

RUTH OVERVIEW –

Brian Bill: Many people have said that the Book of Ruth is the most beautiful short story ever written. It's an account of anxiety, fear, love, and commitment that inflames the imagination and soothes the soul. It begins with despair and ends with delight.

David Brock: The Book of Ruth is one of the most delightful literary compositions of the ancient world. The narrator is a master at painting word pictures. He skillfully employs the techniques of dialogue, characterization, repetition, reticence, ambiguity, suspense, wordplays, inclusions, et cetera to produce this moving work of art.

Ruth 1:1-5: Introductory Background

Now it came about in the days when the judges governed, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the land of Moab with his wife and his two sons. ² And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife, Naomi; and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah. Now they entered the land of Moab and remained there. ³ Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left with her two sons. ⁴ And they took for themselves Moabite women as wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. And they lived there about ten years. ⁵ Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; and the woman was bereft of her two children and her husband.

- So we know the **historical setting** = in the time of the judges – with all of the rebellion and apostasy, we can assume that the famine was part of God's judgment (**Lev. 26:18-20; Deut. 28:23-24**) at some point during this time period – maybe during Gideon's judgeship
- Planned for just a temporary stay = a “sojourn” – but turned into an extended stay of 10 years
- The **names** in the book all have significant meaning
 - City of Bethlehem = *house of bread* – but severe famine hits
 - Elimelech = *my God is king*
 - Naomi = *pleasant* – she will be asked to be called Mara = *bitter*
One of the key story lines – Naomi accuses the Lord of being unkind to her and dealing bitterly with her; but the Lord is vindicated as being extremely kind
 - Mahlon and Chilion = *sick* and *pining* – don't sound very robust physically
 - Orpah = *stubborn*
 - Ruth = *friendship*
- **Author** is not named; some again speculate the prophet Samuel but we don't know – unlikely since Samuel died before the coronation of King David –
cf. **1 Sam. 25:1 – death of Samuel; 2 Sam. 2:4 – coronation of King David**

You have probably heard before the story of God's Tapestry of Divine Providence:

Tapestry has been a form of textile art for centuries. The weavers are artists who can create very intricate designs, and make such a breathtaking and desirable tapestries. When you look at a tapestry hanging on a wall, you see a completely spectacular and perfect work of art. The form, the colours, the texture, and the patterns make a tapestry a display of surpassing beauty. A real

masterpiece. But when you view the other side of the tapestry, it appears to be nothing more than a bunch of disparate threads; hanging, tangled, contorted, random, and seemingly rough. It has no resemblance to the image at the front side.

From one perspective, our life may look like the front of the tapestry — whole, beautiful and perfect. But things are not always what they seem. Turn the tapestry over, it's a different perspective, it's in disarray, chaotic, and worthless. Nothing makes sense. And often without clarity and understanding of how everything works together.

Sometimes God gives us a glimpse at what He is weaving into the fabric of our lives. Nothing happens by chance. No thread of experience, whether good or bad, is wasted. Whereas God always look at the **bigger picture**, we only focus on the tiny and insignificant thing. When things appear to be dreary, we just have to remind ourselves that we are simply looking at the backside of the tapestry. And the Artist — the 'One' weaving it together has a plan and knows precisely what He is doing. On days when we convince ourselves that our lives are in chaos, and everything seems to be falling apart, God thinks differently. The Lord is not only the thread that runs throughout His handiwork but He is the One who holds it together to make His creation beautiful, perfect and priceless.

BIG IDEA: The kind providence of God secures redemption and establishes the Messianic hope even for destitute Gentiles.

DEFINITION OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE - Wayne Grudem

God is continually involved with all created things in such a way that he

- (1) keeps them existing and maintaining the properties with which he created them;
- (2) cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do; and
- (3) directs them to fulfill his purposes

KEY VERSE:

Ruth 4:14 *"Blessed is the Lord who has not left you without a redeemer today"*

MAIN FOCUS OF THE BOOK:

- The Redemption of Ruth and Naomi
 - The Redeemer and His Lineage
 - o Boaz the Kinsman-Redeemer
 - o the Royal Line leading to King David and the ultimate Son of David, the Messiah;
- Matt. 1:5** – Obed then to Jesse then to David

EXPANDED SUMMARY:

This beautiful love story is one of only two books in the Bible named for women (Esther is the other); and not just a woman but a Gentile woman at that. Tucked away in the transition between the times of the Judges and the inception of the monarchy, the story of Ruth is pivotal to the integrity of the Messianic line which will develop from the root of King David. Much rich theology about the person and role of Jesus Christ as our Redeemer can be traced to the typology centered around the figure of Boaz. The kind providence of God uses seemingly insignificant

people and events to accomplish critical kingdom objectives. The loyalty and devotion of Ruth is rewarded with unimaginable blessing that spills over to all those who come to embrace the Lord Jesus as their Redeemer.

