

**Love is ...
Waiting
Ruth 3:1-18**

Introduction: Today we are going to walk through the third chapter of the four chapters in the book of Ruth. It's a timeless story of what love is, and as such, it's all about God, who is love, being manifested through His people. So far in the story we've learned that love is transformational and that it's easily recognizable if you know what you're looking for! Ultimately, it's a story about the covenant of love God made with His people that demonstrates itself not only in His providential love that led to King David, but more importantly, the providential love revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

For those that are new, let me spend just a few minutes getting you up to speed with where we are in one of the most famous love stories in all the world.

A man named Elimelech (My God is King) was married to a woman named Naomi (Pleasant) and they lived in Bethlehem (Place of Bread). They had two sons named Mahlon (Sickness) and Chilion (Vanishing). When a severe famine struck the land Elimelech ironically decided to take his family to land God gave the Hebrew people. However, because the Hebrew's people lacked the faith to claim it, they never conquered and occupied it. On a clear day people in Bethlehem could see these unconquered hills on the other side of the Dead Sea, hills that in this day were green and thriving while their land was barren and starving. However, instead of those lands being occupied by the descendants of those to whom God gave it, they were instead inhabited by their Satan worshiping, baby sacrificing, crazy cousins, known as the Moabites! Think of the irony, God was prospering the land where their pagan cousins lived, land the Hebrew people never obeyed God and took, while He was cursing the land His people obeyed Him and claimed! We don't know why God was doing this because the story never tells us, and it's clearly not the point; but no matter the reason, Elimelech made the decision to move to Moab so that he could continue providing for his family.

However, sometime after arriving in Moab with his family, Elimelech dies! Afterwards, his wife and two sons continued to live there, and as such, Mahlon and Chilion grew up and married Moabite women, something that was not prohibited by the Mosaic Law. After ten years neither sons' marriage had produced a child and both sons died! This left Naomi, Elimelech's wife, not only a widow, but a woman with no heir for her and her husband's land, and no way for her to financially provide for herself! It was almost impossible for a woman in Naomi's situation to live in anything but abject poverty.

One day, while working in the fields of Moab, she heard that God had ended the famine in Bethlehem, so she decided to go back. However, as she journeyed back, she told her two daughters-in-law Orpah and Ruth to go back to Moab. Naomi felt there was no future for these two Moabite women in Bethlehem and she didn't want to see them waste their lives with her helpless cause. After many tears and much persistence, Orpah opted to go back to Moab but Ruth decided something very different. Ruth's covenant of love to her mother-in-law is one of the most recognizable passages in all the Bible. The Bible records,

16 But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. 17 Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." (Ruth 1:16-17)

Naomi realized there was no talking Ruth out of going back with her because she was not only unable to persuade Ruth to no longer love and serve her, but now Ruth was even committing to love and serve Naomi's God as her only God! So off they went to face the harsh reality of being widowed women together.

Upon arriving in Bethlehem, the barley harvest had already begun, therefore, Ruth quickly found a field where they were reaping grain so she could glean. Gleaning was something God set up in the Mosaic Law to provide for those who were poor and sojourning (a person living in a place that is not their home country – an immigrant).

9 "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. 10 And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God. (Leviticus 19:9-10)

There was no concept of handouts in Israel, but, if you were willing to work you could provide for yourself by following behind the reapers and picking up whatever sheaves they dropped or left behind as they reaped, as well as the stuff they weren't allowed to reap around the edges of the field. So, chapter two tells us this is exactly what Ruth did to provide for her mother-in-law. At some point while she walked through the fields looking for sheaves of grain, a man named Boaz, who happened to be there checking up on the progress, noticed her. Even though Ruth caught Boaz's attention, he had no idea who this stranger was, that is, until the supervisor of his workers connected the dots for him.

