



Chapter 3

• THOU ART MY KINSMAN REDEEMER •

RUTH 3:1-6 THE PREPARATION PROCESS

In the first verse of Chapter 3, Naomi's concern for Ruth is evident as she says, "My daughter, I must find a home for you, where you will be well provided for." The Hebrew word for "home" used here is 'manoach,' which means a place of rest, or a resting place. It signifies more than a physical dwelling; it suggests a place of comfort, security, and peace—a haven where Ruth could find a respite from the trials she had faced.

Naomi's desire for Ruth beautifully parallels the spiritual rest that is offered in Christ. This search for a secure future for Ruth echoes the spiritual journey towards the rest promised in the gospel, where believers find their ultimate peace and rest in the salvation offered through Jesus.

The invitation to rest in Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest," (NIV) isn't a suggestion to abandon good works, nor is Jesus promising a life without hardship. Rather, it's an invitation to a deep and abiding rest for the soul, found in the redemptive embrace of God. This rest transforms our efforts from weary toil into expressions of love and faith, energized by the Spirit and aligned with God's own heart.

Naomi's understanding that Boaz would be winnowing barley at the threshing floor in the evening reflects her familiarity with the agricultural customs of her time. Evening winnowing, took advantage of the natural wind patterns that would often emerge after sunset. This practice hinged on the occurrence of what is known as a "mountain breeze."

A "mountain breeze" is a local wind pattern that typically occurs in the evenings, especially in an area like Bethlehem which is situated in the Judean Hills. When the sun sets, the air on the mountains cools faster than the air in the valleys. This temperature difference leads to winds moving down the slopes. While this doesn't guarantee that every evening will be windy, it's a frequent enough occurrence to plan agricultural tasks around it.

Traditional threshing floors were often carefully constructed to optimize the natural wind. These spaces were typically flat and open, sometimes slightly elevated to better catch the breeze. If they were partially enclosed, they would have openings or doors on opposite sides, facilitating a cross breeze that was crucial for winnowing—the process of separating grain from chaff.

In this process, farmers would use a winnowing fork to toss the grain mixture into the air, allowing the wind to blow away the lighter chaff, while the heavier grain fell back down to be collected. This image of separation is echoed in the New Testament, when John the Baptist uses winnowing as a metaphor to illustrate that Christ will separate believers from unbelievers: "His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Luke 3:17, NIV)

In verse three, Naomi instructs Ruth to do three specific things before meeting Boaz: wash, anoint herself, and put on her best garment. These actions are symbolic of our spiritual preparation as the bride of Christ. 1 Corinthians 6:11 tells us, "But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

Let's look at each one of these and the symbolism they represent:

1. **Washing:** Naomi's first instruction to Ruth to wash herself resonates with our spiritual cleansing through God's Word. Just as Ruth washed in preparation to meet Boaz, we are cleansed spiritually by the truth and promises found in the Scriptures. The Apostle Paul captures this transformation in his letter to the church in Ephesus.

