

**RH 4.13** ~ *So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son.*

At the start of **RH**, we saw Naomi without a nation, without a husband, and without her sons. And at the end, that doesn't exactly change. Her past isn't undone—and her husband and sons still remain, sadly, deceased. And yet, still: we find her at the end **restored and rewarded**. God doesn't erase her trauma: instead, He redeems it: He gives it purpose—proclaimed by the same women who Naomi had, originally, spoken her trauma to in chapter one.

**RH 4.14-15** ~ *Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! <sup>15</sup> He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.”*

Like Job before her, Naomi stands as an example of a woman who struggles with her trauma and pain. But her **broken** life doesn't prevent her from being **blessed** by her daughter-in-law—who helps her to settle back in Bethlehem: her old home town that, in reflection, she likely realized she never should have left. But from her pain and seeming **powerlessness** comes a trust in the **power** of God. And this trust allows her to **wait in wisdom**—knowing that she and Ruth would both be redeemed: their land and status restored, at last!

Like in the case of Job, her pain and struggle weren't erased. The trauma and loss she experienced wasn't negated. It was just perfected—redeemed. Years after burying her husband and sons, she held her grandson in her lap, raising him. And her grandson would have a grandson of his own:

**RH 4.16-17** ~ *Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. <sup>17</sup> And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi.” They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.*

In Naomi, we see a favored mother-in-law—a woman who stands as proof that God can, in fact, restore the broken! And if He can restore her broken life, He can do the same for you!

**PH 4.19-20** ~ *And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. <sup>20</sup> To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

### **INVITATION**

**EH 1.7-10** ~ *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup> which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ <sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*

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**Naomi: A Favored Mother-in-Law – Part 2**

RH 3-4

PC \_\_ Pchd \_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTION:** Can God restore a broken soul?

### **TRN TO RH 3**

### **INTRODUCTION**

**ILL—Twitter Account Tracking a Dog Rescue** (an account started appearing on my feed; a woman who adopted a dog who'd gone through severe abuse; tracking the dog's recovery and restoration from trauma) I love animals—I still vividly remembering a couple of commercials from my childhood that hit hard with me: showing animals in a shelter that had been abused and abandoned by their human keepers. It always breaks my heart to see such trauma.

We had a less severe, but similar experience, with one of our dogs, Misty. She'd been abandoned on the side of the road and picked up by a friend from Stewart's Creek. When we came to see her and adopt her, she hid, growled, and cowered in the garage. We took her home, and she continued to hide. While, eventually, she adapted to us, she's still a bit anxious at times. The trauma never really goes away.

### **BACKGROUND**

This morning, we looked at **Naomi: a favored mother-in-law**. While we most commonly focus on Ruth, herself, when we look at **RH**, you can't discuss one without the other. The story of Naomi was a terrible one. Over the course of but a few verses, we see her leave her native homeland, lose her husband, both her sons, and then finally, she prepares to return to Bethlehem, destitute and ashamed: her **trauma** having fully broken her.

**RH 1.19-21** ~ *So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, “Is this Naomi?” <sup>20</sup> She said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. <sup>21</sup> I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?”*

This morning, we looked at Naomi as an example of a mother who was **broken, but blessed**—how her loving nature created an attitude of loyalty in her **daughters-in-law** that gave her the support she needed during her darkest time of her life. We looked at how she seemed **powerless, but** actually, she was **powerful**—due both to her role as matriarch over Ruth and her reliance upon the God of creation. And it's in this moment that her role starts to shift: for the second half of the book, we see that her **brokenness** has begun to heal.

**Can God restore a broken soul?** This isn't just a thought-question. For most of us have, at some point or another, felt this feeling of abandonment and brokenness. Can God do the thing we struggle to do: can He heal and redeem our trauma and bring us through to something better? For the answer, we turn to **RH 3**.

### **BD: RH 3 – Waiting with Wisdom**

**PS 27.14** ~ *Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!*

**ILL—Waiting for Rescue** (it's a bit cliché now; the story of a man on his roof in a disaster, turning down rescue attempt after attempt after attempt: God will rescue me; dies, "Why didn't you rescue me?" "I tried three times!") It's a cliché for a reason; we've heard it a dozen times. But there's truth in it. We sometimes think that God's actions must always be some big and grand action: the clouds parting, angels singing, sun shining through the darkness. But, in truth, while God calls on us to **"wait on the Lord"**, that waiting isn't a passive one!

