

**BOAZ**  
**REDEMPTION FOR A DARK WORLD (Story of Ruth + Mark 13)**

The story went something like this. Kate McClure said she ran out of gas on the freeway and was in distress as she tried to figure out what to do. A homeless veteran, Jonny Bobbitt, befriended her, gave away his small wad of dollars, -- twenty of them -- and enabled her to be on her way.

Feeling a deep sense of gratitude, McClure began a “Gofundme” page for the homeless man to try and enable him to have a better life. The national attention the page got was phenomenal and, next thing you know, 14,000 people have donated and some \$400,000 for Bobbitt.

McClure posted, “My friend will never have to worry about a roof over his head again!! Thanks to everyone who had a part in this amazing ride.” All the donors felt great! They had rescued someone from darkness and given him new hope.

Unfortunately it turns out the entire thing was a scam and McClure, her boyfriend, and Bobbitt were all arrested last week for fraud. The story was concocted – fabricated – a lie that played on the heartstrings of generous people looking for a meaningful charity. McClure faces up to ten years in prison.

But imagine if it were true. Wouldn't it be a wonderful story of people gathering together to buy someone out of a desperate situation? That's what the word REDEMPTION means. To pay the price to deliver someone from bondage. To sacrifice so that another can be set free.

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Well, there is a true story of someone like this in the Bible. His name is Boaz, and, when he encountered the widow Ruth scrapping for grain in his field, and heard the story that she and her mother-in-law, Naomi, had returned to Naomi's homeland because they had both tragically lost their husbands and felt their chances for survival were better with relatives -- he decided that God was calling him to make a difference in their lives.

At first he makes sure that his workers leave a little extra grain for Ruth to harvest. But as time goes along, he eventually falls in love with Ruth and, himself, puts up the purchase price for Ruth's rescue, marries her, and spends the rest of his days celebrating his relationship with this wonderful servant woman.

REDEEMER. Boaz was a Redeemer for Ruth and Naomi. He rescued them from a time of darkness and enabled them to know joy and peace again.

We have a Ruth here at Beautiful Savior, don't we? Ruth Schiefelbein. But do we have any Boazes? Ahhh yes, there's one right there. Little Bo Buie. His name is a historical reference to an Old Testament saint who brought rescue to Ruth and eventually was an ancestor of the great King David.

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But, of course, you and I know that there is a greater Redeemer – one who didn't just rescue one poor woman in one historic era in Israel, but who went far beyond the Boaz sacrifice to the greatest lengths possible.

His name, of course, is Jesus. Our God saw us in such desperate shape. Far worse than Ruth and Naomi – we were destined for eternal destruction. Our human nature had been so corrupted by the first sin of Adam and Eve that our inclination, every day, was only toward selfishness and greed, pride and anger. We were so filled with ourselves that we had no room in our hearts for God or anyone else.

We needed a Redeemer – we needed a Savior who would buy us out of our slavery to sin.

To do so would be a nearly impossible task. Only one who was uncorrupted and pure could pay the price for our sin. And only one who was willing to suffer the extreme punishment that we deserved would be able to offer the ransom. This meant that our only possible means of rescue was for God Himself to step up to the plate and offer Himself as the living, loving REDEEMER. No other sacrifice could possibly accomplish the task.

How wonderful that our God was willing. And in a way far, far greater than Boaz, enabled us to be children of God.

On the cross, when Jesus shouted out the words, “It is finished.” That’s what they mean. Literally the phrase means: “THE PRICE IS PAID. THE REDEMPTION IS SECURED.”

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Today, you and I who have been REDEEMED by our Lord Jesus Christ, still remain in a sinful world. And, in fact, that world is spiraling downward toward the final end of all things. If you look at our Gospel Lesson for today you can see what Jesus Himself tells us about the end.

Verse 5: There will be deceivers. False prophets, false messiahs, spiritual deceivers.

Verse 6: There will be wars and rumors of wars, nation rising against nation.

Verse 7: There will be a rise in natural disasters – earthquakes, fires, floods and famines.

Verse 9: There will be persecution of Christians –

Verse 12: There will even be division in families and betrayal between those who have the closest of bonds.

It’s a serious, dangerous, and dark world in which we live, and Jesus is telling us that toward the end of all things, all of this will escalate to the point of a darkness the world has not known up unto this point.

But, says Jesus, you don’t need to be afraid. And do you know why?

Because you have a REDEEMER. One who has saved you – set you free from the law of sin and death. Jesus has opened the gates of heaven for you. Jesus enables you to rise above this dangerous, broken world BECAUSE you know, no matter what you face, no matter how awful this world might get, You have a future in glory.

But, with that knowledge and confidence comes also a responsibility. The same responsibility that BOAZ felt in the Old Testament.

That is, you are called to help welcome others out of darkness and into light, out of bondage and into freedom, out of death and into life.

The CHIEF way you do that is by sharing the REDEEMER Himself: Jesus. Inviting others to hear His story. Inviting others to become better acquainted with Him through faith.

Inviting others to continue to learn more about His unbelievable grace and His unconditional love for them.

Sometimes we're afraid to do that because we mistakenly think that people will think we're religious fanatics or that they will reject us. But God promises to bless the sharing of His Word and has dispatched His Holy Spirit to be with and guide us. So be not afraid. God will bless you in your speaking.

But a second way you can be a Boaz is by reaching out to rescue others in physical need. Helping with the fire relief out in California. Making a difference with a neighbor who's struggling with cancer by bringing her a meal. Serving at the Gathering to feed the hungry. Supporting missionary families. Assisting a neighbor with a house repair project.

Because, you see, the REDEEMER, Jesus, empowers the REDEEMED, you and me, to reflect Him in the way we live our lives.

The lie with which I began this story, about the homeless man who assisted the young woman, pales in comparison to the many, many real "gofundme" stories that have touched the lives of God's people and have elicited generosity that has actually lifted someone out of darkness and unto a better future.

A year ago, my friend Pastor Peter Kelm, passed away from gall bladder cancer. One year later, due to the generosity of people all over the country, a Christian school was built in Ghana in memory of Pastor Peter. It now serves 150 kids who previously had difficulty finding a place for education.

So be a Boaz. Take the redeeming love of the Savior that first came to you, and share it with others. And you can be sure that, just as He did for Boaz, He also has great plans for you.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.