



**Title:** Unfailing Love (Ruth series)

**Text:** Ruth 3

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**Intro:** A desperate mother-in-law's schemes, a young foreign widow's risky boldness, a steamy nighttime scene and a man's righteous restraint—all these converge in Ruth 3, a chapter that presents us with an incredible picture of God's unfailing love toward His people.

3:1 Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? 2 Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. 3 Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do." 5 And she replied, "All that you say I will do."

- Threshing floor was a place known for illicit activity.
- To wash and anoint was a way of signaling that her time of mourning was over (2Sam12:20)
- Uncover feet and lie down language is charged with intensity.
- Why does Naomi think this will work? Does she see the risk?

6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her. 7 And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. 8 At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! 9 He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer." 10 And he said, "May you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. 11 And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. 12 And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. 13 Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the Lord lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning."

- Responsibilities of the Kinsman-Redeemer ("family-protector")
  - Avenge the death of a family member—Num 35:19-21
  - Buy back family property that had been sold to pay debts—Lev 25:25, Ruth 4:3-4
  - Redeem a relative that had sold himself into slavery—Lev 25:47-49
  - Bear responsibility of Levirate (Latin for "brother-in-law") marriage-preserving name of deceased—Deut 25:5-10; R4:5

14 So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." 15 And he said, "Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city. 16 And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did you fare, my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her, 17 saying, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, 'You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'" 18 She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."

## **I. GOD USES IMPERFECT HUMAN PLANS TO BRING ABOUT HIS PURPOSES.**

### **1. What are we to make of Naomi's plan?**

- We should see scene in Ruth 3 as descriptive, not prescriptive.
- Not an endorsement for unwise scheming.

### **2. Nevertheless, the Lord is able to use this awkward, muddled plan.**

- Proverbs 16:9

## **II. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS POSSIBLE EVEN IN THE FACE OF GREAT TEMPTATION.**

### **1. Several stark contrasts**

- Time of the Judges: "everyone did what was right in their own eyes"
- Genesis 19:30-38; Numbers 25:1-9

### **2. Picture of the Biblical womanhood and manhood.**

- Ruth: beautiful mix of strength and submission. Contrast that with a cultural caricature of overly sexualized or cynical / disappointed / bitter portrayal.
- Boaz: noble picture of protecting, selfless, integrity. Contrast with the power grabbing grown up frat boy image or the bumbling idiot we see playing the father on many sitcoms.

### **3. There is Gospel grace and hope for those who have made a mess of their lives giving into temptation.**

- The picture here is that God redeems!
- Scripture full of people who have gotten it terribly wrong yet God redeems and gives them a new affection so that they are now empowered to pursue true satisfaction in Him.

## **III. GOD LOVES HIS PEOPLE WITH AN UNFAILING LOVE AND ENABLES THEM TO LOVE OTHERS THIS WAY.**

### **1. The Hesed of God**

- *"Hebrew hesed cannot be translated with one English word. This is a covenant term, wrapping up in itself all the positive attributes of God: love, covenant faithfulness, mercy, grace, kindness, loyalty—in short, acts of devotion and loving-kindness that go beyond the requirements of duty."* –Dan Block
- All through the book we see the behind the scenes Hesed love of God.

### **2. Those who have received God's Hesed give it away to others.**

### **3. God's unfailing love is seen most clearly and fully in Christ.**

- 1 John 4:7-12