**RH 3.1-5** ~ *Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? <sup>2</sup> Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. <sup>3</sup> Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. <sup>4</sup> But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do."* <sup>5</sup> And she replied, "All that you say I will do."

**EX:** This whole thing strikes us as a bit odd. But Naomi's **wisdom** shines through here. While she'd shown in the previous chapter her growing trust in the protection and guidance of the Lord, she recognized that there was wise action that could be taken by her. While she was **waiting** on the Lord, she was **waiting in wisdom**: not just passively sitting back expecting her problems to be solved, but using her understanding of the culture and politics of the time to act and **"stack the deck"** a bit.

Boaz was an older man, and Ruth a younger one. Even in a culture that sometimes had more than a dozen years separating husband and wife had its limits, and Boaz didn't think she'd have any interest in an old man like him. The actions Naomi proposes to Ruth were ones that, in the era, would have communicated clearly a simple message: **"I'm humbly coming before you, my kinsman redeemer, to seek your care and protection in marriage."**

Ruth obeys her mother-in-law. And she makes the case clearly to Boaz: *"I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer."* (**RH 3.9b**) But it's not so simple. *And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. <sup>13</sup> Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the Lord lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning."* (**RH 3.12-13**) And so, he rested the evening at his feet—likely unsure: uncertain of what was going to happen. **Would he keep his word? Would she and her family be redeemed, their property and name restored?** Uncertain, she returns to Naomi: her trusted, beloved, and favored mother-in-law, and tells her what had happened, presenting a gift of six measures of barley from the man.

What seemed an unclear message to Ruth was crystal clear to Naomi. She was able to rightly interpret the actions of Boaz as a sign of his integrity and honesty. If he'd promised he'd see them redeemed, she knew he'd see them redeemed. *She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."* (**RH 3.18**) She knew she'd done all she could do. Now, it was time to **wait with wisdom**.

**B.ILL—Restoration of Job—JB 42** (similarly experience trauma; losing family, wealth, and reputation; at the end, Job similarly speaks in faith of wisdom: trusting in God's righteousness) *Then Job answered the Lord and said: <sup>2</sup> "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. <sup>3</sup> 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. <sup>4</sup> 'Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.' <sup>5</sup> I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; <sup>6</sup> therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes."* (**JB 42.1-6**)

**PS 5.1-12** ~ *Give ear to my words, O Lord; consider my groaning. <sup>2</sup> Give attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to you do I pray. <sup>3</sup> O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch. <sup>4</sup> For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you. <sup>5</sup> The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers. <sup>6</sup> You destroy those who speak lies; the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man. <sup>7</sup> But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house. I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you. <sup>8</sup> Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness because of my enemies; make your way straight before me. <sup>9</sup> For there is no truth in their mouth; their inmost self is destruction; their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue. <sup>10</sup> Make them bear their guilt, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; because of the abundance of their transgressions cast them out, for they have rebelled against you. <sup>11</sup> But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you. <sup>12</sup> For you bless the righteous, O Lord; you cover him with favor as with a shield.*

**AP:** It's amazing to see the faith that's regrown in Naomi over the course of these two chapters. But as she's seen evidence of the truth of God's will in action, her faith begins to spark again. She's again able to **wait with wisdom**—taking action as needed, and trusting in God's active plan and providence. And, brothers and sisters, this is the next step in our restoration after trauma, as well. To reach restoration, we need to follow the pattern of this wise woman and mother: we similarly need to **wait with wisdom**—acting as needed and appropriate, but ultimately placing our trust in God to guide the world and our lives in the direction that they must go.

**PH 4.8-9** ~ *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. <sup>9</sup> What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*

### **CONCLUSION: RH 4 – Restored and Rewarded**

As we come to the end of the book, we still aren't sure what's going to happen. **Will Boaz's contact at the gate—the closer redeemer—fulfill his responsibility? Will Boaz be as reliable as Naomi believes he will be?** While Ruth and we may not be so certain, Naomi, we remember, is! And after a bit of back and forth involving the exchange of a sandal (be honest: our customs seem a bit odd, too, from the outside), Boaz returns: ready to fulfill his promise.