CONTRASTS WITH BOOK OF JUDGES

Go from the R rated scenes of Judges where you have graphic violence to the G rated Hallmark movie love story of the book of Ruth – where all the drama is neatly resolved in 4 quick chapters

1. Tone and Mood

- **Judges:** Dark, chaotic, and violent. The book often depicts moral decline, civil war, idolatry, and lawlessness.
- **Ruth:** Gentle, hopeful, and redemptive. It focuses on kindness, loyalty, and God's providence.

2. Main Themes

- **Judges:** Decline of Israel due to disobedience; the cyclical pattern of apostasy: sin, servitude, supplication and repentance, and salvation and rest
- **Ruth:** Faithfulness and redemption; how God works through ordinary lives and faithful choices.

3. Scope

- **Judges:** Tribal conflicts, battles, and judges leading portions of Israel.
- **Ruth:** Domestic and personal – centers on a single family in Bethlehem.

4. Heroes

- **Judges:** Flawed and Inconsistent
- **Ruth:** Righteous and Faithful

5. Divine Role

- **Judges:** God is active in judgment and deliverance but often distant; the people frequently ignore Him.
- **Ruth:** God's providence is subtle but steady, working behind the scenes through seemingly mundane events.

6. Ending

- **Judges:** Ends with civil war vs. Benjamin and the repeated line: “*In those days there was no king in Israel...*”
- **Ruth:** Ends with the genealogy of **David**, Israel's greatest king – a note of hope and continuity. Points to the coming Messiah-King

VALUES OF THE BOOK: (cf. **Bill McRae**)

- **Literary** Value: beautiful pastoral love story – a pleasure to read; Simple but very profound; would have lasting value just as literature – how much more given its theological significance
- **Historical** Values

- Presents marked contrast with book of Judges as we just have seen – isolated examples of godliness and faithfulness exist in the overall context of apostasy
- Links the theocracy (where God rules directly over His people) to the monarchy
- Provides the ancestry of David – which provides the Messianic line as seen in the NT genealogy of Christ in **Matt. 1:3-6**
- **Moral** Value: high ideals of married life in the OT – in contrast to what we see regarding polygamy, concubines, etc.; emphasizes the ideals of loyalty and kindness
- **Doctrinal** Values
 - Insights into the Providence of God – how God is always working behind the scenes to carry out His sovereign agenda
 - Scope of the Grace of God – Ruth is a Gentile – included in God’s plan of redemption
 - Insight into way of salvation in the OT; she was converted when she accepted as her own personal God the God of Israel – act of faith; she was not saved because of her family connection to Naomi or because she moved to the land of Israel
 - Importance of the different aspects of God’s covenant promise to Abraham and his descendants – look at the importance of the land; the blessing that will come even to the Gentiles
- **Typical** Value – Role of the kinsman-redeemer; love story between Christ and His Church – we will discuss this in **Chap. 4**

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK: the 4 chapters form the 4 sections of the book

- I. (Chap. 1) **Ruth’s Bankruptcy** – Loyal Family Devotion in Tragic Circumstances
- II. (Chap. 2) **Ruth’s Befallings** – Lessons about the Kind Providence of God
Events that seemed to happen to her by chance
- III. (Chap. 3) **Ruth’s Boldness** – Looking to Boaz for Redemption and Security
- IV. (Chap. 4) **Ruth’s Blessing** – Love Consummated – Redemption, Marriage, Lineage
Reversal of her tragic circumstances of Chap. 1

I. (1:1-2) RUTH’S BANKRUPTCY --
Difficult Trials Test the Loyalty of Our Commitment to God’s Lovingkindness –
3 Approaches to the Difficult Trials God Brings Our Way

A. (:1-5) The Legacy of Elimelech – [already read this paragraph]
Fleeing Trials – Trusting in the Flesh – Hitting Rock Bottom in Moab –
 The Backdrop of the Sad Consequences of Sinful Choices

You can’t run from your problems – especially since your main problem is YOU – you especially can’t run from the Lord’s discipline; He will persist in finding a way to teach you the lessons you need to learn

Warren Wiersbe: A family makes a bad decision and exchanges one famine for three funerals.