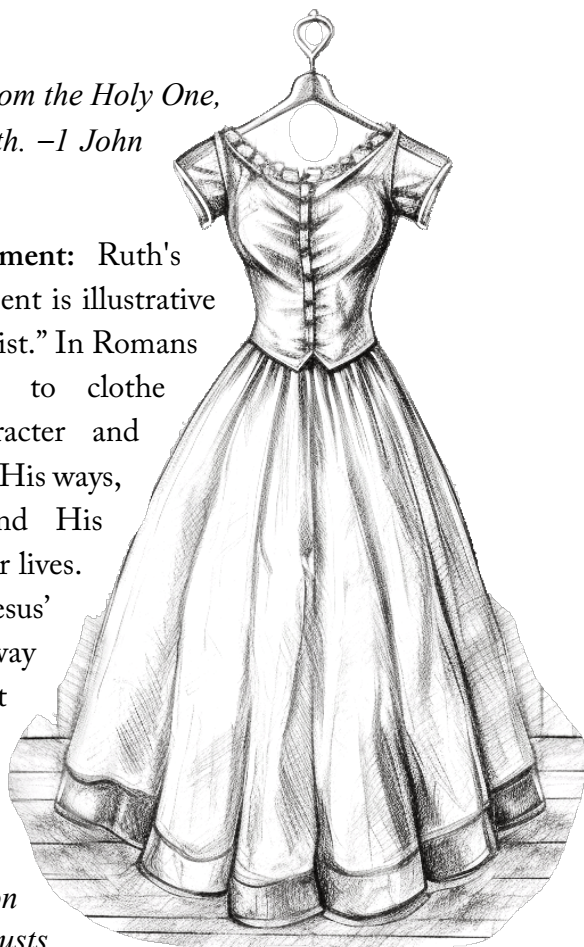
Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word. –Ephesians 5:25–26, NIV

2. **Anointing:** The act of anointing is symbolic of the anointing of the Holy Spirit that believers receive. This anointing sets us apart and empowers us for God's purpose. As Ruth anointed herself for a new chapter in her life, we too are anointed with a new identity and purpose in Christ.

But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. –1 John 2:20, NIV

3. **Putting on her Best Garment:** Ruth's changing into her best garment is illustrative of a believer “putting on Christ.” In Romans 13, Paul urges believers to clothe themselves with the character and presence of Jesus, embracing His ways, His love, His mercy, and His holiness in all aspects of their lives. It's about adopting Jesus' teachings and example as a way of life, letting His Spirit guide actions, thoughts, and desires.

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. –Romans 13:14, NIV



In each of these actions—washing, anointing, and dressing—Ruth was physically preparing to meet Boaz. Spiritually, however, these actions can be seen as symbolizing the preparation of the Bride of Christ, which is the Church, as it readies itself for the return of Jesus. Just as Ruth cleansed and

adorned herself for her redeemer, believers are called to be cleansed by the Word and anointed by the Spirit, 'putting on' Christ in anticipation of His coming.

So, what does this look like in the life of a believer? It's digging into the Word of God, while letting its truth saturate our lives and shape our actions. It's allowing the Scripture to be our compass, steering us towards transformation. It's a process of shedding our former way of life including the sin we leave behind to embrace our new life in Christ. It's a reminder to walk in the Spirit, living out the righteousness and purity for which we've been called.

❓ How does the New Testament describe the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and what purpose does this anointing serve in the life of a believer? (See 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 and 1 John 2:27)

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❓ Ruth was told to put on her best garment, a powerful image of putting on Christ. What are some of the characteristics of this garment? (See Colossians 3:12 and Isaiah 61:3)

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? If you remember, at the end of the last chapter, we talked about the wheat harvest and how Shavuot commemorates the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. Do you see any parallels between the Israelites preparing to receive the Law and Ruth preparing to meet Boaz? (See Exodus 19:10-15)

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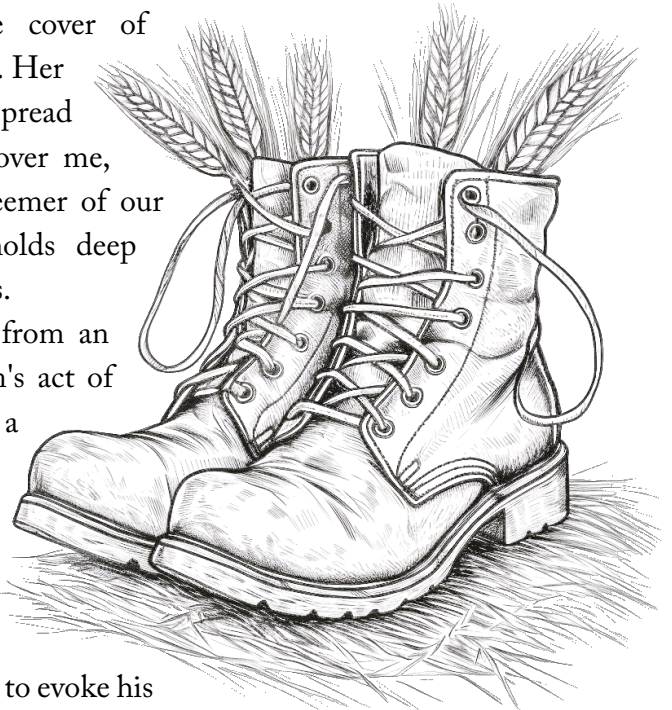
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RUTH 3:7-13 THE THRESHING FLOOR

