

Title: **Bringing in the Sheaves (Final Gleanings in Ruth)**

Passage: **Ruth 4:18-22**

Theme: **Central themes of Providence and the Cross**

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{Read Passage}

Sev. folks ask after last wk. if we were done w/the book of Ruth. Unexpected. After all, we finished w/v. 17. There's 1 more section: vv. 18-22. “Ever known me to skip over any verses?” I don't generally skip over any words, much alone vv.

We're done w/the story proper. T/narrative of Naomi, Ruth and Boaz has ended.

But that's just a snapshot of a much bigger story.

I. Act One: The Royal Line with Hope in Ruin (1:1-22)

II. Act Two: The Royal Line with Hope Renewed (2:1-23)

III. Act Three: The Royal Line with Hope at Risk (3:1-18)

IV. Act Four: The Royal Line with Hope Restored (4:1-17)

Epilogue - Royal Rights and The Resultant Redeemer (4:18-22)

Royal Rights are t/rights of a King (David whose name is last).

Resultant Redeemer would be David's great descendant: JC, t/SOG.

This Epilogue = genealogy. We might think that a genealogy is a trivial appendage to t/story ---- fact is genealogies were very imp.

They est. family legitimacy, inheritance rights w/i families, and even political rights related to “the throne” (cf. monarchies today). – David.

As it relates to t/BOR ==>

These last 5 vv. tell us how we got from point A to B.

How did we get from Perez, t/son of Judah, to King David?

How did we get through t/woeful days of Israel known as t/time of t/Judges to t/sunnier days of David, a central fig. in t/entire OT?

The BOR, this genealogy included, show us that in t/dark days of the judges the Royal Line was preserved not by Judges or Kings but by God's good hand – apart from which t/great family of David would have become extinct.

IV. Act Four: The Royal Line with Hope Restored (4:1-17)

A. Scene One: Resolving Legal Matters (vv. 1-12)

B. Scene Two: Romance and Redemption (vv. 13-17)

13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went in to her. And the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. 14 Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed is the LORD who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel. 15 “May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.” 16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her lap, and became his nurse. 17 The neighbor women gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi!” So they named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Epilogue - Royal Rights and The Resultant Redeemer (4:18-22)

18 Now these are the generations of Perez: to Perez was born Hezron, 19 and to Hezron was born Ram, and to Ram, Amminadab, 20 and to Amminadab was born Nahshon, and to Nahshon, Salmon, 21 and to Salmon was born Boaz, and to Boaz, Obed, 22 and to Obed was born Jesse, and to Jesse, David.

1. Verse 18

Now these are the generations of Perez:

Familiar formula to the book of Genesis ==>

Genesis 5:1 THIS is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.

Now these are the generations of Perez:

a. Who was Perez?

Name should be familiar (v. 12).

[elders] **“Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah ...”**

Tamar became a childless widow (Ruth) and her brother-in-law, Onan, refused to carry out his duties in levirate marriage, she tricked her father-in-law, Judah, into a sexual union by posing as a prostitute (Gen. 38). Perez was 1 of the twins born thru that illicit affair.

b. Scholars have asked the question, “Why start the genealogy here?”

Why start w/Perez and not w/his father, Judah, t/better known and more central OT figure?

(a) Connection to v. 12 (above)

Interesting contrasts –

Gen. 38 ends w/the birth of Perez.

Ruth ends with the birth of Obed.

“Levirate Marriage Fail” in Gen. 38.

“Levirate Marriage Success” in Ruth 4.

Eugene H. Merrill, OT scholar at DTS & 2010 Pres. of t/ETS
comments on t/contrasts between Gen. 38 and Ruth ==>

In the Tamar account (Gen 38:14–16) Judah was seduced under the cover of a disguise worn by his daughter-in-law. In the case of Ruth (Ruth 3:6–13), she approached Boaz to propose marriage under the cover of the darkness of night. After it had become apparent that Tamar was pregnant, Judah haled her before the village tribunal in order to accuse her formally of prostitution and seek her death. Instead, he himself was found out and became the object of shame and condemnation (Gen 38:24–26). Similarly, Boaz and Ruth appeared before the elders to announce his redemption of her and their impending marriage. This time the couple was praised and blessed (4:1–12). In each instance, moreover, the “husband” was advanced in age and sired sons when the prospects for doing so would ordinarily be bleak. Most significant of all is the fact that both Tamar and Ruth bore sons in the Davidic/messianic line. This at once is the most evident and precise link binding the two stories together. Jacob’s dying blessing of Judah pronounced, “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” (Gen 49:10).