B. (:6-14a) The Lament of Naomi –

Grieving Trials – Limiting Your Vision to the Hopelessness of Your Present Circumstances – The Burden of Guilt and Desperation

Naomi had some **very real reasons to complain** –

- had experienced famine and hardship in the Promised Land;
- left everything behind to flee to a foreign land
- raised 2 sons in the foreign land of Moab;
- her husband died; her sons married local girls (against the law of God);
- then both died before fathering any children;
- now her husband's name would fail;
- the definition of a failure

C. (:14b-22) The Loyal Devotion of Ruth –

Cleaving to Trials – Walking by Faith – Back to Bethlehem –

The Bravery of Ruth's Commitment vs the Bitterness of Naomi's Reaction to the Lord's Hand of Discipline

2 daughters-in-law stood at a crossroads with the opportunity to choose; Orpah turned back; Ruth went on with Naomi; a journey of 50 miles from Moab to Bethlehem; Ruth showing great kindness to Naomi

The great contrast between Orpah and Ruth should remind one of the story of the 2 thieves on the cross:

One was saved that none might despair, but only one that none may presume

1) (:14b-18) The Bravery of Ruth's Loyal Commitment

- Committed to sticking with Naomi – involves leaving and cleaving (:14b-16a)
Often used in wedding ceremonies as an expression of commitment
- Committed to changing nationalities (:16b)
- Committed to changing her God (:16c)
- Committed on a permanent basis (:17-18)

2) (:19-21) The Bitterness of Naomi's Reaction to the Lord's Hand of Discipline

- Not the type of homecoming one would desire; think of all the gossip over the years; you could probably see her bitterness in her countenance
- Tone of Bitterness pervades her outlook; amazing that it does not corrupt Ruth's spirit
- Prospect for New Beginnings in the Promised Land of Blessing
She thought she was returning empty-handed; but she had the blessing of Ruth's companionship and it was the time of the barley harvest; **there was hope**

II. (2:1-23) RUTH'S BEFALLINGS --

The Kind Providence of God Surprises Us as We Act Diligently and Responsibly in Our Journey of Faith –

3 Surprising Blessings of the Kind Providence of God

A. (:1-7) The Kind Providence of God Directs Us Into Favorable Circumstances that are Divine Appointments – **We Need to Take Initiative and Step Out in Faith**

Introduced to the key character of **Boaz** = *in Him* (Jehovah) *is strength*

- A close relative – possibly a nephew of Elimelech
- A man of great wealth; a mighty man of valor; a man of standing – same words used of Gideon and Jephthah (**Jud 6:12; 11:1**)

Divine appointments don't negate personal initiative (**vs. 2**)

Risky undertaking for young and attractive widow with no male protection in a wicked culture
Providence presents itself as a random stroke of luck (:3)

Noble character of Boaz reflected in his words of faith and relationship with his workers (:4)

B. (:8-16) The Kind Providence of God Provides For Our Needs and Protects Us as We Trust in God's Favor – **We Need to Act Responsibly and Work Hard**

Huey: A vivid idiom describes her faith: "*under whose wings you have come to take refuge.*" It pictures a tiny bird snuggling under the wings of its mother (cf. **Deut 32:11**). The word for "*wing*" is also the word for the "*skirt*" or "**robe**" of a man (cf. **3:9**, where it is so used). Figuratively the idiom symbolizes **God as the Protector** (**Ps 36:7; 57:1; 91:4**).

2 key days in Ruth's life after Introduction in Chap. 1:

- Chap. 2 = the day she was **fed**
- Chaps 3-4 = the day she was **wed**

Boaz took an ordinary occasion and transformed it into a glorious demonstration of compassion, generosity, and acceptance – in short, the biblical understanding of *hesed*.

C. (:17-23) The Kind Providence of God Surpasses Our Expectations of Divine Blessing – We Need to Persevere and Give God the Glory in Testifying to His Lovingkindness

2:17 An ephah of barley would have weighed about 30 to 50 pounds and was enough for one to two months worth of provision.

