

Devotion 11:

Our Father Protects and Provides

Ruth 1—4

“Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings.”
(Ps. 17:8)

“I will say to the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust...He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge.’” (Ps. 91:4)

In the book of Ruth we find one of the most heartwarming stories in the entire Bible. Like many such stories, it is one where our Lord turns darkness into light. (Ps. 18:28) It is the period of judges when there is a famine in the land. An Israelite woman named Naomi has lost her husband and two sons to death. She is living among the Moabites and decides to move back among her relatives on the west side of the Jordan River. One of her Moabite daughters-in-law, Ruth, however, determines to remain with her.

As the Lord’s sovereignty arranges it, the ladies meet a relative of Naomi’s deceased husband, one who can be a kinsman-redeemer. That is, one who is 1) related by blood, 2) able to buy the husband’s land, 3) willing to redeem the land and marry Ruth, and 4) is free to do so. Thereby the husband’s name will live on and the two women will be provided for and not left poor and destitute.

A key passage in the book is when the kinsman-redeemer, Boaz, says to Ruth, *“May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.”* (2:12) It is a beautiful word picture that is referred to again when Ruth, according to custom, lies next to Boaz one evening and asks him to *“spread the corner of (his) garment over (her).”* (3:9)

At story’s end, Naomi, who has had her darkness turned into light by a loyal daughter-in-law and a loving kinsman-redeemer, is blessed by the Lord’s enabling Ruth to bear a grandson. Women in the town exclaim, *“May he become famous throughout Israel! He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age.”* (4:13-15) Ruth’s son becomes the grandfather to King David.

Only four women are mentioned in Jesus’ genealogy in Matthew 1: Rahab (the prostitute who spied for Israel), Ruth, Bathsheba (the adulteress with David), and Mary. Two of these ladies, Rahab and Ruth, were foreigners. It is difficult to read this story and not equate it to what our Father has done for us in Jesus.

Our Father has sent us a kinsman-redeemer to protect and provide for us. As Ruth 1:6 says, *“He (comes) to the aid of his people.”* He is our faithful and true friend. He has left His comfortable home of heaven, has descended to this foreign and strange land, and has pledged to remain with us until the end of the age. (Mt. 28:20) As Jesus said in Luke

13:34: *“...how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.”*

As Naomi moved from emptiness to fullness through the selfless, God-blessed acts of Ruth and Boaz, likewise we, too, move from the emptiness of sin and this fallen world to fullness of life through the selfless love of our Father through Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus said in John 10:10, *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

As Naomi returned to the Promised Land at the time of harvest, so will we. Some people today aren't certain of this fact. That is unfortunate and due to their looking at their own lives and their own righteousness (or lack of it). But if we consider the story of Naomi, we see that she came into fullness not by anything she did, but based solely on the selfless, righteous acts of others (Ruth and Boaz). Similarly, we have come into fullness not because of anything we have done, but solely by the selfless, righteous acts of Jesus.

Jesus said in John 10:28-30:

“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.”

Jesus, our kinsman-redeemer, became a man, was able to save us, was willing to save us, and was free from sin. We can therefore be assured of our salvation. Why? Because our Father protects us and provides for us.