

I. Introduction

- A. Nine sermons ago, I said Ruth is a fireworks show—slow start, explosive finish. Today, in Ruth 4, the sparks start to fly! This passage is stunning, and I pray it grips your soul.
- B. First, we'll dig into these verses. Then we'll ask: What's God saying to you? What's His Word for you today?
- C. I need to acknowledge something upfront. The interpretation I'm going to give you challenges the traditional understanding of this passage.
 1. The burden is always on the Bible teacher to make their case to convince you, *from the Bible*, so that's my job today.

II. Previously

- A. Our story has 3 main characters:
 1. Naomi, a widow who has lost her two sons to death, and has gone from angry and bitter to blessed and ready for grace.
 2. Ruth, also a widow and childless, who is a model of freely given grace.
 3. Boaz a single man who has made his riches in agriculture and has been freely generous with Ruth and Naomi.
- B. When we last saw Ruth and Boaz, Ruth performed a kind of ritual that opened the door for Boaz to marry her. Ruth doesn't know it, but Boaz wants to do more than that. Way more than that.
- C. It involves some legal transactions that will literally change the course of everyone's life.
- D. And by everyone, I mean everyone.
- E. I even mean you and me today.

III. Title

- A. My talk today is part 9 in a series. The series is called: **Resting in the Love of God**
- B. And my talk today is called: **Your Grace is... ?**
- C. What happens in this place in the Bible sent a shock wave that is still rippling through history, and actually defines your life today. Let's take a look beginning at Ruth 4:1.

IV. Sermon (note: this is an original translation from Hebrew by Pastor Bill.)

- A. *"And Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there. And Look! The near-relative came by, of whom Boaz had spoken. And he said, 'Turn aside; sit here, Mr So-and-So.' And he turned aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city and he said, 'Sit down here.' And they sat down."* (Ruth 4:1,2)
 1. The city gate is the courtroom—deals are sealed here. Mr. So-and-So, a closer relative to Naomi than Boaz, holds legal rights Boaz must address.
 2. This is high-stakes business happening.
- B. *"And he said to the near-relative, 'The portion of the field that belonged to our brother Elimelek, Naomi -- who returned from the fields of Moab -- is selling. And I personally thought to disclose it to you, saying Buy it, before the presence of the inhabitants and before the presence of the elders of my people. If you will buy it, buy it. And if you will not buy it, tell me so that I may know, for there is no one ahead of you to buy it, and I am after you.' And he said, 'I will buy it.'"* (Ruth 4:3,4)
 1. Okay, this is one of those times you read a verse in the Bible, scratch your head, and say, Who cares?
 2. The original audience got it—they knew the laws. Once you do, this will click for you.
 3. There are 4 Laws that apply to what's happening here...
 - a) **The Law of Inheritance.**
 - (1) The Law of Israel specified a pecking order for inheritance. (Num. 27:8-11). The order goes:
 - (a) Son > daughter > brothers > father's brothers > nearest relative
 - (2) Mr So-and-So is the nearest living relative, and then Boaz.
 - (3) If Naomi sells her land, Boaz is second in line with rights to buy it.
 - b) **The Law of Permanent Possession**
 - (1) In Lev 25:23 God decrees, "The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine."
 - (2) Israel's land was divided by tribe, clan, family. No permanent sales were allowed—only leases. This protected families from losing their heritage, even in poverty.
 - (3) How did this work?
 - c) **The Law of Jubilee**
 - (1) The Laws of Jubilee are outlined in Leviticus 25. Here's what happened to property in that year:
 - (a) All property was returned to its ancestral owners.
 - i) If you sold some land outside your family to pay your bills, you got that land back in the Year of Jubilee. You didn't even have to pay for it or return any of the money you got for it (Lev 25:13).
 - (b) This meant that all property costs were influenced by the number of years till the next Jubilee.
 - (c) All property values spiked right after Jubilee, and then WENT DOWN for the next forty nine years (Lev 25:15).
 - (2) This was super-important to Mr So-and-So. Why?
 - (3) Because Naomi has no heirs. And she was too old to have heirs.
 - (4) So, Mr So-and-So could buy Naomi's land at a discounted price, and add it to his own estate FOREVER.
 - (5) That's why Mr So-and-So so quickly agreed, "I will buy it." This brings up the next Hebrew law.
 - d) **The Law of Kinsman-Redeemer.... The law of levirate marriage and kinsman-redeemer.**
 - (1) Under the Bible's laws for the Jews, there was a certain institution called levirate marriage. The laws of levirate marriage are found in Deut 25:5-10.
 - (a) *"If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a*

husband's brother to her. And it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel." (Deuteronomy 25:5-6)