2:20 -- Victor Yap: Illustration: **Meditating on the Kind Providence of God**

A friend sent me an e-mail with the subject "**An Everyday Survival Kit.**" However, this survival kit does not have a flashlight, a blanket, food, or the normal emergency-preparedness stuff. Here are its contents:

- Toothpick - to remind you to pick out the good qualities in others...**Matt. 7:1**
- Rubber band - to remind you to be flexible, things might not always go the way you want, but it will work out...**Rom. 8:28**
- Band Aid - to remind you to heal hurt feelings, yours or someone else's...**Col. 3:12-14**
- Pencil - to remind you to list your blessings everyday...**Eph. 1:3**
- Eraser - to remind you that everyone makes mistakes, and it's okay...**Gen. 50:15-21**
- Chewing gum - to remind you to stick with it and you can accomplish anything...**Phil.**

4:13

- Mint - to remind you that you are worth a mint to your God...**John 3:16-17**
- Candy kiss - to remind you that everyone needs a kiss or a hug everyday...**1 John 4:7**
- Tea bag - to remind you to relax daily and go over that list of God's blessings...**1 Thess. 5:18**

III. (3:1-18) RUTH'S BOLDNESS --

Because Our Redeemer is Not Only Willing and Able But Righteous, We Should Be Bold in Approaching Him For Rest and Security

Waiting on the Lord vs. Pathway of Expediency

Difficult passage to interpret: a couple of preliminary observations:

- Start with the basic presupposition of the **moral integrity** of both Boaz and Ruth
- Recognize that Naomi was not above trying to speed up the process of making a connection between Ruth and Boaz

A. (:1-5) Human Wisdom Can Lead to Compromising Situations When the Pathway of Expediency Trumps the Walk of Faith

1) Urgent and Legitimate Need for the Security of Marriage

3:1 George Lawson: So the question in chapter three becomes, where are they going to find a place of **permanent security**? And that's exactly how Ruth chapter three in verse one opens up. Then Naomi, her mother-in-law said to her, my daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? In other words, Naomi realizes that **Ruth needs more than just a temporary solution**. You don't just need a one to two month plan. You may be provided for in this season, but what about next season? And if nothing changes, you're going to be in the exact same position next year that you were at the beginning of this year. So the question is, **where are you going to find security**? That word security literally means a place of tranquility and repose. [a resting place; settled habitation – **Ruth 1:9**] It's a place where your heart can be at peace, rest, freedom from concern and worry. And this specific context here, as one commentator points out, it refers to the condition of security and rest afforded a woman in Israel by **marriage**.

Ultimately we need to come to the Redeemer for our rest: **Matt. 11:28-30** "*Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.*"

2) Boldness in trying to make connection with Boaz

Was Naomi acting out of expediency and putting Ruth in a dangerous situation or was she acting out of faith and trusting in the Lord to provide? Seems to be sort of a mixed bag

How long can we wait for Boaz to take action and initiate something here?? There are other maids in the picture as well – speaks to the competition for his affections. Naomi's patience has worn thin. She has come up with a plan.

The picture of redemption in the Scriptures always starts with the **initiative of God** ... not that

we can get every detail to mesh when we speak in terms of spiritual analogies, etc. – but we at least have some reason to suspect that Naomi may be jumping the gun here.

Bob Deffinbaugh: I take the text at face value. I do not believe that there is some unique cultural interpretation here. Folks, when a woman bathes, puts on perfume and 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 in any way but what we all assume. I think we can agree that Naomi was not above resorting to **expediency** to try to achieve her good intentions for Ruth. She might have wanted to speed up the process of waiting upon the working of the Providence of God.

Certainly as Ruth obeys she ends up in a potentially compromising situation – but what transpires highlights even more the noble and virtuous character of Boaz who does not take advantage of the situation.

Ruth can therefore obey the instructions of her mother-in-law and at the same time trust in Boaz's integrity and the providence of the Lord to protect her in this awkward situation.

B. (:6-13) Compromising Situations Can Be Successfully Navigated By Godly Men and Women of Integrity

Did Ruth seduce Boaz here? Text does not support that; what she did was **honorable**; she had the right to ask a near relative to be her protector

Ruth taking a lot of initiative but this was a very special circumstance

This is not presented as the model example for how we should counsel our virgin daughters to pursue God's blessing of a godly husband. Not a Matchmaker Manual.

Why did Boaz not initiate a proposal of marriage? Evidently for two reasons:

- He assumed Ruth wanted to marry a younger man, closer to her own age (**v. 10**), Not quite a Bill Belichick / Jordan Hudson type of age gap – but pretty large
- and he was not the closest eligible male relative (**v. 12**).