We find ourselves at a significant moment in our story when Ruth approaches Boaz under the cover of darkness at the threshing floor. Her bold yet humble petition, "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family," (Ruth 3:9, NIV) holds deep cultural and spiritual overtones.

Ruth's actions here stem from an ancient practice, where a man's act of spreading his garment over a woman signified his pledge to protect and support her. In a sense, it was a marriage proposal. By asking Boaz to extend the corner of his garment, Ruth is inviting Boaz to evoke his duty as her kinsman-redeemer.



Digging into the word to find more on this subject, I came across a verse where similar language is used to depict God's covenant relationship with Israel.

When I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your naked body. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign LORD, and you became mine. –Ezekiel 16:8, NIV



By the way, if you cross reference that verse, do you know what you'll find? References to the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai when the Israelites affirm their commitment to God's covenant.

*Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people.
They responded, 'We will do everything the LORD has said;
we will obey.'* —Exodus 24:7, NIV

This acceptance of God's covenant parallels the protective and binding agreement Ruth seeks with Boaz. While the physical act of spreading a garment is specific to Ruth's story, symbolizing Boaz's willingness to marry and protect her, it resonates with the spiritual covering God provides His people. It highlights themes of protection, provision, and a profound relationship.

Now, here's where it gets even more interesting. We talked about the process of winnowing, but what we haven't discussed is the process of threshing. Threshing is the essential step that precedes winnowing, where the kernels of grain are extracted from the stalks and husks. This was traditionally done by beating the grain using a flail—a tool consisting of two sticks connected by a chain or a strap. The impact from the flail would dislodge the valuable kernels from their casings. Similarly, a threshing sledge, often laden with sharp stones or metal, would be pulled over the grain to achieve the same result. This intense and rigorous process was akin to a form of sacrifice—the grain had to be beaten to be freed, signifying the hard but necessary work to bring forth sustenance from the harvest.

In John 12:24, Jesus speaks of His own life as a seed that must die to produce many seeds, a direct reference to His death. "Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies," He says, "it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." (NIV) The imagery here is powerful: just as the grain must be threshed to bring forth new life, so too was Christ's sacrifice essential to yield the harvest of redeemed lives.

In a fascinating parallel from the Old Testament, we see David purchasing a threshing floor in 2 Samuel Chapter 24. This is not just any piece of land; it's the future site of the Temple, the very heart of Israelite worship. On this threshing floor, David builds an altar to the Lord and makes sacrifices to atone for the sin of counting the people. It's on this same site that Solomon will later build the Temple, a place of continual sacrifice to God. The threshing floor thus becomes a symbol of sacrifice—a foreshadow of the redemptive work of the cross.

Now, here on the threshing floor, we find Ruth humbly lying at Boaz's feet, offering her life and future to him. Here, Boaz reciprocates with a promise to take Ruth under his care, showcasing a mutual willingness to give of themselves for the well-being of the other. This scene, set against the backdrop of the threshing floor—a place where grain was stripped and beaten—mirrors the body of Christ which was broken for us.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. —Isaiah 53:5, NIV

By asking Boaz to spread the corner of his garment over her, Ruth is expressing her willingness to come under his care and authority. Ruth's request is a powerful gesture of trust in Boaz's character and his standing as a kinsman-redeemer. Her act of submission is not passive; it's a choice made from a position of strength and vulnerability. It's a sacrificial gift, reminiscent of her earlier decision to leave her homeland and follow Naomi, where she demonstrated a similar trust and submission to Naomi's guidance.