[Bibliotheca Sacra Volume 142. (1985)., 142(566), 128]

Ruth is t/better Tamar even as Obed, her son w/Boaz, vindicates Perez, Tamar's son w/Judah.

(b) Also have v. 15 (women say of Ruth)

“. . . your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better . . . than seven sons . . .”

There are 7 generations from Perez (v. 18) to Boaz (v. 21). Poetic.

Now these are the generations of Perez: to Perez was born Hezron,

2. Verse 19

and to Hezron was born Ram, and to Ram, Amminadab,

Amminadab = Aaron's father-in-law (Exod. 6:23).

3. Verse 20

and to Amminadab was born Nahshon, and to Nahshon, Salmon,
Nahshon lead t/tribe of Judah during t/years of wilderness wandering.

4. Verse 21

and to Salmon was born Boaz, and to Boaz, Obed,

Timeline – Brings us up to date in Ruth. We now look future.

5. Verse 22

and to Obed was born Jesse,

1 Samuel 16:1 **Now the LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons.”**

and to Jesse, David. (David was t/youngest of Jesse's 8 sons)

Bringing in the Sheaves (Final Gleanings in Ruth)

I. The Depth of God's Providence

II. The Trajectory of the Cross

A. Big Picture

B. Little Picture

Depth/width to God's providence, His ruling over all creation.

Also a trajectory – crossward.

I. The Depth of God's Providence

A. Big Picture

This is something we've seen t/o t/book & we touched on it last wk. Not only t/fact of God's providential governance over His creation, but how he uses little things to accomplish His big purposes.

We have a tiny obscure village, Beth. Localized famine. Unknown family (husb, wife, 2 sons). We have a pagan land, Moab & a young Moabite woman. She, along w/her mother-in-law & a go'el (near relative) named Boaz would become central fig. in t/story. Story that goes beyond them to an heir, a son named Obed & beyond him to a King, David & beyond that king to t/King of Kings, JC.

At 1 level it's about covt. faithfulness (Hesed) between family members
Another level it's about God's Hesed to His people.

At 1 level it's about tears of pain transformed into tears of joy.
Another level it's about t/eternal joys of seeing and savoring a Savior.

Behind t/frowns and joys of life is a good God who orchestrates all things according to His good purposes.

A. Big Picture

BP relates to this grand theological doctrine of providence, God's government of the universe. As theologian R.C. Sproul writes ==>

He rules His creation w/absolute sovereignty & authority. He governs everything that comes to pass, from t/greatest to t/least. Nothing ever happens beyond t/scope of His sovereign providential government. He makes t/rain to fall & t/sun to shine. He raises up kingdoms & brings them down. He numbers the hairs on our head & the days of our life.

Jn. Calvin (a theol. & I think a c.) First, then, let the reader remember that the providence we mean is not one by which the Deity, sitting idly in heaven, looks on at what is taking place in the world, but by which He, as it were, holds the helm and overrules all events. Hence his providence extends not less to the hand than to the eye. That is to say, He not only sees, but ordains what he wills to be done. [Institutes, 175]

Psalm 135:6 **Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.**

Isaiah 46:10 **Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';**

That's lofty / high / immense.

But another aspect of that immensity is how God uses ordinary people and secondary means to those same ends.

God's use of secondary causes is no less providential.

Concurrence. "Coterminous actions of God and men." Sproul ==> We make things happen. Yet the causal power we exert is secondary. God's sovereign providence stands over and above our actions. He works out His will through the actions of human wills, without violating the freedom of those human wills. The clearest example of concurrence that we find in Scripture is in the case of Joseph and his brothers. Though Joseph's brothers incurred true guilt through their treachery against him, the providence of God was working even through their sin. Joseph said to his brothers, "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive" (Genesis 50:20).

