:8, 2:20] now
than before, because you have not pursued younger men, whether rich or
poor. [11] Now don't be afraid, my daughter. I will do for you whatever
you say, since all the people in my town know that you are a woman of
noble character [Proverbs 31:10]. [12] Yes, it is true that I am a family redeemer,
but there is a redeemer closer than I am [a closer kinsman with prior legal right,

At midnight.

At the feet of Boaz.

Boaz is startled by Ruth, who identifies herself as his servant, and him as a family redeemer. Boaz blesses her, but reveals there is a closer redeemer. But he will ensure Ruth is redeemed one way or the other.

the chiastic flow protects the plot from being mere romance].

13 Stay here tonight [now under my wing/protection], and in the morning, if he
wants to redeem you, that's good. Let him redeem you [a final obstacle]. But
if he doesn't want to redeem you, as the Lord lives [a binding covenantal oath
invoking the Lord as witness], I will. Now lie down until morning [either way
Boaz will ensure the matter is resolved].'

The news shared (Ruth 3:14-15): Boaz blesses Ruth with all the barley she can carry, which she takes back to town.

14 So she lay down at his feet until morning but got up while it was still
dark [pre-dawn twilight, Ruth rushes away at the last possible moment of anonymity]. Then Boaz said, 'Don't let it be known that a woman came to the
threshing-floor [protects her identity].'

In the morning, while it was still dark.

Ruth remained at Boaz's feet.

Boaz addresses his servants.

15 And he told Ruth, 'Bring the shawl you're wearing and hold it out.' When she held it out, he shovelled six measures of barley [the gift is a tangible pledge of his commitment, and its weight signals the seriousness of his oath]
into her shawl, and she went into the town.

Ruth goes into town.

Boaz shovelled six measures of barley into Ruth's shawl.

The waiting begins (Ruth 3:16-18): Now Boaz is not at rest because the issue of Ruth is unresolved.

16 She went to her mother-in-law, Naomi, who asked her, 'What
happened, my daughter?'

Then Ruth told her everything the man had done for her. 17 She said, 'He
gave me these six measures of barley, because he said, "Don't go back to
your mother-in-law empty-handed [same word Naomi used to describe her own bitter return from Moab, Ruth 1:21]."'

18 Naomi said, 'My daughter, wait [šəḇî, sit still, remain quietly, it is out of your hands] until you find out how things go, for he won't rest [yiš·qōṭ, undisturbed, restless] unless he resolves this today.'

Ruth tells her mother-in-law of Boaz's lavish gift and Naomi recognises that Boaz will make sure things end well.

This is how I use colour highlighting:

- Orange: structure indicator, conjunctions, and prepositions.
- Pink: Time.
- Green: Location.
- Blue: Character.
- Yellow: Commentary reference.
- Red: repeated words.

Sermon preparation worksheet

Passage: Ruth 3 **Preaching audience:** Benoni Baptist Church, married, two kids, with a need to be spiritually anchored.

1. How has the author organised this passage? *a) An outline, b) Tools, c) The emphasis.*

a) 1) Naomi's plan and Ruth's commitment (Ruth 3:1-5).

2) Ruth's actions at the threshing floor (Ruth 3:6-7).

3) Boaz's revelation of a closer redeemer and promise to act (Ruth 3:8-13).

4) Boaz's visible pledge and Ruth's return (Ruth 3:14-15).

5) Ruth's report and Naomi's call to wait (Ruth 3:16-18).

b) I identified the text type as narrative with embedded discourse. I observed scene changes (Naomi's house → threshing floor → Naomi's house). Characters (Naomi/Ruth → Ruth/Boaz → Ruth/Naomi). The plot (Ruth's need for rest in Ruth 3:1-5, Ruth's actions in Ruth 3:6-7, Boaz's decision in Ruth 3:8-13, Boaz's pledge in Ruth 3:14-15, and Boaz's restlessness in Ruth 3:16-18). Repeated words (rest, redeemer, wing, empty). All this emphasises Boaz's commitment. There is a possible chiastic structure (A. Naomi's Plan, B. Ruth's Obedience, C. Boaz's Response, D. The Redeemer Revealed but Obstacle Named, C'. Boaz's Solution, B'. Ruth's Return, A'. Naomi's Waiting) which emphasises the closer redeemer.

c) The path to rest requires decisive covenant-keeping action, and even then it must wait on another's response.

2. How does the context inform the meaning of this passage? *a) Literary, b) Historical, c) Cultural, d) Biblical.*

a) In Ruth 2, Ruth's diligent work ethic finds favour with Boaz, who is revealed as a close family redeemer. And Ruth gleaned until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. In Ruth 4, the close family redeemer declines his duty. Boaz marries Ruth. And their genealogy produces King David. This matters because the path to rest requires Ruth's decisive action even while patiently waiting on the redeemer to resolve the matter.

b) The period of the judges was characterised by moral chaos (Judges 21:25), and covenant unfaithfulness, which makes Boaz's righteous, lawful behaviour remarkable. The legal framework of family redeemer (Leviticus 25:25-28 and Deuteronomy 25:5-10) explains why Boaz must defer to a closer redeemer. The threshing floor is where the chaff was separated from the grain. The harvesters slept there to protect the grain which explains why Boaz was there. This matters because the chaos of the period makes Ruth's obedient, covenant-keeping actions stand out, yet even her bold initiative must wait on proper legal resolution.

c) Rest is a comprehensive security associated with marriage and a permanent home. The opposite of Naomi's bitter experience of loss and emptiness. The threshing floor carried connotations of festivity and potential license, heightening the risk Ruth takes. Uncovering Boaz's feet and lying down isn't clearly understood, however it seems best interpreted as a act of submission. Six measures of barley serve as a tangible pledge. The weight is enough to carry but enough to demonstrate Boaz's ability to provide. This matters because Ruth takes decisive action despite the potential risk. She risks her reputation, yet her noble character and Boaz's righteousness protect her. The path to rest demands bold, risky action that submits to cultural and legal processes, requiring patient waiting.

d) The are no explicit Biblical citations or clear allusions in Ruth 3.