I should point out here that in ancient Israel, the law of kinsman redemption was deemed as a moral and familial duty rather than an absolute legal requirement. By agreeing to pursue the duty of a kinsman-redeemer, Boaz is embracing the spirit of selflessness and commitment that the role requires. This commitment entailed significant responsibilities,

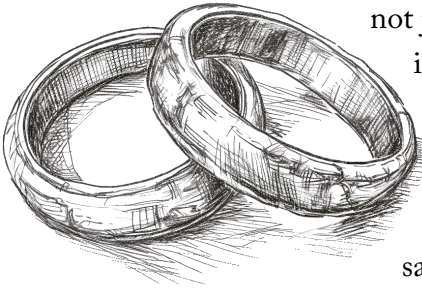
highlighting a readiness to place the well-being of others above his own interests:

1. **Redeem the Family Land:** Boaz would take on the financial responsibility to buy back the land that Naomi's family had sold due to poverty, as mandated in Leviticus 25:25.

This act was more than a financial transaction; it was a pledge to restore the heritage and stability of Naomi's family.



2. **Marry the Widow:** Boaz would marry Ruth, the widow of a deceased relative, to ensure the continuation of his relative's family line, according to the stipulations in Deuteronomy 25:5-6. This was not just about providing for Ruth; it also involved an intention to raise children in the name of her deceased husband, securing his legacy within their lineage and community.



These actions by Boaz are reflective of a sacrificial commitment to family and community, yet a specific provision of the law presented a potential obstacle. The law granted the nearest relative the primary right to assume the role of a kinsman-redeemer should he choose to do so.

In Ruth's case, there was a relative closer than Boaz who had the option to redeem her. Boaz displayed extraordinary kindness and duty, by not only respecting the legal procedures but also indicating his readiness to go above and beyond the call of duty in his desire to assist Ruth and Naomi.

❓ In your own words, list the responsibilities of a kinsman redeemer, that were applicable to Boaz. Underneath each, write down any reflections of Christ that you find:

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❓ In what ways does the action of spreading a garment over someone symbolize protection and commitment in ancient Israel, and how does this echo our relationship with Christ?

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We talked about the process of threshing and winnowing in this chapter. In what ways can our trials be likened to threshing, and the response to our trials be likened to winnowing?

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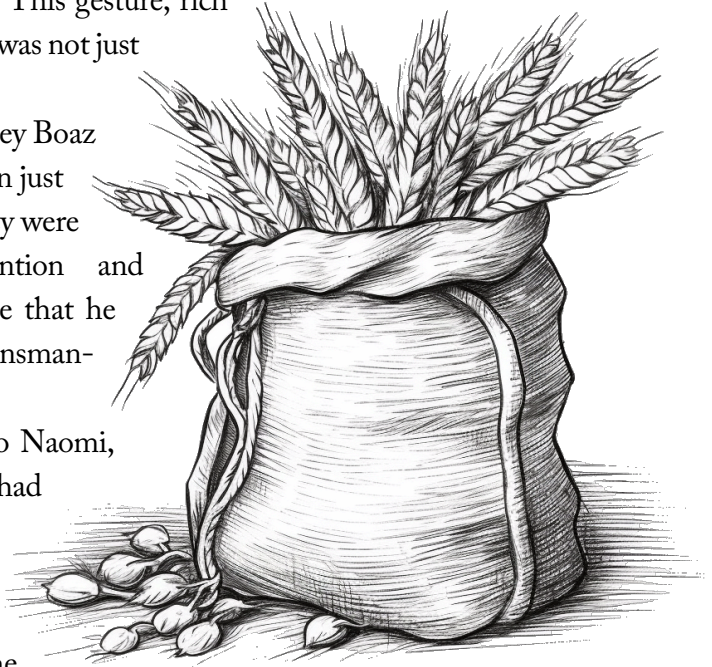
RUTH 3:14-18 SIX MEASURES OF BARLEY