Concurrence in Ruth.

Elimelech decides to leave Beth. (ch 1).

Ruth “chances upon” a field belonging to Boaz who just happens to be a near relative. (ch. 2)

Naomi concocts a plan Risky righteousness on a threshing floor (ch 3)

Legal issues that come up later in that chapter (Boaz states he wasn't t/nearest kinsman & didn't have lawful rights of redemption)

Legal proceedings in ch. 4 where t/unnamed nearer go'el is offered Elimelech's estate (Boaz' cunning in how he offers it).

Concurrence. Why where there's a big picture there are lots of little pictures (postage stamp-sized works of art I talked about last wk.).

B. Little Picture

You may not see it, but God is at work (esp. when we don't see it).

For t/believer, t/road to glory isn't a flat, straight path. It's filled w/turns and hills and delays and what seem like detours.

The road to glory isn't a straight line, BUT God will get us there.

1. Do all of our stories have happy endings?

Depends. In this life or t/next?

Admittedly, t/BOR ends on a high note. It's a story w/a crisis beginning and a happy ending.

Naomi who is embittered in chapter 1

20 And she said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.21 “I went out full, but the LORD has brought me back empty.

Finds her suffering turned into rejoicing in ch. 4 ==>

4 Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed is the LORD who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel.15 “May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.” 16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her lap, and became his nurse.

In God's providence this story has a 'happy ending'. But not every story does, or should. The ultimate happy ending is when we inherit the kingdom.

In our narcissistic culture we know little of what it means to sacrifice, to suffer for a greater good.

“The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick with longing for the things it has forbidden to itself.” — Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Ruth was willing to devote herself to t/life of an old maid out of her devotion for her mother-in-law, Naomi.

One writer calls it “a sort of reversed sexual allegiance where she was going to be content to remain a widow, unmarried, in a culture that was so dependent on the role of fathers and husbands.”

We live in an age where t/idea is to be happy. Considered a fundamental right of every human being. If divorcing my wife makes me happy, I ought to do it. If flitting from paramour to paramour like bees upon daisies makes me happy, I ought to do it.

We've erased boundaries of decency and replaced them w/the reckless freedoms of unbridled liberty.

It's not all about what you can get out of this world.

How foolish to scratch and claw for worldly pleasure all one's life only to die and face an eternal hell.

How wise to savor t/joys of knowing and serving JC, even in suffering and self-sacrifice, so that one can enjoy Him for all eternity.

Application in our culture today – for singles – and even for those who struggle with same-sex attractions. One can devote one's life to celibacy, if necessary, as a corollary to inheriting eternal life.

Flies in the face of our culture that screams, “everyone ought to have a right to be happy.”

Luke 9:23–25 23 . . . “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. 24 “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. 25 “For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?

(Mark 8:37 – You?)

Scottish preacher William M. Taylor [d. 1902]

“Not every story that begins so sadly as this did has so sweet and pleasant an ending. Not always are virtue, piety, constancy, and self-sacrifice so visibly rewarded upon the earth. But we are not on that account to think less of the providence of God; for virtue is not to be

pursued because of its reward, and right is to be done for its own sake —nay, rather, for the sake of God. Then, when the end shall come . . . we shall see the vindication of Jehovah." [Cited by Barber, 125]

That the afflictions that do attend the saints in the ways of holiness, are but short and momentary. 'Sorrow may abide for a night, but ? joy comes in the morning' (Ps. 30.5). This short storm will end in an everlasting calm, this short night will end in a glorious day, that shall never have end.' It is but a very short time between grace and glory, between our title to the crown and our wearing the crown, between our right to the heavenly inheritance and our possession of the heavenly inheritance. Fourteen thousand years to the Lord is but as one day. What is our life but a shadow, a bubble, a flower, a post, a span, a dream? Yea, so small a while doth the hand of the Lord rest upon us, that Luther cannot get diminutives enough to extenuate it, for he calls it a very little cross that we bear. . . It will be but as a day before God will give his afflicted ones beauty for ashes, the oil of gladness for the spirit of heaviness; before he will turn all your sighing into singing, all your lamentations into consolations, your sack-cloth into silks, ashes into ointments, and your fasts into everlasting feasts. [Thomas Brooks in Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, 84-85]

That brings us to our second point ==>

II. The Trajectory of the Cross

A. Big Picture

T/scarlet thread that weaves its way from David, t/last work of chapter 4, to t/Gospel of Matthew.