- (2) The man who undertook such a marriage was called the kinsman-redeemer.
- (3) Every single interpretation of Ruth sees Mr So-and-So as the person who refused to be kinsman redeemer, and Boaz as the willing kinsman redeemer. And so they make Boaz the knight in shining armor, kinsman redeemer just like Jesus.
- (4) Every single one of them is wrong. Actually so wrong that they wreck the book. This whole thing is a fatal error.
- (5) The problem is that these laws don't apply in Ruth. Here are four reasons why not:
 - (a) **Because the law applies to BROTHERS, and Elimelek has no brothers. (Deut 25:5)**
 - (b) **Because the law applies to brothers WHO DWELL TOGETHER and Elimelek and his sons died in Moab. (Deut 25:5)**
 - (c) **Because the kinsman-redeemer laws were REQUIRED and would have been automatically enforced if they applied. (Deut 25:8)**
 - (d) **Because if a man refused to fulfill the role of kinsman-redeemer for his brother, he was DISGRACED. His face was spit upon, and his name was changed (Deut 25:9,10). None of this happens here.**
- (6) So Mr So-and-So owes nothing to Naomi and Ruth. Boaz owes nothing to Naomi and Ruth. Nobody owes them anything. Any favor that anybody does for them is pure grace.
- (7) You can almost imagine Mr So-and-So rubbing his hands in glee. "Absolutely I'll buy it! Where do I sign?"
- (8) Now, in verse five, Boaz begins the countdown to the GRACE-FIREWORKS:

4. "On the day that you acquire the field from the hand of Naomi, indeed also I ACQUIRE RUTH, the Moabitess, wife of the deceased, to perpetuate the name of the deceased through his inheritance." (Ruth 4:5)

- a) There are some technical reasons why this has to be the correct translation, and I won't get into them in this message.
 - (1) But I did make a write-up of those reasons, and here they are
 - (a) <https://veritasschool-217-reading-ruth.s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/217+READING+RUTH+notes+8.pdf>
 - (2) Don't miss what's going on here. Boaz breaks the news to the whole town that he is going to marry Ruth.
 - (3) But even more, Boaz also announces that their firstborn son will not be legally his.
 - (4) Instead, Boaz chooses that his firstborn son will be legally the child and heir of Ruth's late husband, Mahlon. Instead of Boaz Jr. this boy will be Elimelek/Mahlon Jr.
- b) So what?

C. Fireworks

1. With these words, Boaz reaches the pinnacle of grace. How so?
 - a) **Boaz is buying the land from Naomi.**
 - (1) He pays a price for the land, and his own estate bears the cost. Remember, the cost must be really big in light of Mr So-and-So's refusal.
 - b) **Boaz is marrying Ruth.**
 - (1) DO NOT MISS THIS:
 - (2) WHAT PRICE DOES BOAZ PAY TO BLESS RUTH AND NAOMI? WHAT DOES HE GIVE UP? WHAT DOES HE SACRIFICE?
 - c) **BOAZ IS GIVING UP HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON.**
 - (1) That son will not bear his father's last name, will not share in his father's inheritance, and will not technically be a member of his father's family.
 - (2) He won't be Boaz Jr. He'll be Elimelek/Mahlon Jr.
2. What an enormous sacrifice on the part of Boaz. For Boaz, the price of grace was giving up his only begotten son.
 - a) He pays by buying the land and giving his money to Naomi.
 - b) He pays by giving up his son.
 - c) He pays by giving the land to the son of another.
 - d) He pays by risking that his own family line go extinct. What if he has no other children from Ruth?
3. This is amazing grace. This is self-sacrificing love. This is costly grace. And what is the price tag on that grace? The price of a Son. Boaz is giving up his Son for the blessing of the undeserving, helpless, lost people he loves.
 - a) No wonder the crowd is so amazed at what they've just seen.
 - b) No wonder they celebrate and launch into praise and blessing of God.
4. Does any of this ring any bells for you at all?
5. You've heard of John 3:16? Well, I made my own version, Ruth Style.
 - a) **For Boaz and Ruth so loved Naomi that they gave their only begotten son, that if she receives him, she will be richly blessed, plus she will not die, but will live on forever and ever.**
6. This is the message of Ruth, but it gets even better, which is coming next time.
7. But let me wrap it up with this:
8. What is God saying to us here? What is the Word of the Lord for us today from Ruth chapter four?
9. Here's the real title of my talk today:
 - a) **Your Grace is Too Small**