In the quiet hours, as the light of dawn was approaching, Boaz, moved by a deep sense of honor, whispered discreetly, "No one must know that a woman came to the threshing floor" (Ruth 3:14 NIV). His careful words were a shield to Ruth's dignity, a testament to his protective and prudent nature.

It was then, before Ruth made her way back, that Boaz took a further step in their unfolding story. He instructed her to extend her shawl, and he filled it with six measures of barley. This gesture, rich in symbolism and kindness, was not just a gift; it was a message.

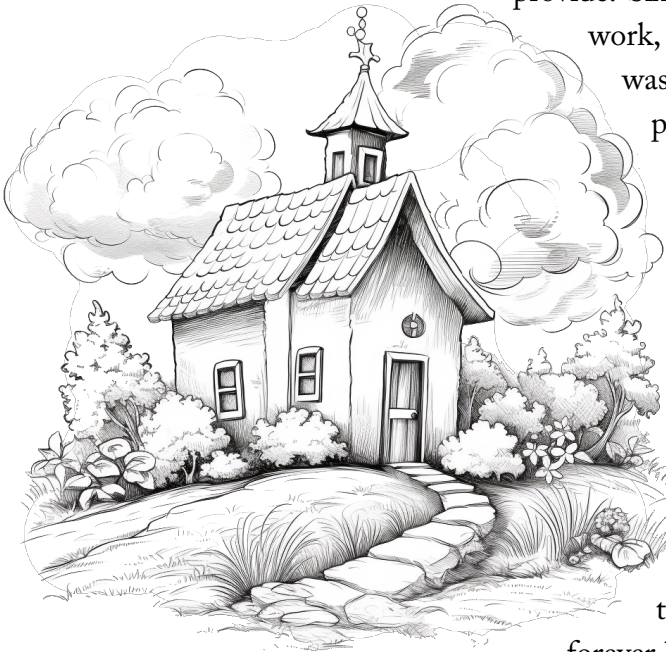
The six measures of barley Boaz gave to Ruth were more than just a sign of his generosity. They were a symbol of his intention and commitment—a reassurance that he would fulfill his role as a kinsman-redeemer.

When Ruth returned to Naomi, and recounted all that Boaz had done, the weight of the barley she carried was a tangible sign of his pledge. Naomi, with the



wisdom of experience, recognized the meaning behind the gift. She understood that Boaz's actions were a foreshadow of good things to come.

The significance of the six measures—neither an accidental nor an arbitrary number—points to the completion and rest that Boaz sought to provide. Six, the number of man, and of work, suggested that Boaz's work was not yet complete, but the promise of rest and completion was near—pointing forward to the seventh day, the day of rest and fulfillment.



This act of Boaz foreshadows the ultimate rest and redemption that Christ provides. Jesus, our greater Boaz, offers us abundant life, not only for this life but for eternity in our

forever home. He pours into our laps a full measure of grace, exceeding all we could hold, as He promises in John 16:33, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (NIV).

In the hands of Christ, we find the fullness of redemption, and in His promise, we find rest. As Boaz did not rest until he had settled the matter, so Christ, through His finished work on the cross, ensures our complete redemption.

*There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God;
for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works,
just as God did from his. —Hebrews 4:9–10, NIV*

Just as Naomi and Ruth waited in hopeful anticipation for Boaz to fulfill his word, so we too await the final fulfillment of all Christ has promised. The six measures of barley remain a testament to the faithfulness of God's servants and the fidelity of God Himself—a prelude to the abundant provision found only in Him.