Everybody in town was talking about a Moabite woman who had been widowed herself, but instead of going back to her family in Moab, decided to not only commit her life to serve her Jewish mother-in-law but also Yahweh! Boaz was blown away by Ruth's testimony of love, so much so, he invited her to lunch with his workers, gave her some of the sheaves his reapers had picked, and arranged for her to be able to glean all she wanted from his fields under the protection of his men. By the end of the day Ruth had been able to collect enough sheaves that she was able to beat out an ephah of barley. An ephah was about five gallons of grain which weighed about 30 pounds and would sustain them for at least a month.

That evening, when Ruth arrived back at Naomi's with all the grain she picked, and even some of the left-over roasted grain from lunch, she told Naomi all about this gracious man's promise to allow her to glean on his fields freely and safely. Obviously, Naomi wanted to know who in the world this man was, and this is where everything gets real interesting!

When Ruth tells Naomi the man's name is Boaz, Naomi immediately recognizes that Boaz is a redeemer in Elimelech's family. Now, I'm going to explain all that a lot more next week, but for now just know that that Boaz was somebody who could legally purchase the field belonging to Elimelech and marry Ruth. The proceeds of the sale of the land to the redeemer would go to Naomi, and as such, be a financial lifeline to her. Additionally, in marrying Ruth, the first-born son of that marriage would be legally treated as Naomi's son, and as such, that son would carry on the name of Elimelech and Mahlon (Naomi's son that married Ruth) and not the redeemer's. That son would also inherit all the land previously owned by Elimelech that would have gone to his sons Mahlon and Chilion.

This is where chapter three picks up. Naomi realizes God has put an opportunity in front of them that they needed to respond to with a strategic, well thought out, faith driven response! Faith is certainly a measurable testimony of acting on the promises of God. Whether its Abraham leaving for a land God would show him, Joshua leading the people to conquer the land, or the Apostle Paul obeying God's commission to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles; faith is most clearly seen by a testimony of action based on a belief in who God is and what God has instructed us to do and not do. But interestingly, as you will see in our study of the books of Samuel next year, David and his refusal to kill or undermine Saul's authority as King demonstrates that faith is sometimes testified by our inaction, which ironically is still very much an extremely difficult action to take. In Ruth chapter 3 we are going to see both of these realities come to light! So, let's get started!

Proposition: There are 4 parts to the story in Ruth chapter 3 that reveal an important and difficult quality of what love is.

The 1st part of the story is The Plan.

(1) The Plan - Naomi directs Ruth to make herself available to Boaz for marriage. (3:1-5)

- A. At the end of chapter two we read,
- B. **23 So she kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law. (Ruth 2:23)**
- C. Every morning during the harvest, Ruth woke up and went and gleaned in Boaz's barley fields. But once the harvest was done, and it had become clear that Boaz had kept his word to Ruth, Naomi realized it was time for Ruth to step out on faith. You need to understand that Boaz's response to Ruth is not the response one would expect to a foreign woman gleaning in a person's field. In chapter two Boaz proactively told his workers not to rebuke Ruth for a reason. Although sojourners were legally allowed to glean, that doesn't mean they wouldn't be mocked while doing it! Jews didn't like Moabites at ALL! So, for Boaz to not only grant Ruth the opportunity to glean, but to do so freely with protection, blessing and even a seat at the table to eat lunch with Boaz and his workers, said

something massive to Naomi – (1) Boaz is an upstanding, kind and virtuous man, and (2) Boaz is interested in Ruth!

