

Bible Study: The Book of Ruth

Week 3: Ruth 3



The World behind the text - Background:

1. 'Foot' or 'leg' in Hebrew (regel) can also mean male genitalia!
2. 'Spreading a cloak' is an image of anointing or appointing – compare Elijah throwing his cloak over Elisha

The 'World in Front of the text' – our experience now:

1. How do you get ready for a date? What feelings might be involved?

The text:

1. What words or phrases immediately strike you?
2. What do you make of Boaz's words in 3.10-12? Is this chapter positive about women or patriarchal? Or does it shift?
3. Who is vulnerable in this encounter? Why and how?
4. What does the text say about family relationships? Intimate relationships?
5. Where is God in all this?
6. Does this speak to us today?

Ruth 3

Ruth and Boaz at the Threshing-Floor

3Naomi [Ruth's] mother-in-law said to her, 'My daughter, I need to seek some security for you, so that it may be well with you. ²Now here is our kinsman Boaz, with whose young women you have been working. See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing-floor. ³Now wash and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing-floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴When 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.' ⁵She said to her, 'All that you tell me I will do.'

6 So she went down to the threshing-floor and did just as her mother-in-law had instructed her. ⁷When Boaz had eaten and drunk, and he was in a contented mood, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came quietly and uncovered his feet, and lay down. ⁸At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and there, lying at his feet, was a woman! ⁹He said, 'Who are you?' And she answered, 'I am Ruth, your servant; spread your cloak over your servant, for you are next-of-kin.' ¹⁰He

said, 'May you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter; this last instance of your loyalty is better than the first; you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. ¹¹And now, my daughter, do not be afraid; I will do for you all that you ask, for all the assembly of my people know that you are a worthy woman. ¹²But now, though it is true that I am a near kinsman, there is another kinsman more closely related than I. ¹³Remain this night, and in the morning, if he will act as next-of-kin for you, good; let him do so. If he is not willing to act as next-of-kin for you, then, as the Lord lives, I will act as next-of-kin for you. Lie down until the morning.'

14 So she lay at his feet until morning, but got up before one person could recognize another; for he said, 'It must not be known that the woman came to the threshing-floor.' ¹⁵Then he said, 'Bring the cloak you are wearing and hold it out.' So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley, and put it on her back; then he went into the city. ¹⁶She came to her mother-in-law, who said, 'How did things go with you, my daughter?' Then she told her all that the man had done for her, ¹⁷saying, 'He gave me these six measures of barley, for he said, "Do not go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed." ' ¹⁸She replied, 'Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today.'

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