

"God's Love Story Sermon Outlines"

by Doug Hamilton

Section 11: God's Love Story and Our Commitments to Others (The Book of Ruth)

We live in a society that has forgotten the importance of commitment. A brief look at the book of Ruth should bring things back into perspective. Perhaps we might see another perspective of God's Loves Story. We will cover the Book of Ruth with four questions about commitment.

I) How is your commitment to the broken-hearted?

A) Naomi lost her husband.

- Ruth 1:3 3 Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left with her two sons.

B) Naomi lost her sons.

- Ruth 1:5 Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died, and the woman was bereft of her two children and her husband.

C) Naomi lost her joy for the Lord.

- Ruth 1:20-21 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. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has witnessed against me and the Almighty has afflicted me?"

She was as broken-hearted as a woman could be. She lost her husband, her sons, her home, her heritage and her self-esteem. Many people crumble under pressure of such stress.

Ruth's response to broken-hearted Naomi

- Ruth 1:16-17 But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you *or* turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people *shall be* my people, and your God, my God.¹⁷ "Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if *anything but* death parts you and me."
- She was prepared to go to the ends of the earth for her mother-in-law. I cannot think of a phrase in literary history that communicates commitment from one human to another more than Ruth to Naomi.

Christians understand that Commitment and God's Love Story go together.

- Romans 15:7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.
- Ephesians 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.
- Ephesians 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.
- 1 John 3:11 This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

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- If we will just reach out to broken-hearted with a life that models God's Love Story, then the church and the world would be far better off.

II) How is your commitment to the forgotten?

A) Ruth was forced to glean in the fields.

- Ruth 2:2-3 "And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, 'Please let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after one in whose sight I may find favor.' And she said to her, 'Go, my daughter.'³ So she departed and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers..."
- We must remember that this was the welfare system of the day and required much work to get by. It would have been common for her back to ache and her fingers to bleed as she picked heads of fallen grain one by one from the hard ground.
- Deut 24:19 "When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands."

B) This would have been terrifying for her.

- She was a poor woman.
- She was a foreigner.
- She was a widow with no other male figure to look out for her.

Boaz's efforts to reach out to Ruth

He was absolutely committed to her from the beginning. His commitment was genuine and strong toward the forgotten.

1) He took notice of her.

- Ruth 2:5 Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?"

2) Encouraged her to stay.

- Ruth 2:8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen carefully, my daughter. Do not go to glean in another field; furthermore, do not go on from this one, but stay here with my maids."

3) Saw that she was not taken advantage of.

- Ruth 2:9a "Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Indeed, I have commanded the servants not to touch you."

4) Provided her drink.

- Ruth 2:9b "When you are thirsty, go to the water jars and drink from what the servants draw."

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5) He showed understanding of her plight with his words.

- Ruth 2:11 “All that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband has been fully reported to me, and how you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and came to a people that you did not previously know.”

6) He included her in fellowship.

- Ruth 2:14 At mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come here, that you may eat of the bread and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.” So she sat beside the reapers; and he served her roasted grain, and she ate and was satisfied and had some left.

7) He encouraged others to encourage her.

- Ruth 2:15-16 Boaz commanded his servants, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not insult her.¹⁶ “Also you shall purposely pull out for her *some grain* from the bundles and leave *it* that she may glean, and do not rebuke her.”

Christians understand that Commitment to the Forgotten can never be separated from God's Love Story.

- Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.
- Romans 12:16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.
- Romans 14:13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.
- 1 Corinthians 16:20 All the brothers here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.
- We must live committed lives to others that assures all that they are not forgotten in the slightest. That is God's Love Story!

III) How is your commitment for redemption of others?

A) Naomi counsels Ruth to seek redemption

- Ruth 3:1 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?”

B) Ruth requests redemption.

- Ruth 3:9 He said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth your maid. So spread your covering over your maid, for you are a close relative.”

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C) Boaz promises redemption

- Ruth 3:13 “Remain this night, and when morning comes, if he will redeem you, good; let him redeem you. But if he does not wish to redeem you, then I will redeem you, as the LORD lives. Lie down until morning.”

D) Boaz met with the elders and near kinsman for redemption.

- Ruth 4:1-2 Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there, and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz spoke was passing by, so he said, “Turn aside, friend, sit down here.” And he turned aside and sat down.² He took ten men of the elders of the city and said, “Sit down here.” So they sat down.

E) The near kinsman refused to make a claim.

- Dt. 25:8-9 says if the near-kinsman will not redeem and marry the widow, then he is to remove his sandal before the elders at the city gate. This man has no intention of messing up his own estate by marrying Ruth just to claim the land.

F) Boaz redeems according to the law, marries Ruth.

- Ruth 4:9-10 Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses today that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon.¹⁰ “Moreover, I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, to be my wife in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance, so that the name of the deceased will not be cut off from his brothers or from the court of his *birth* place; you are witnesses today.”

Christians understand that commitment to the redemption of others is all about God's Love Story.

- It is not the redemption of a near kinsman under the Law, but the redemption of souls for the kingdom of God. This is the greatest commitment we could ever make for another.
- Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.
- Hebrews 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
- Galatians 5:13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.
- John 13:35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."
- We must be committed to living our lives like we want them to be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. That is God's Love Story!

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IV) How is God's commitment to you?

A) Ruth conceives, bares Obed. (4:13-17)

B) Obed begat Jesse, Jesse begat David (4:22)

C) The line of Christ is in place to bring forth your Savior (Mt. 1:6-16)! A Moabite stranger, the son of a harlot and a hopeless widow woven into the seed line of Christ. (4:21-22).

Conclusion:

The basis of all commitments we make to another person must be based in the fact that God made a commitment to us first. The Christian walk void of commitment is a "Ruth"less walk.

1 John 4:19 We love, because He first loved us. We commit to others because He first committed to us. Go out and live God's Love Story through your commitments to one another! Your commitments are made, live up to them! Go tell the world of the commitment that Jesus made for you and show it with your actions to the broken-hearted, the forgotten and those not yet redeemed.