1. With David comes the Davidic Covenant

God promises that he will est. for David a permanent dynasty.

“Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.”

a. Where is that find fulfillment?

Matthew 1:1–17 1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 2 To Abraham was born Isaac; and to Isaac, Jacob; and to Jacob, Judah and his brothers; 3 and to Judah were born Perez and Zerah by Tamar; and to Perez was born Hezron; and to Hezron, Ram; 4 and to Ram was born Amminadab; and to Amminadab, Nahshon; and to Nahshon, Salmon; 5 and to Salmon was born Boaz by Rahab; and to Boaz was born Obed by Ruth; and to Obed, Jesse; 6 and to Jesse was born David the king. And to David was born Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah; 7 and to Solomon was born Rehoboam; and to Rehoboam, Abijah; and to Abijah, Asa; 8 and to Asa was born Jehoshaphat; and to Jehoshaphat, Joram; and to Joram, Uzziah; 9 and to Uzziah was born Jotham; and to Jotham, Ahaz; and to Ahaz, Hezekiah; 10 and to Hezekiah was born Manasseh; and to Manasseh, Amon; and to Amon, Josiah; 11 and to Josiah were born Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. 12 And after the deportation to Babylon, to Jeconiah was born Shealtiel; and to Shealtiel, Zerubbabel; 13 and to Zerubbabel was born Abihud; and to Abihud, Eliakim; and to Eliakim, Azor; 14 and to Azor was born Zadok; and to Zadok, Achim; and to Achim, Eliud; 15 and to Eliud was born Eleazar; and to Eleazar, Matthan; and to Matthan, Jacob; 16 and to Jacob was born Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17 Therefore all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the time of Christ fourteen generations.

Acts 13:22–23 (Paul preaching) 22 “After He [God] had removed him [Saul], He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, ‘I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will.’ 23 “From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus,

(1) Go'el – the “kinsman redeemer”

In t/OT there are 5 aspects of t/redemptive function of a gō'ēl

1. To ensure that the hereditary property of the family stays in the family (Lev 25:25–30)
2. To ensure the freedom of individuals within the family by buying them back (redeem) when they were forced to sell themselves into slavery because of poverty (Lev 25:47–55)
3. To avenge a murder (Num 35:12, 19–27).
Judicial. If your close kin was murdered you had t/right of execution.
4. To receive restitution on behalf of a deceased victim of a crime (Num 5:8). Financial settlement.
5. To ensure that justice is served in a court case involving a relative.

Not just anyone could function as a go'el. There were qualifications. Had 2 b a near/blood relative. He had to act.

2. Transition

Kinsman Redeemer had to be able to pay the price

Kinsman Redeemer had to be willing to pay the price

a. Jesus Christ – Our Go'el!

Was he able to pay the price to redeem us from our sin?

Qualified?

Hebrews 2 3 how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?
14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself
likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render
powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and
might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all
their lives. 17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all
things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in
things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the
people.

God and Man.

John 10:15 . . . I lay down My life for the sheep.

Kinsman Redeemer had to be able to pay the price

Kinsman Redeemer had to be willing to pay the price

John 10:18 18 “No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down
on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have
authority to take it up again . . .

1. To ensure that the hereditary property of the family stays in the
family

Peter tells us we have an inheritance which is imperishable and
undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven . . .

2. To ensure the freedom of individuals within the family by buying
them back (redeem) when they were forced to sell themselves into
slavery because of poverty (Lev 25:47–55)

We were purchased out of the slave market of sin, in bondage in
Egypt. God purchased us and made us slaves of Christ.

5. To ensure that justice is served in a court case involving a relative.

1 John 2:1 **My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;**

Glory of Christ - He comes from t/nations & He dies for t/nations. The blood of not just Jews, but all peoples ran in His veins that He might redeem all peoples.

