

Kindness in our everyday lives

Week 3: Kindness in Redemption

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing and sharing together.

The 1998 film 'Sliding Doors' explores the idea of how a single event can significantly shape a person's future life; in this case whether or not the lead actor catches a particular tube train. In her old age, we can imagine Ruth looking back on the events told in this week's passage and seeing how pivotal they were in setting the future direction of her life.

Encourage people to share moments that, in hindsight, they see as being pivotal in their lives.

WORSHIP

"In him (Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace" Ephesians 1:7.

In this verse Paul reminds us of the most pivotal moment in all history, the death and resurrection of Christ. Through his death, Christ redeemed us (or paid the price for us) from the natural consequence of our sin, namely spiritual death and separation from God. But Christ was resurrected from death and so, through Him, all who take their own pivotal step of placing their faith in Him can be confident that they are permanently rescued and reconciled with God, forever.

Take time to praise Christ for being the personal redeemer of each of us and for the future surety of salvation that each of who places their faith in Him has.

You could sing or listen to 'There is a redeemer'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDgZ1v3l9go>



WORD

Naomi's plan

Read Ruth 3:1-6

1. In these verses Naomi's character seems to have changed from that which we see in chapter 1 and the early part of chapter 2. What differences do you see?

You may find it helpful to contrast these verses with Ruth 1:1, 13b and 20-21 and also Ruth 2:1-2.

2. From our cultural perspective, there's no doubt that Naomi's plan appears odd, but nonetheless it does seem to stem from her trying to be a good mentor to Ruth. As you consider her actions, what good aspects do you see in what she does, and how might they inform our walk with the Lord?

As you consider this question you may find it helpful to look at Proverbs 3:6 and Matthew 7:12.

The start of Ruth's better future

Read Ruth 3:7-18

3. Verse 8 tells us that Ruth startled Boaz. How we respond when we are startled, shocked or in pain can often provide an insight into our true character. What does Boaz's response in verses 9 and 10 tell us about his character? As you think back to situations when you've

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been startled, shocked or in pain and how you responded, in what ways does Boaz's response challenge you?

4. Through verses 6-10 we read how Ruth washed and perfumed herself, put on her best clothes and then went and laid at Boaz's feet in the middle of the night. What is your opinion of how she acted?

Try to take into account all of the verses in your response. You may also find it helpful to look at 1 Peter 3:3-4.

5. As Boaz responds to Ruth in verses 12-13, it becomes clear that there are complications that need to be resolved before her future is assured. How do you think Ruth felt at this point and also during and after her subsequent conversation with Naomi (v18)? How does this speak to you?
6. As Ruth, a Moabite, acknowledges Boaz as her kinsman redeemer, he quickly responds by telling her to not be afraid before beginning to redeem her. In what way does this echo our relationship with Christ?

You may find it helpful to look at Isaiah 43:1b and 2 Corinthians 5:16-17.

WHAT NEXT?

Whilst we may well have reservations about what Naomi suggests that Ruth should do, she nonetheless had a close and trusted relationship with her and, through that closeness was willing and able, when the moment was right, to guide Ruth by helping her see the person who was her redeemer, and what steps she needed to take to be redeemed. As Christians, we are all called (Matthew 28:18-20) by Christ to show Him to others and to help guide them in order that they might have the opportunity of seeing Him as their personal redeemer, put their faith in Him, and receive the redemption that He freely offers.

To what extent do we do this as well as we ought? How might we do it better, either as individuals or as a church?

Personal reflection

Is God calling you to show Him to someone in particular and/or is God calling you to help guide someone you know in taking the step of placing their faith in Christ? Are you willing to step out for God and seize the moment when it arises?