Vs. 9 -- *Pulling the edge of the garment over her*; not a euphemism for sexual immorality but a sign of providing her with appropriate protection – and to do that by **pursuing marriage**

Concept of Levirate marriage: **GotQuestions.org**

A levirate marriage is literally a “**marriage with a brother-in-law**.” The word *levirate*, which has nothing to do with the tribe of Levi, comes from the Latin word *levir*, “*a husband's brother*.” In ancient times, if a man died without a child, it was common for the man's unmarried brother to marry the widow in order to provide an heir for the deceased.

Levirate marriage became part of the Law in **Deuteronomy 25:5–6**. There, the Israelites are commanded to care for women whose husbands died before they had children. An unmarried brother of the deceased man bore a responsibility to marry his sister-in-law: God called it “the

duty of a brother-in-law” (**Deuteronomy 25:5**). God’s purpose for levirate marriage is stated: “*The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel*” (**verse 6**). In ancient Israel the passing on of the family name and the inheritance within a tribe were vitally important (see **Numbers 36:7** and **1 Kings 21:3**).

Ruth asked Boaz to be her “**kinsman-redeemer**”; that is, to marry her and preserve the land her husband had owned (**Ruth 3:9**). Boaz agreed but informed Ruth that there was one other relative of nearer kin; the obligation to marry Ruth and redeem her land fell on him first (**verse 12**). As it turned out, the nearer relative officially transferred his right of redemption to Boaz, clearing the way for Boaz to marry Ruth and “*maintain the name of the dead with his property*” (**Ruth 4:5**).

Vs. 11 – *woman of excellence* – Just as Boaz referred to as a *man of excellence* in **2:1** – great wealth, substance, military prowess

Proverbs 31:10 “*An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.*”

The highest praise you could give a potential bride

Certainly an excellent union!

C. (:14-18) Faith in the Kind Providence of God Means Waiting on the Lord Instead of Rashly Pursuing the Path of Expediency

Vs. 17 – *six measures of barley* – The Hebrew text does not specify the standard of measurement. Some translations insert ephah – but 6 ephahs would weigh 200 lbs = too much for Ruth to carry back to Naomi. So it was some lesser measurement ... but still considerable.

Vs. 18 – expectation that Boaz would take immediate action and there soon would be a resolution one way or another

Block: With this statement the curtain falls on Act 3. All the characters have played their roles perfectly. Naomi has taken the initiative and gotten the ball rolling. Ruth has carried out her delicate and daring scheme, and Boaz has responded right on cue. The reader as witness to the drama waits with Ruth to see “*how the matter will fall.*”

IV. (4:1-17) RUTH’S BLESSINGS -- **A Redeemer Who is Willing, Qualified and Capable Brings Abundant Blessing in Delivering Outcasts Who Were Desperate and Destitute** Reversal of Tragic Circumstances of Chap. 1

Love Relationship reflects Christ and His Bride: Typology

- Boaz is a type of Christ – he is the one who redeems Ruth; purchases her family’s land and herself; then marries her, assuming the responsibilities of a kinsman-redeemer
- Ruth is a picture of the Church – Gentile girl; redeemed by Boaz and brought into a covenant relationship with God

The type of redemption involved includes both persons and their inheritance

Lev. 25:25 *“If a fellow countryman of yours becomes so poor he has to sell part of his property, then his nearest kinsman is to come and buy back what his relative has sold.”*

A. (:1-6) The Redeemer Must Be Willing –

Contrast Between Boaz and the Unnamed Closest Relative –

This was the “*fullness of time*” for Boaz to act –

Gal. 4:4-7 *“But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ Therefore you are not longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.”*

“Behold I have Come to Do Your Will, O God” (Heb. 10:7)

This unnamed individual is presented as a foil so we can **contrast his unwillingness with the gracious willingness of Boaz** – understand that Boaz is making a significant sacrifice for the benefit of Ruth and Naomi

His superficial initial response = Sure I will function as the kinsman-redeemer

Then he was confronted with the cost and the full nature of the obligation

Cf. how superficially many people respond to the Gospel – to the command to repent and put their faith in Christ – “free ticket to heaven – sure, I will take that; pray to have Jesus enter my heart and become my Savior? **No problem**” – that is why Christ had to call out the rich young ruler who came to Him asking the works oriented question: *“What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”* *“sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”* (**Luke 18:18-27** – an impossible passage for the easy believism camp to deal with) – understand what you are doing when you are **transferring your allegiance to a new Lord of your life** – are you really willing to give up your autonomy and submit to my rule?? **No way** said the rich young ruler

B. (:7-11a) The Redeemer Must Be Qualified and Capable –

Emphasis on the Legal Nature of the Transaction –

- Must be a near relative

Christ was born of a woman – taking on human flesh – and lived under the law to accomplish all righteousness so that He would be qualified as the perfect lamb without blemish to offer Himself up as a sacrifice for our sins.