❓ Naomi and Ruth waited with hopeful expectation for Boaz's promise to be fulfilled. How does their period of waiting reflect the Christian anticipation of Christ's second coming?

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❓ In your own words, explain what Hebrews 4:9-10 means:

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❓ In your own words, explain what this verse means: Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience. (Hebrews 4:1, NIV)

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❓ How have Ruth's actions thus far exemplified the principle of active faith as described in Hebrews 4:11?

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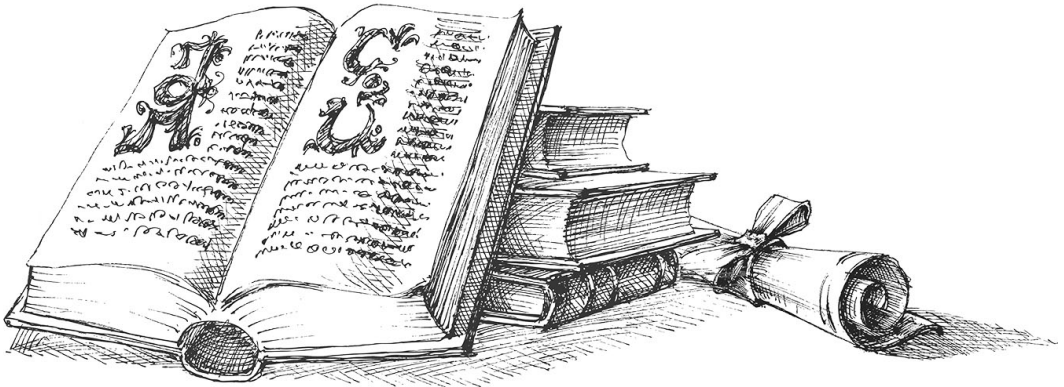
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GLEANNING FROM RUTH CHAPTER 3

As we turn the pages of Chapter 3, the story invites us to consider the sacrifice of Christ's ultimate act of love. The processes of threshing and winnowing serve as powerful reminder of the trials and tribulation that refine us, akin to the sufferings Christ embraced for our sake.

Ruth's intentional preparation to meet Boaz is a parallel to our spiritual adornment as the bride of Christ. We're cleansed by the truth and beauty of His Word, anointed by the Holy Spirit's presence, and we choose to 'put on' Christ by embracing virtues like compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Let this be a reminder to you: as Ruth readied herself with careful intention, we too are called to prepare our hearts. This preparation is an active, daily choice to clothe ourselves in the attributes of Christ, which readies us to step into His presence, transformed and renewed.



SEEDS OF RENEWAL

As Ruth prepared to meet Boaz, what are some ways you can prepare your heart for daily encounters with God? And, is there any improvement you need in this area?

Considering the threshing floor where grain is separated from chaff, what areas of your life might God be refining to reveal your true purpose in Him?

Answer Key

Ruth Chapter 3

How does the New Testament describe the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and what purpose does this anointing serve in the life of a believer? (See 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 and 1 John 2:27)

The New Testament describes the anointing of the Holy Spirit as a mark of ownership and a guarantee of our inheritance in Christ. In 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, it states that God anoints, sets a seal of ownership on us, and puts His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. In 1 John 2:27, the anointing is described as something that abides in believers, teaching them about all things, and is true and not false. It serves to guide, protect, and authenticate the believer's relationship with Christ.

Ruth was told to put on her best garment, a powerful image of putting on Christ. What are some of the characteristics of this garment? (See Colossians 3:12 and Isaiah 61:3)

The characteristics of the garment, which symbolizes putting on Christ, include compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience (Colossians 3:12), and the garment of praise, beauty instead of ashes, and the oil of joy instead of mourning (Isaiah 61:3). These traits reflect the transformative effect of Christ's righteousness and the new identity that is found in Him.

