

Ruth 3:10-13

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/ruth/ruth-3/ruth-310-13/>

Boaz explains that there is a relative closer than him.

Boaz's responds by first complimenting Ruth for choosing the family (including Naomi) well being as a priority over her own romantic interest. Boaz prays that Ruth will *be blessed of the Lord* because of this action. Boaz's interpretation is that her action in seeking marriage with Boaz is a *better* kindness to Naomi *than the first* kindness of gleaning in the fields on her behalf.

Specifically Boaz recognizes that Ruth is seeking Naomi's family interest rather than *going after young men*. By adding the phrase *whether poor or rich* Boaz recognizes that there are some younger men who are also rich, like him. The fact that Boaz makes this statement would indicate that Ruth was attractive and had the option of seeking and gaining interest from younger men. It also indicates that human nature in this respect has been the same for over three thousand years.

Boaz was not only older, but likely also already married (although the story does not tell us this). If so, Ruth would have been seeking this marriage knowing she is marrying an older man, and likely will not be the primary wife. This would certainly justify the great commendation Boaz lavishes on Ruth.

Boaz immediately accepts her proposal. His reaction makes it likely Boaz had already thought this through. Being that he has been awakened in the *middle of the night* that seems the best explanation as to how he could immediately outline a plan of action. But first, Boaz comforts Ruth. She is in a very vulnerable position. Boaz says "*Now, my daughter, do not fear.*" After laying for hours uncertain about what was to come, in such a vulnerable circumstance, perhaps Boaz heard a tremble in Ruth's voice, so reassured her *not to fear*. This again shows Boaz's excellent character.

Just as Naomi predicted, Boaz tells Ruth a plan. Boaz says to Ruth *I will do for you whatever you ask*. Boaz adds something else as well, his reasoning for granting the request, Ruth's character. Boaz has inferred that Ruth is young and attractive. But that is not what has caught Boaz's attention. Boaz states *for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence*. Boaz has not only seen her excellent character for himself, he has checked with the villagers, and they have confirmed that Ruth's character is outstanding.

There is, however, a glitch in the plan. Boaz explains that while *it is true I am a close relative*, that there is another *relative closer than Boaz*. According to the kinsman redeemer custom, the closest relative had the obligation or privilege. Since both Ruth's husband as well as Naomi's other son died in Moab, there is no brother to act as kinsmen redeemer. So they are now going down the family line. Again, it seems Boaz has already contemplated this possibility.

Boaz does as Naomi predicted and tells Ruth what to do. He instructs Ruth to *remain this night, and when morning comes* Boaz will find out if the closer relative will do the redemption. But he also commits to Ruth that *if he does not wish to redeem you, then I will redeem you, as the Lord lives. Lie down until morning.*

Biblical Text

¹⁰ Then he said, “May you be blessed of the Lord, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness to be better than the first by not going after young men, whether poor or rich.”¹¹ Now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you ask, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence.¹² Now it is true I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I.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.”