D. Therefore, once all the reaping was done, Naomi gave Ruth a plan to step out on faith and make herself available to Boaz for marriage. The Bible states

E. **1 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? 2 Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. 3 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. 4 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." 5 And she replied, "All that you say I will do." (3:1-5)**

1. **“winnowing”** The process of separating grain from plant stalks. Grain was crushed and then tossed into the air for the wind to blow away the chaff. Boaz probably winnowed at night to take advantage of more wind.”¹
2. “The evening was selected not only because it was cooler than the day, but because the increase of wind at night enabled the husbandmen to winnow more thoroughly”²
3. “The threshing floor was not in a shed or a building or any place covered with a roof and surrounded by walls, but normally an open-air circular piece of slightly elevated ground from fifty to one-hundred feet in diameter, that was smooth, hard, and clean. Following the harvest, the threshing floor was the center of the economic activity of the village and surrounding area. The sheaves of dried cereal grass from the harvested fields were brought here to be trampled by oxen or broken down by threshing sledges (vehicles mounted on low runners). The grain was further separated from the grass and chaff with winnowing forks, which were used to toss the trampled products into the air so that the wind would blow away the light grass and chaff and the grain would fall to the ground. After that, sieves were used to strain out the grain from whatever products still remained with it. Once all this was done, the separated grain was closely guarded until it could be distributed. Sometimes the villages had communal granaries, but most people kept their personal supply of grain in home storage pits or private granaries. For Scripture references see: Deuteronomy 25:4; Ruth 3:2–7; 2

¹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Ru 3:2). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

² Freeman, J. M., & Chadwick, H. J. (1998). [Manners & customs of the Bible](#) (p. 201). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers.

Samuel 24:22; Isaiah 41:15–16; Jeremiah 15:7; Joel 2:24; Amos 2:13, 9:9; Luke 22:31.”³

4. “Naomi’s directions and Ruth’s willingness to comply (3:5) therewith must be judged by the standards of the times in which those women lived. On her part, Naomi had confidence in the good behavior and resolute chastity of her daughter-in-law. She knew that Boaz was a deeply religious man who would recognize immediately that he was being nudged ever so gently to perform his duty to his dead kinsman by marrying Ruth. On her part, Ruth trusted her mother-in-law’s judgment and knowledge of local customs.”⁴
 5. “Threshing and winnowing were a time of great festivity and rejoicing. Naomi knew that Boaz was threshing his grain on the day that she had chosen for her plan. She also knew that Boaz would be sleeping near his grain that night, to protect it. 3:3. Ruth was to prepare herself by washing and perfuming herself. The words **best clothes** may be rendered “a large outer garment.” This was to keep her identity from being detected.”⁵
- F. Some want to suggest that Naomi’s plan was for Ruth to seduce Boaz. I’m going to comment on that more in just second but let me go ahead and let you now that is not at all what Naomi was telling Ruth to do.

This leads us to the 2nd part of the story, the proposal.

(2) The Proposal - Ruth clearly asks Boaz to marry her. (3:6-9)

- A. Now, I know this comes as a shock, because normally it’s the expectation that the man asks the woman to marry him, but in this case, Boaz, for whatever reason, wouldn’t pull the trigger! So, Ruth does. Watch what happens,
- B. **6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her. 7 And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. 8 At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! 9 He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer."**
- C. Why would Boaz sleep by his grain? Well, “The threshing floor was usually out in the open, and so it was necessary for the owner or some trusty servant to

³ Freeman, J. M., & Chadwick, H. J. (1998). *Manners & customs of the Bible* (p. 96). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers.

⁴ Smith, J. E. (1995). *The Books of History* (pp. 220–221). Joplin, MO: College Press.

⁵ Reed, J. W. (1985). *Ruth*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 424). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

keep watch over the grain. Boaz ate his supper and slept at the far end of the grain pile. This practice continued throughout the centuries so long as threshed grain was kept outside in the open.”⁶

D. Was Boaz drunk – no!

1. The intentional, thought-out wise interactions of Boaz that follow Ruth’s proposal give no hint of Boaz being drunk or hungover. Furthermore,
2. “The Hebrew phrase used here, *wayyitab libbo*, does not necessarily indicate drunkenness (Judg 18:20). When it does indicate drunkenness, that fact is made more explicit (1 Sam 25:36; 2 Sam 13:28). While Boaz’s feasting likely included alcoholic drinks, it should not be assumed that he was drunk.”⁷