Only Christ is **qualified** as the perfect God-Man to be the one Mediator between God and man.

- Must pay the redemption price in full

Boaz also is **capable** to pay the sufficient price to accomplish the redemption – he doesn’t have to take out any loans or get any other principals involved to raise some venture capital; he pays the full and sufficient price and accomplishes the transaction so the matter is finished

“It is Finished” (John 19:30)

C. (:11b-17) The Redeemer Brings Abundant Blessing –

Bob Deffinbaugh: Why do the townspeople pronounce a blessing on Ruth that would make her like Rachel and Leah? There is the sense which we have just noted – namely that these two women (with their handmaids) produced the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel. But I believe that there is also a more subtle blessing here – that of being enabled to conceive. First Rachel (**Genesis 30:1**), and then Leah (**Genesis 30:9-13**), were unable to conceive. In both instances, God (see **Genesis 30:14-24**) opened their wombs and enabled them to conceive. We know from the earlier chapters of Ruth that she had borne no children, and in **Ruth 4:13**, we are told that God “*enabled her to conceive.*” Thus, this blessing may have assumed that God would open Ruth’s womb so that she could bear children and thus **build up the house of Israel**.

Ten years of infertility in Moab, but one night of quick fertility in her marriage to Boaz

Vs. 13 -- What is so important about God blessing Ruth with a son?

- Someone to take away the shame and stigma of being without a male descendent
- Someone to rescue the family financially (connection to the ownership of land and the passing along of the inheritance from generation to generation)
- Someone to carry on the family name
- Someone to rise to an important role of leadership in the nation = in God’s kingdom Program – in fact to be a key link in the ancestry of King David and then the Messiah

(4:18-22) EPILOGUE – Appreciating the Significance of Redemption

Voddie Baucham: What’s missing in **Ruth 4**?? This is a beautiful love story, but **where is the wedding**?? There is no wedding here! Average wedding cost in U.S. is \$30,000; look at all the interest in royal weddings; We love weddings! In our culture young women highly value a wedding but tend to minimize the responsibilities of marriage – of being a faithful wife and mother.

Significance of Marriage:

- Beautiful picture of redemption and our union with Christ
- Provides protection, provision, companionship, purpose in life
- Provides children that bring great joy and continue our legacy

Today’s culture says: “I sure hope God gives you a long time to enjoy one another before children pop up to destroy your happiness” – children kill your freedom is not the biblical view;

- if you are not ready to have kids you are not ready to be married – “We can’t afford children right now” – but you just spent \$30,000 on the wedding! Where are your priorities?

- One reason we must reject homosexuality is because it is a categorical denial of one of the very purposes of marriage (not the only purpose, but one significant purpose)
- Balance: We must show compassion to those who struggle with infertility; God is the one who sovereignly opens the womb according to His good purposes

God's kindness to us is so evident – Look at how the story ends:

- Story starts very down but ends very up
- Story moves from death to life
- From barrenness to fruitfulness
- From emptiness to fullness
- From curse to blessing
- From bitterness to sweet
- From being in exile to producing the grandfather of King David

(Mark Dever)

WHY STUDY THIS BOOK?

- To elevate the role of women and of Gentiles in God's redemptive plan throughout history
- To bask in the simplicity and beauty of a love story with surprising twists and turns
- To see the Providence of God at work behind the seemingly insignificant people and events of normal day living
- To deepen our appreciation for loyalty and devotion and kindness as exemplified by Ruth
- To visualize the blessings that can result from stepping out in faith and trusting the Lord in difficult circumstances
- To track the ancestry of King David and witness the dramatic way in which God preserved the Messianic line
- To focus on the qualifications and role of our Messianic Redeemer based on the typology reflected in Boaz

God Moves in a Mysterious Way

- **William Cowper**

*God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.*

*Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.*

*Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessing on your head.*

*Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.*

*His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.*

*Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain:
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.*