

# Faith Carries Wait

---

Ruth 3:16-18

9/20/2009

## 1. Naomi Receives a Down Payment on Redemption

- a. "who are you, my daughter?"
  - i. are you hitched?
  - ii. are you Mrs. Boaz?
- b. Ruth answered with what Boaz had done
- c. She ended with his gift of grain
  - i. Six "measures" of barley
    1. Most likely not six ephahs (that would be almost 200 lbs!!)
    2. Probably six *seahs*, which amounts to about 80lbs
    3. He had to "put it on her", indicating a fairly heavy weight
  - ii. was given so that Naomi was not "empty" (cf. 1:21)
    1. emptiness of Naomi contrasted with fullness now
    2. hunger vs. grain
    3. childless vs. ?
  - iii. "Dowry" of sorts
    1. Proof to Naomi that Boaz was trustworthy
    2. A "down payment" of future blessings to come

## 2. Naomi Instructs Ruth to Wait and Trust Boaz

- a. "Wait"
  - i. Literally, "sit down"
  - ii. Indicates that Ruth doesn't have to do anything now, it is completely up to Boaz
- b. waiting, is like waiting on the LORD
  - i. not knowing how specifics are going to turn out, so there is an element of ambiguous uncertainty
  - ii. knowing that the outcome will turn out good, for Ruth will have a husband, so an element of restful certainty
- c. Trust that Boaz will make their redemption happen
  - i. "complete" it
    1. speak on completion and finality of Christ's work?
  - ii. Boaz is known to be man of his word
  - iii. Boaz is also known to desire Ruth
    1. a potent combination of duty and desire!!
    2. similar to what the prophets command pertaining to caring for widows and orphans combined with the doggedly determined love (like YHWH)
      - a. Exodus 22:21-27
      - b. Deut 10:16-21
      - c. Isa 1:17
      - d. Jer 22:3; 49:11
      - e. James 1:27
    3. This is like Jesus in that His duty was to the Father and His love was for the Church
- d. There is an element of certainty/uncertainty with Christ, too
  - i. Certainty that He will return for He has promised
    1. Holy Spirit's seal and presence
    2. Fruit being produced through transformed affections and righteous deeds

- ii. Uncertainty on when
  - 1. By faith we wait
  - 2. Taking our stand on the things that are unseen, not the things that are seen
  - 3. So...we wait by faith in His person, work, and promise

### 3. We Have Been Given the Gift of the Spirit as Our Down Payment

- a. Like Boaz's down payment to Ruth
  - i. A dowry of sorts
  - ii. "another Helper" of like kind to Jesus to remain with us and in us for God's glory and our good
- b. The Holy Spirit is our guarantee of Christ's completed redemption
  - i. Down Payment
    - 1. Eph 1:13-14
  - ii. Glorifies Christ
    - 1. John 16:13-14
      - a. The Holy Spirit's role is to bring glory to Christ because that is what He has been doing for all of eternity!
    - 2. John 17:1,5,24
      - a. Jesus desired to be glorified by the Father so that He might glorify the Father in return
      - b. This is the way God has always existed, the Father glorifying the Son who glorifies the Spirit who glorifies the Father, etc.
      - c. Amazingly, He desires us to participate in seeing His glory and in glorifying Him forever
        - i. There is NO OTHER GOD like this, who shares His glory, or who shares His own Spirit in order to do it!!

### 4. Christianity is About Waiting and Trusting in Jesus Christ

- a. Christianity is usually viewed as "religion" whereby a person can do enough good things and avoid enough bad things to make it to heaven
  - i. Religion is not about waiting, resting, but performance in order to earn salvation and blessing
- b. We wait for our redemption by faith in Jesus and the work that He accomplished for us
  - i. Christianity is NOT about religion, our work to redeem or fix ourselves and so prove to God that we are worthy of being loved and redeemed
  - ii. Christianity is about the God who poured Himself out on our behalf by His grace alone so that we could see and participate in glorifying Him, and we are saved by His grace toward us!
- c. Our God is the only God who acts on behalf of the one who waits for Him
  - i. Isaiah 64:1-4

### 5. Christianity is Being Called Away from Self-determined Salvation (Religion)

- a. Self-determined salvation is drawing a line between the acceptable sinners and the "bad" sinners, then determines to work and achieve to prove that you're on the "good" side
  - i. Through doing the "right" things
  - ii. Through avoiding the "bad" things
- b. Drawing this dividing line (religion) between big sins and acceptable sins is not just the way organized religion works, it is the way that the heart works
  - i. "Those people are what's wrong with the world"
    - 1. Religious or irreligious think the same way
  - ii. Because it's in the human heart, the religion of today has the same root as yesterday, it's just that the dividing line has moved
    - 1. 50 years ago: good nuclear family, good citizen, hard worker, hospitable, pull your own weight