E. Did Ruth have sex with Boaz? Now here is where people go crazy in teaching this passage. Some liberal scholars suggest Ruth uncovered Boaz and had sex with him and that’s why he woke up. Others suggest that when Boaz woke up, Ruth offered to have sex with him. The arguments stem from twisting and exaggerating the text, as well as trying to apply rarely used interpretations of Hebrew words such as the one translated here for feet that was very rarely used as a metaphorical reference to male genitalia. Because these interpretations are growing in their popularity (obviously in an attempt to justify sexual immorality) I want to take a moment and make sure you understand why it’s an utterly ridiculous assertion.

1. First, it cannot be forgotten that in the Bible, sex is very clearly communicated as the exclusive covenantal act to both consummate, as well as celebrate and nurture, a marriage. Sex is not permitted in any other context. It is so clearly and even bluntly taught in the Bible that anyone who suggests otherwise should lose all of their credibility as a trustworthy teacher of the Bible.
2. Second, don’t forget, the Bible NEVER hesitates to tell us about inappropriate or sinful behavior, so there is no reason whatsoever to hide it here either. For instance, King Solomon is the child of a marriage that was formed out of an adulterous and murderous relationship; a relationship we learn about because a prophet named Nathan exposed it, the very prophet some believe wrote Ruth. Point being, it would have been easy and not without a lot of precedence, for the author to clearly and bluntly tell us if there was anything sinful about this relationship, and he didn’t.

⁶ Freeman, J. M., & Chadwick, H. J. (1998). [*Manners & customs of the Bible*](#) (p. 202). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers.

⁷ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [*Faithlife Study Bible*](#) (Ru 3:7). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

3. Third, taking your shoe off and giving it to somebody was a way of signing your name to a vow. Most people only had one pair of sandals, so to loan one or two of them to somebody as a security that you were going to do what you said you were going to do was significant. Interestingly, in the levirate law, if a brother refused to take his brother's widowed wife then according to the law, she would take his sandal and spit in his face. We are going to get more into this law next week but for now I want you to see where shoes play a role in this. In Deuteronomy 25 we read,
 - a. **5 "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. 6 And the first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. 7 And if the man does not wish to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to perpetuate his brother's name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.' 8 Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him, and if he persists, saying, 'I do not wish to take her,' 9 then his brother's wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face. And she shall answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.' 10 And the name of his house shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal pulled off.' (Deuteronomy 25:1-10)**
 - b. Now, let me be clear, I don't believe Ruth was suggesting she was going to threaten Boaz with public shaming if he didn't marry her. Ruth wouldn't have come to him secretly if she intended on publicly shaming him. In addition, Boaz, nor anybody else, was under any obligation to marry Ruth. The levirate law in Deuteronomy only obligated a brother, and in this case, there weren't any brothers to obligate! My point in sharing this is that uncovering his feet had a very relevant symbolic context to the situation. Ruth needed a family member of her dead husband to marry her, and as such, she was looking for a serious covenant promise of marriage, not a one-night stand!
4. And finally, Ruth saying, "**spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer,**" was in no way a sexual innuendo. The writer of Ruth already used this phrase in a very clear way in the previous chapter when Boaz said this to Ruth,
 - a. **"12 The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!" (Ruth 2:12)**

- b. The obvious context of the phrase was covenantal provision and protection. In chapter two, Boaz used the phrase to acknowledge that Ruth had committed herself to Naomi and Naomi's God, and as such, Ruth had committed herself to take refuge under the wings of The One who had made a covenant with the people of Israel. By committing to Naomi and God she was entrusting herself to be protected and provided for by the God who promised to guard and bless Israel; to be under the shelter and protection of His wings!
- c. She is now, with the very same language that Boaz used with her, inviting Boaz to make a covenant of protection and blessing with her; that is, she is clearly proposing to Boaz to take her as his wife!
- d. J.G. Baldwin notes,
- e. **"Spreading the cloak over' was a vivid expression for providing protection, warmth and fellowship. The phrase spoke eloquently of marriage."**⁸