D. Your idea of grace falls radically, painfully short of God's idea... of God's Word. How so?

V. 4 Ways

A. You LIMIT the reach of Grace.

1. **There's nobody that the grace of God can't reach, and no part of anybody that grace doesn't love.**
 - a) Do you have Regrets? Grace forgives.
 - b) Do you feel Sick? Grace heals.
 - c) Are you Hurting? Grace comforts.
 - d) Scared? Grace strengthens.
 - e) Doubting? Grace convinces.
 - f) If you spoil it, grace restores it.
2. Grace frees the addicted, restores the dysfunctional, loves the lonely, saves the lost. Jesus' cross opened a path for every soul —no one's too far gone. You limit grace when you think anyone's beyond it. Or when you think any part of your soul is beyond it.
3. God's grace is boundless—let it enlarge your heart!
 - a) It doesn't matter to God if you're a prodigal, pervert, or parasite.
 - b) Criminal or corporate executive. White collar, blue collar, no collar. Big sins, little sins.
4. Nobody is left out.
5. He loves the beautiful parts of you. He loves the nasty parts of you. He loves you.
6. I have this sneaking suspicion that your idea of grace is just too small.
 - a) But it's not just because you limit the reach of grace... on top of that...

B. You REDUCE the righteousness of Grace.

1. Many Christians make the mistake of separating grace from God's righteous laws, as if grace means God simply overlooks sin. But the story of Boaz teaches us that true grace never shortcuts justice - it fulfills it completely.
2. Notice how Boaz follows every law, every legal procedure. He pays every penny. Nothing is overlooked.
3. This is the heart of true grace - not that righteousness is suspended, but that it is completely satisfied. Boaz doesn't say, "Let's skip all this legal business because I'm feeling generous." No, he honors every requirement while taking the cost upon himself.
 - a) Grace isn't God being lenient or nice.
 - b) Grace isn't God sacrificing his holiness and wrath on the altar of his love.
 - c) Grace isn't even love being unconditional.
4. And don't miss the fact that there is no grace that flows to Naomi and Ruth without Boaz paying the price that probably bankrupted his estate.
5. I want you to know...
 - a) Your sins are forgiven, not because they are erased, but because they are paid for.
 - b) Your entrance to heaven is guaranteed, not because God lowered the standards, but because he met the standards on your behalf in Jesus.
 - c) The forgiveness you've been given is rock solid... there's no lawyer in heaven above, on earth beneath, or in hell beneath that... there's no lawyer that can make the case that God made a mistake when he forgave you.
6. Every law is fulfilled. Every requirement is met. Every debt is paid. Every sin is died for. Every gap is closed. Every need is supplied. Every breach is mended. Every hole is filled. Every loophole is closed.
7. **You're not saved by grace because God is nice; you're saved by grace because God is just and it would be unjust of him to ever cast you out.**
8. And if your logic makes you reduce the righteousness of God's grace in any way, then your grace is too small... and you will not stand strong against the devil's accusations.
 - a) Which leads to number 3:

C. You CHEAPEN the price of Grace.

1. The heart of Scripture is Christ. The heart of Christ is grace. And the heart of grace is the cross. Without Christ's cross, there is no grace - not in reality and not conceptually either.
 - a) There is no such thing as a Crossless Grace.
 - b) If Jesus had not died on the cross, there would be no grace for you.
2. Whenever you separate grace from the cross, you cheapen it.
 - a) At the cross, every demand of divine justice was fulfilled. Every requirement of righteousness was met. Every debt was paid in full.
3. Jesus died for you. The cross was brutal. The cross was torture. The cross was bloody. The cross was total humiliation, total pain, horrible death.
4. And in that death, what is the cost to bring to you back to God? The precious blood of Christ.
5. The main thing about Jesus isn't his life, isn't his miracles, isn't even is love.
6. It is his death on the Cross.
7. Because in that death...
 - a) He absorbed the shame that whispers you're not enough.
 - b) He absorbed the rejection that leaves you feeling unwanted.
 - c) He absorbed the addiction that hooks its claws into your psychology and won't let go.
 - d) He absorbed the loneliness that makes you feel invisible.
 - e) He absorbed every sin of yours, past, present, and future.
8. And when he died, he dragged them all into the icy waters of death with him.
 - a) He drained them of their power. He demolished their authority.

- b) All the bad stuff that hurts your life, Jesus took down to the grave,
- c) He buried every last one and spit on their tomb.
- 9. I am trying to persuade your mind, so that your mind can persuade your emotions, so that your emotions can persuade your choices, so that your whole psychology can be persuaded that...
 - a) **By the Cross of Christ, the love of God for you and the grace of God for you is real and unending and unassailable, so that no power or force or Dark Lord can ever overturn it once you step into the royal family of God.**
- 10. That's the cross... and to suggest that any level of your dedication, commitment, service, giving, or religion can ever add one penny to the price Jesus paid on the Cross is to Cheapen the price of Grace... and if that's you, I'm telling you with all the love and respect I have, your Grace is too small.