3. What is the main point the author is arguing to *his audience?*

Rest requires bold initiative and patient submission to God's appointed means.

4. How does this passage connect to the gospel of Jesus Christ?

The passage connects to the gospel through the metaphor of the protective wing. Ruth asks Boaz to spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer (Ruth 3:9), echoing Boaz's prayer that she would find refuge under Yahweh's wings (Ruth 2:12). Boaz's wing is the human instrument of God's wing. Jesus, the ultimate redeemer, takes up this same imagery. How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing (Matthew 23:37). Ruth comes to Boaz seeking shelter. Sinners come to Jesus seeking salvation. The Redeemer's wing is God's provision of refuge, and Jesus is that refuge made flesh. The encounter functions as a type of Christ's redeeming work. Ruth approaches the redeemer empty-handed, throws herself on his mercy, and receives his promise. The gospel connection functions as fulfilment of the pattern. Sinners come to Christ with nothing but need and find acceptance through the Redeemer's grace. The connection provides the solution to the problem of restlessness. Where Ruth's bold initiative secured a human promise, Christ's decisive action secured eternal redemption. For the believer, the weary, the suffering, the drifting, this means your rest depends not on your performance but on the Redeemer's completed work. You can stop striving. For the unbeliever, coming to Christ requires Ruth's posture, acknowledging emptiness, throwing yourself on His mercy, and trusting His promise to save you. The gospel is not a transaction but a refuge.

5. What is the main point you will argue to *your audience*?

Come to Jesus to find rest.

6. What sermon title and preaching outline will you use to argue your main point?

a) Where to find rest

b) 1) The Rest we long for (Ruth 3:1-5) – Naomi's compromised desire for Ruth's security. Our universal need for rest.

2) The Rest we risk for (Ruth 3:6-13) – Ruth's righteous approach to the redeemer. Sinners coming to Christ.

3) The Rest we wait for (Ruth 3:14-18) – The pledge given. The waiting required. The promise that sustains.

7. How will you apply your main point for the good of your audience? *a) Believers, b) Unbelievers.*

a) After the connect to the gospel. Where are you still trying to earn your rest? The gospel says the Redeemer has acted. Your rest is secure. Recognise that the Lord is your refuge. Identify one situation you are trying to control and release it to Jesus.

b) After the connect to the gospel. You have looked for rest in relationships, career, success, money. And found them all to be hollow. You need a refuge. The Redeemer spreads His wings over all who come. Will you come? With nothing but your need? And ask Him to take you under His wing?

On my sermon preparation sheet, these are the questions and an explanation:

1. **How has the author organised this passage?**
   a) An outline: The author's organization (or structure) is a way of talking about the shape or form of a biblical passage. Beneath the surface of each passage is an underlying arrangement of material and a logic that the author has used to organize the passage. And each part of the passage has a role to play in that structure.
   b) Tools: Identify the text type, and any grammatical tools used to identify the structure.
   c) The emphasis: The structure will reveal an emphasis that the author is making.
2. **How does the context inform the meaning of this passage?**
   a) Literary context: How do the passage that comes before and the passage that comes after relate to your passage?
   b) Historical context: The historical situation or circumstances experienced by the first audience at the time when the book was written.
   c) Cultural context: The setting in the daily life of the people/characters in the book and how that will have been understood by the first audience. This is distinct from historical context in that it does not relate to a particular audience in a particular place at a particular time, but the details of life that the people/characters in the text had in common. Anything that requires extra-biblical knowledge should be treated skeptically.
   d) Biblical context: Is the author citing or alluding to some previously written Biblical passage? What connections could the author have reasonably expected his first audience to make.
3. **What is the main point the author is arguing to his audience?**
   The author's main point is a way of talking about the aim of a passage as a whole. It can be descriptive or prescriptive. It is not simply a summary statement. But rather, it is the idea of which the author is trying to persuade his audience. As you work on articulating the author's argument, please keep in mind that it needs to be specific enough to the passage that it clearly comes from the particular passage (and not any other passage), it is for the first audience, it should be one single sentence that is both short and clear, and captures the argument of the passage.
4. **How does this passage connect to the gospel of Jesus Christ?**
   What part of the gospel (the death and resurrection of Christ) is in view? Every part of the Bible, every passage of Scripture, in some way relates to the gospel of Jesus Christ. What parts of the passage connect to the gospel? The connection must be legitimate and textually driven.
5. **What is the main point you will argue to your audience?**
6. **What applications will you make? a) To believers, b) To unbelievers.**
   The main point of a sermon is the fundamental statement of what you, as a speaker today, are trying to convince your audience today. It will certainly be intimately related to the author's main point for his original audience and it will consider the gospel connection. It should be well reasoned and, perhaps, articulated as the result of proof (so depending on premises and building arguments).
7. **What is your sermon title and your preaching outline? a) Sermon outline, b) Sermon title.**

On my sermon preparation sheet, this is how questions relate to one another:

- 1 a) should be driven by the text.
- 1 c) should be driven from the outline in 1 a).
- 2) should be directly relevant to 1 c).
- 3) cannot be disconnected from 1 c), and should be clarified by 2).
- 4) must be found in the text.
- 5) cannot be disconnected from 3), and should be driven by 4).
- 6) should flow from 5).
- 7) should structurally relate to 1 a), and make the argument in 5).