F. But, in some defense of those who say her offer was a sexual appeal, clearly Ruth is offering herself for marriage which necessarily has a righteous sexual context. Therefore, the romantic suspense and tension just went from zero to hundred in a minute! Boaz has just woken up to find this beautiful woman, that he truly loves and respects, laying at his feet saying she wants to marry him. Likewise, Ruth's heart had to be pounding as she took the leap of faith in breaking all the cultural norms and offering herself in marriage to this man that has swept her off her feet with his virtue and kindness! She not only risked rejection but possible public ridicule.

G. So what's going to happen?

Well, that leads to the third part of the story. [The Response.](#)

(3) The Response - Boaz commits to try and marry Ruth. (3:10-15)

A. 10 And he said, "May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. 11 And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. 12 And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. 13 Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem

⁸ Baldwin, J. G. (1994). [Ruth](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 292). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

you, then, as the LORD lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning." 14 So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." 15 And he said, "Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city.

- B.** Boaz is not first in line as a redeemer, so he can't just commit to marry Ruth. We don't know if Ruth knew this or not, but Boaz had clearly already done his homework and found out! I will explain the redeemer laws and the incredible picture Boaz gives us as a kinsman redeemer next week when we get into chapter 4.
- C.** However, what I need to make sure you see right now is that Boaz immediately demonstrates his feelings about Ruth, and as such, he doesn't hesitate in his commitment to marry her! He lays out a plan to make sure no one jumps to any wrong conclusions about their relationship; and he sent her home to Naomi not only with the assurance of his words that he was going to try and marry Ruth, but also with some food as a tangible testimony of his intent. He, in this way, is once again signaling his desire to provide for and protect Ruth as her husband, as well as serve Ruth's mother-in-law.
- D.** In addition, before I move on, I want us to take just a minute to see something I think is so significant, but all too often overlooked.
- E.** Boaz seems to be at least somewhat successful for sure. He has a field, he is able to hire workers, and as we will see next week, he has enough money to purchase Elimelech's field from Naomi. But remember, Ruth is still a young woman and seemingly very attractive both in her character and her appearance, meaning, she could easily find a young rich husband – and Boaz is fully aware of that reality. This is why Boaz said,
- F.** **10 And he said, "May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. (3:10)**
- G.** Boaz in no way sees himself as a catch, and as such knows Ruth can do better! We don't know how much older Boaz was than Ruth, but it's enough that Boaz knows it's significant both in the attractional element of it, as well as the practical element of it. Being noticeably older meant Boaz was more likely to die before Ruth and leave Ruth as a widower all over again.
- H.** In addition, attraction matters in marriage. If you're not attracted to somebody, I don't advise that you marry them! But with that, throughout all of human history, young men and a young woman have been considered more attractive

than those who are older – that is until people like Brad Pitt, Denzel Washington, Jennifer Aniston and my wife came along!

- I. The point is that there is no doubt in Boaz’s mind that Ruth’s love for him is coming from a heart that is not seeking Boaz for selfish reasons, because if selfishness was her motive, then she would have gone after, and likely won over, a younger, wealthier man. But she doesn’t. Her heart is motivated to marry Boaz for all the righteous reasons a person should marry a person, and that blows Boaz away.
- J. This level of humility not only shows us the character of Boaz but it shows us something beautiful about love. Love is gift given; it is a kindness given; it something that is not deserved or earned but rather given from a heart truly wants to bless; a heart that truly wants to serve; a heart that’s truly committed to bring life; a heart that truly resembles God’s! The Hebrew word Boaz used of Ruth’s actions towards him is not only translated as “kindness” but also as “love,” especially when referring to God’s “hesed” towards his people! Look at the word of God,
1. **8 In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love (*hesed/ kindness*) I will have compassion on you," says the LORD, your Redeemer. (Isaiah 54:8)**
 2. **10 For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love (*hesed/ kindness*) shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54:10)**
 3. **13 and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love (*hesed/ kindness*); and he relents over disaster. (Joel 2:13)**
 4. **2 And he prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love (*hesed/ kindness*), and relenting from disaster. (Jonah 4:2)**
- K. It is this characteristic of God that led God to save us! The Bible says,
- L. **3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. 4 But when the goodness (*the Greek word here is chrēstotēs and it is frequently used to translate the Hebrew Greek word hesed*) and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he**

saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4)

- M. The point being, Boaz sees a testimony of God's love in Ruth when Ruth demonstrates to Boaz what he considers to be an unmerited level of favor towards him. There is no greater testimony of that characteristic than the testimony of God's gracious plan to send His only Son to pay the penalty of our sin and rescue us out of darkness into the eternally glorious life that is only found in being adopted into His family!

The final part of the story is an inevitable part of an act of faith but its also where we see an unmistakable characteristic of love truly come out - waiting!

(4) The Wait - Ruth must now step back and let God work! (3:16-18)

- A. **16 And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did you fare, my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her, 17 saying, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, 'You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'" 18 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."**
- B. First of all, it's funny to me that Naomi is very confident Boaz is going to get this matter settled today, but Naomi's not God so she can't say that authoritatively. Furthermore, Ruth isn't God and can't know for certain what Boaz is going to do either, but more importantly, she can't possibly know whether or not the redeemer, who has the right of first refusal, will want to exercise his right to marry Ruth; after all, Ruth is an attractive young woman who is well known as a woman with an incredible work ethic, a high level of integrity and character, and most importantly, a proven ability to sacrificially love; who wouldn't want to marry that woman! So, I'm sure Naomi's words are encouraging, but nonetheless, Ruth has no idea what the outcome will be, and she has arrived at a point that the only thing she can or should do is wait.
- C. Waiting is hard, that's why a self-motivated, voluntary willingness to wait is always associated with love, whether its righteous love or a sinful version of love. You are only willing to volunteer to wait on that which you love! Think about it, it would be somewhat crazy to wait on what you can't stand; why would you do that? But, even when you're waiting on that which you love, waiting is still brutal, especially for people like me who aren't naturally inclined to wait for anything!

- D. Waiting requires submission of your desires; it requires trust; it requires suffering; and it requires sacrifice, and thus why it can only come from love. **“7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” (1 Corinthians 13:7)**, all of which has to do with waiting!
- E. The only reason you’re willing to wait on something you don’t love is because you’ve been forced to; i.e. when your parents sent you to your room to wait on whatever discipline you were about to receive for disobeying them! That waiting wasn’t from love because we would have all ran away from it if we could have!
- F. But Naomi’s encouragement to Ruth to wait is not just a call to faith, but a call to love. Listen to God’s Word,
1. **4 Love is patient; (1 Corinthians 13:4)**
 2. **4 Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? (Romans 2:4).**
 3. In similar fashion Peter wrote,
 4. **9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)**
 5. Paul and Peter were both saying, have you forgot that God’s patience in holding back His wrath is a demonstration of His love that is giving you time to repent! God demands holiness, and He harshly judges wickedness, yet He holds back His wrath towards us because He loves us, and as, such He is patient with us; waits on us! It can only be love that would motivate a holy and righteous God who deserves nothing but praise, honor and obedience, to withhold his wrath on those who don’t!

So let me get right to the challenge.

Challenge: Passive waiting means you disengaged and gave up so that you don’t feel the hurt of waiting. Its self-focused, unsacrificial and anything but love. Active waiting may or may not involve you doing anything, but it doesn’t disengage, nor does it give up, because its love. How are you waiting? Is it love or something else?