Revelation 5:9 **And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.**

B. Little Picture

Ruth was an idolatrous Moabite before God pursued her. She didn't merit this pursuit, it was free, that is the way God pursues you add me.

1. Trajectory of the cross

Encompasses sin, evil decisions of men.

Here's where it all comes together. Big & Little; Good & Evil. God is sovereign over it all.

In fact, as John Piper observes, there is no Cross apart from God's sovereignty over sin.

We ask: Can it really be that God governs the sinful acts of men to make them serve his wise purposes without himself being a sinner?

Yes, he can. If he cannot, then there is no Christian gospel. The gospel is the good news that Christ died for our sins.

Acts 4:27-28 Truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

This means that what Herod, Pilate, the soldiers, and the mobs did to Jesus was planned by God. And all those acts against Jesus were sin. God does not sin. He is holy (Isaiah 6:3). He "is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). He is "the Father of lights" from whom comes "every good gift and every perfect gift" (James 1:17). But he clearly ordained that the murder of his Son happen. In other words, when we see God's sovereignty at work in the book of Ruth preparing the line of a king, even though asking for that king was sin, we are seeing the kind of divine work that is necessary for the redemption of the world. There could be no crucifixion if there were no crucifiers.

Perhaps someone may think that this heady theology about God's ruling over sin without being sinful himself is too high to be practically helpful. Joni Eareckson Tada and her coauthor Steve Estes have found it otherwise.

Joni has been almost completely paralyzed from the neck down from a diving accident when she was seventeen years old. During a bleak period of doubt and anger, a friend introduced her to Steve Estes. They began to study the Bible together. "She came to the classically Reformed belief that her injury was an expression of God's love. To put it simply, Scripture taught Tada that her soul was infinitely more important than her body."

She explains, I was heading down a path of self-destruction [before my accident]. . . . I was checking out a birth-control clinic to get some pills, because I knew I'd be sleeping with my boyfriend in college. Somewhere in that mess of emotions and regrets and falterings and failings, while making a sham of my Christian faith, somewhere in that desperation I said, "God, rescue me." And he did. I believe my accident was a direct answer.

Some people might want to say indirect, but I lean toward the old adage that God draws straight lines with crooked sticks.

In other words, when God ordains something crooked, he himself is not doing anything crooked. When told that many people would say, "How dare you say God did that?" she recalls that she had the same question for Steve Estes. "How in the world can you say this accident was God's will?" Here's where God's sovereignty over the cross of Christ becomes so relevant.

She recalls that Steve answered, Let me answer that question by asking you a question. Do you believe that when Jesus died on the cross, that was God's will? . . .

Well, think about it for a minute, because Jesus was handed over for 30 pieces of silver, drunken soldiers pulled his beard out, then beat him mercilessly in that back room. The mob screamed, "Crucify him."

How can that be God's will? Torture, injustice, murder, treason. How could any of that be God's will?

Joni remembers, "He had me. Because I knew that God the Father's plan was for his Son to go to the cross."

These insights led Joni to the deep and unshakable conviction that the pains of life are not exceptions to God's love for his children. They are expressions of his love. "There are more important things than walking," she says.

Maybe death is supposed to be hard. Maybe it's supposed to be a taste of hell. . . . Oh, thank you, thank you for this wheelchair! By tasting hell in this life, I've been driven to think seriously about what faces me in the next. This paralysis is my greatest mercy.

A vision of God as absolutely supreme over all the evil of the world—natural and moral—has set Joni Eareckson Tada free to love others. Tim Stafford, who interviewed Joni for an article in Christianity Today, said, "Heaven has pulled her out of herself, and into the lives of other sufferers. Heaven has made Tada an activist." God's sovereignty over sin, even the world's worst sin--murdering the Son of God—was not too high to help Joni Eareckson Tada. And it is not too high to help you. [John Piper, A Sweet and Bitter Providence]

It was according to the determinate counsel of God. Judas's act of wickedness helped to bring about the best thing that ever happened in history. It is not insightful that we refer to that day in history as Good Friday.

Ruth? A story 3k years ago? A story that ended, but really didn't.