If you remember, at the end of the last chapter, we talked about the wheat harvest and how Shavuot commemorates the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. Do you see any parallels between the Israelites preparing to receive the Law and Ruth preparing to meet Boaz? (See Exodus 19:10-15)

Just as the Israelites had to consecrate themselves, wash their clothes, and abstain from certain activities in preparation to meet with God and receive the Torah (Exodus 19:10-15), Ruth also prepared herself by washing, anointing, and putting on her best garment to meet Boaz. Both instances involve a process of purification and preparation for a significant encounter that will lead to a change in their relationship and status.

In your own words, list the responsibilities of a kinsman redeemer, that were applicable to Boaz. Underneath each, write down any reflections of Christ that you find:

- **Marry the Widow:** Christ's commitment to His Church can be seen as a spiritual marriage, where He loves, nurtures, and sacrifices for His bride, the collective body of believers (Ephesians 5:25-27).
- **Redeem the Land:** Christ's redemptive work at the cross can be seen as reclaiming what was lost by Adam, restoring our relationship with God, and offering us the promise of eternal life. This 'inheritance' is a gift from God, made accessible through faith in Jesus (1 Peter 1:3-4).

In what ways does the action of spreading a garment over someone symbolize protection and commitment in ancient Israel, and how does this echo our relationship with Christ?

In ancient Israel, spreading a garment over someone symbolized a pledge of protection, provision, and the taking on of a covenantal commitment. This act signified a man's intention to marry and care for a woman. It echoes our relationship with Christ in that Christ covers and protects us, commits to us through a new covenant, and provides for our spiritual well-being, much like Boaz did for Ruth.

We talked about the process of threshing and winnowing in this chapter. In what ways can our trials be likened to threshing, and the response to our trials be likened to winnowing?

In a way, they serve to separate what is valuable in us from what is not, much like threshing separates grain from chaff. The response to our trials can be likened to winnowing because it involves discerning and keeping what is good and true, letting go of the chaff—the unnecessary or harmful aspects that trials reveal in our lives. This process strengthens our faith and character, as winnowing purifies the harvest.

Naomi and Ruth waited with hopeful expectation for Boaz's promise to be fulfilled. How does their period of waiting reflect the Christian anticipation of Christ's second coming?

We exercise patience and faith as we await Christ's promised return. And like Ruth and Naomi, we embody a hope and trust in God's timing.

In your own words, explain what this verse means: There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. (Hebrews 4:9-10, NIV)

- **Present Spiritual Rest:** When individuals come to faith in Christ, they are said to enter a type of rest in the here and now. This is the rest from striving to earn salvation through works, as mentioned in Hebrews 4:10, where it says, "for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his." This present rest involves a peace of mind and soul that comes from trusting in the sufficiency of Jesus' sacrifice for sin.
- **Future Eternal Rest:** There is also the anticipation of a future, more complete rest that awaits believers after this life or at Christ's return. This is often associated with the heavenly rest or the "Sabbath-rest" mentioned in Hebrews 4:9. It represents the final state of believers, enjoying eternal fellowship with God, free from the troubles and labors of the present world.

Both aspects of rest are grounded in the finished work of Christ, with the present rest affecting how believers live their lives today and the future rest being the hope and promise that sustains them.

In your own words, explain what this verse means: Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience. (Hebrews 4:1, NIV)

The phrase "make every effort" implies that while salvation is not earned by works, there is an active component to faith. It involves hearing God's word, believing it, and responding to it in obedience. This is not a passive process but one that requires attentiveness, perseverance, and a wholehearted commitment to God's ways to ensure one does not fall by the same sort of disbelief that affected the Israelites.

How have Ruth's actions thus far exemplified the principle of active faith as described in Hebrews 4:11?

She gave up her old life, leaving everything behind.

She embraced Naomi's God and her people.

She took the initiative to glean in the fields for survival.

She complied with Naomi's guidance.

She made a bold move to propose a form of marriage to Boaz.