D. You SHRINK the effects of Grace.

- 1. I'm convinced you're selling grace short! It's not just a ticket to heaven—it's a dynamite blast that transforms every inch of your life.
- 2. Boaz's grace didn't just save Ruth and Naomi from poverty; it rewrote their story, gave them a future, and shook the world, but that's for next time.
- 3. Grace is that big, that wild, that powerful—but you shrink it when you treat it like a small-time deal. Stop it!
- 4. Here's what happens when you let grace unleash its full effect:
 - a) Grace doesn't just forgive you—it remakes you. You're not a patched-up sinner; you're a new creation, a beloved child of God.
 - b) Grace doesn't just erase guilt—it ignites confidence. Your failures scream, but grace shouts louder.
 - c) Grace doesn't just offer mercy—it rewires your heart. You don't obey to earn points; you love because you're loved.
 - d) Grace doesn't just change your status—it heals your story. Your shame becomes a stage for God's glory.
 - e) Grace doesn't just cover sin—it crushes its power. Your chains are broken; walk free from what held you back!
 - f) Grace doesn't just hide your wounds—it restores your soul. Your hurts become holy ground where God meets you.
 - g) Grace doesn't just accept you—it celebrates you. You're not tolerated; you're cherished as God's masterpiece.
- 5. You shrink grace when you box it into a one-time transaction. It's not just about your eternal address—it's about your entire existence!
- 6. **Grace is Christ's life exploding in you, transforming your past, present, and future by recoding your whole psychology.** Don't settle for a small grace. Let it rip through your life like Boaz's did for Ruth—costly, radical, and world-changing. The cross demands nothing less!

E. You TAME the wildness of Grace.

- 1. **Grace isn't a tame pet you keep on a leash—it's a roaring lion, unleashed to wreck your small plans and ignite a daring life!** Boaz shocked Bethlehem with his wild grace, sacrificing his wealth, his son, his legacy to redeem Ruth and Naomi, shaking history's foundations.
- 2. Jesus took it further—He ate with sinners, pardoned the guilty, loved the unlovely, shattered physics with miracles, and ripped death apart by rising from the grave.
- 3. That's grace: fierce, untamed, unstoppable.
- 4. But you tame it when you play it safe, boxing it into polite religion.
- 5. Stop that! Grace is calling you to a radical, faith-fueled adventure.
 - a) You tame grace when you stick to the rules, but true grace breaks them. Jesus crashed the Pharisees' party to dine with tax collectors. Eat with the outcasts, love the messy, and have a good laugh when grace scandalized the self-righteous!
 - b) You tame grace when you love the lovely, but true grace chases the unlovely. Jesus touched lepers and welcomed rejects. Hunt down the broken, the forgotten, the "not worth it"—love them fiercely, because grace does!
 - c) You tame grace when you doubt miracles, but wild grace defies physics. Jesus walked on water, fed thousands, and rose from the dead. Believe the impossible—pray big, expect wonders, and watch grace bend reality!
 - d) You tame grace when you play small, but wild grace demands audacity. Boaz risked everything for Ruth; Jesus died for you. Step out, risk big, live bold—grace catches you when you leap!
 - e) You tame grace when you keep it private, but wild grace spreads like wildfire. Jesus' love shook the world from a cross. Share grace recklessly—serve, forgive, proclaim Christ, and set hearts ablaze!
 - f) You tame grace when you settle for ordinary, but wild grace fuels extraordinary. Boaz's grace birthed a lineage to Christ; Jesus' grace saved you. Dream huge, live loud, and let grace make your life a miracle!
- 6. Grace isn't a cozy blanket—it's a holy fire! Don't settle for a tame faith. Unleash grace's wildness! Break the rules to love the lost. Forgive the inexcusable. Believe the impossible. Risk everything for Christ. Live so boldly that the world gasps, "What kind of grace is this?" That's the life Jesus died for—an audacious, grace-filled, faith-filled adventure. Grab it, run with it, and let grace set your soul on fire!

VI. Conclusion

- A. Your God's grace isn't tame—it's a holy wildfire!
 - 1. Boaz woke up Bethlehem, giving everything to redeem Ruth and Naomi.
 - 2. Jesus topped it, shattering death on the cross to make you His own.
- B. That grace is yours—right now! Don't cage it. Let it rip through your life! Forgive the unforgivable. Love the unlovely. Chase the impossible. Risk it all for Christ. You're not just saved—you're unleashed to live and to love and to shake up the world with the gospel of the matchless grace of God.
- C. The cross is our power—now how about we go turn the world upside down?