2. Today: self-determined, true-to-yourself, tolerant, authentic, nobody tells you what to do but your own heart
- c. All religion is really a means of wanting to justify ourselves before God (or whatever gains you power in your life) and others.
  - i. Making God or others owe me through my obedience to some law, my sacrifices
    1. We feel that our sacrifices for God and to God have somehow obligated Him to us: You owe me.
      - a. I've done all these things: I go to church, I read my Bible, I say "no" all over the place, denying myself things so now God owes me
      - b. In our prayers: "God, if I do 'x' will you do 'y' for me?"
      - c. "I have tried hard, God, you owe me a clean slate!"
    2. Then people feel that life is unfair if things don't go their way, because they feel that they have been better than others and those people have a better life
      - a. You look down on others who are not as "good" as you are
      - b. The Pharisees do it here, but we all do it in our lives. That is why we get anxious, fearful, angry, bitter, and irritable when things don't go our way: we think we deserve better treatment
      - c. It doesn't matter what your religion is, organized or secular, these feelings of "unfairness" reveal the true attitude of our hearts
    3. I feel like I should have done these things, but I failed to do them well enough, so I feel condemned and worthy of all suffering.
      - a. This self-pity has the same root as the more obvious arrogance: we feel that our blessing or our curse is based upon our ability to perform
      - b. When we believe this, we lose all joy because we are working within a system of religion that we fail
        - i. Even within a system of repentance, we get stuck "trying harder" to perform
        - ii. Repentance, in this sense, is really a form of penance, where we "pay down" our bad performance
  - ii. Religion makes us either look down on others or idolize others
    1. I judge others for lack of moral restraint
      - a. I look down on others in whom I see greater sin
      - b. Phariseeism
    2. I envy others for their righteousness
      - a. Self-pity
      - b. Joylessness
    3. Both are self-righteous religion that are based upon our performance/sacrifices
- d. Paul calls his religion "dung" in comparison to the new wineskin of the grace of Jesus
  - i. Phil 3:4-10
  - ii. Christianity is the new wine of simply waiting
- e. Jesus brings in the new salvation, as opposed to the old religion
  - i. 9:16-17
    1. Jesus is the new wine that bursts the wineskin
      - a. He doesn't fit the old natural religious (works or law based) system
      - b. He smashes it; Breaks out of it; Bursts its categories
        - i. Trying to live religiously with Jesus will leave you feeling swollen, bloated, and distended
        - ii. It will not last. He will break forth
        - iii. We need a new wineskin, a new category: the category of *complete grace* whereby God saves us completely by His own work
      - c. Christianity is having this foundation of religion shattered, smashed, and obliterated by the transforming power of Jesus in the heart
        - i. There is a new wineskin, a new framework: the Gospel of Grace

- ii. Jesus performs all that is necessary for the sinner to become acceptable to God, we wait by faith in Him
- ii. Christianity is not a new religion, whereby the line of “good” sins and “acceptable” sins moves to a “better” place, it is a complete change of heart, a rebirth by the Holy Spirit
  - 1. John 3 – I did not come to teach you religion, I came to be lifted up.
  - 2. Look away from your sacrifices and look to the mercy of God, i.e. “Look to me, the Savior of *sinner*s. Don’t look at *your* sacrifices, look at *mine*.”
- iii. The Gospel that is based upon the *wait* of grace means that we are expecting others to struggle *as we have*
  - i. I have hope for anyone, since I am saved by grace alone
  - ii. I have respect for everyone, since I am saved by grace alone
  - iii. I am better than none, for I am saved by grace alone

## Two Tests to See if We are Truly Waiting by Faith:

1. How do you treat other people’s moral failures?
  - a. Are you indignant, disgusted, maybe impatient and frustrated?
  - b. If so, you are being religious...it’s called being a Pharisee. You don’t see that the root in them is the same root that is in you, and you’ll have nothing to offer them in joy or hope, merely more religion which they have already failed.
    - i. It’s not about waiting upon Christ’s righteousness, but comparing yours to theirs
    - ii. “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”
    - iii. Luke 18:9-13
2. How do you treat your own moral failures?
  - a. Do you feel that you cannot face God; that you cannot look at yourself in the mirror? Do you beat yourself up over your failure? Do you struggle with believing that God really loves you at all? Fear?
  - b. If so, what are you basing such judgments on? You are basing them on *your sacrifices, not His*. Remember, Jesus DIED! He died for you, and He lives to fulfill His promise! It is done, it has been completed. It is finished. Your acceptance and loveliness to God is not based upon your ability to change yourself. You cannot do it! He is doing it for you! Wait for Him. That’s good news!
    - i. Is 43:25; Micah 7:18-19; Jeremiah 31:34; Ezek 36:24-28

Law is useful for moral restraint, but it cannot change the heart. *But Jesus Christ can radically renew and change our hearts through the gift and power of His Holy Spirit.* The transformation of the heart is His work of supernatural *grace*. It is here that we are all on the same page, in the same place, in complete and utter dependence upon Jesus, not merely as a Teacher, but as a sacrificial Redeemer upon whom we wait. If you come to God saying, “You owe me a good life because of my performance,” then Jesus has nothing to offer you. But, if you come to Jesus saying, “You don’t owe me anything!” then Jesus rushes in to eat with you, to dine with you, the waiting sinner. This is Christianity, the Gospel. It is simple, yet deep and profoundly different than anything else because God is profoundly different than anything else.

Let us learn to shed the religion of our hearts and the mere moral restraint of the law, and yearn for the true freedom of a renewed nature, given by mercy and performed by Jesus. You see, we need a heart-changing, life-giving, spirit-renewing, foundation-smashing, grace-giving Redeemer. By His own kindness, with His very own presence within us, He is making us to be like Him to a world that needs hope, joy, and freedom. Herein lies our hope, and the world’s hope, of true rest and righteousness: They that wait upon the Lord will renew their strength, rising on wings like eagles.