

Good morning, Creed and Shu, glad you're here. Today we conclude the sermon series through the Bible book of Ruth!

Often, as we start sermons, I ask you all a question. Sometimes it's a deep question. Sometimes it's a silly question. Today, I've got a pretty straightforward question for you. How did you get here today? Did you come by bus, car, train, bicycle, or walking? That's a very simple question, right? Another simple question is, this morning, did you cross a bridge? I think probably most of us in this room crossed a bridge today because Hiroshima has so many rivers! It's likely you crossed a bridge.

When you crossed the bridge, were you thinking about the bridge? Probably you didn't really think about the bridge. When I cross the Otagawa river using the big red bridge in Higashino, I'm usually zoned out thinking about my work or my family.

Now you probably want to ask me, "Creed, why are we talking about bridges?" The answer is in today's sermon. Let's pray and then read the conclusion to the book of Ruth.

PRAY

Ruth 4:18-22 ルツ記 4章18～22節

¹⁸ Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez fathered Hezron, ¹⁹ Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab, ²⁰ Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, ²¹ Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed, ²² Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David. "これはペレツの系図である。ペレツはヘツロンを生み、ヘツロンはラムを生み、ラムはアミナダブを生み、アミナダブはナフションを生み、ナフションはサルマを生み、サルマはボアズを生み、ボアズはオベデを生み、オベデはエッサイを生み、エッサイはダビデを生んだ。"

Dear friends who are here and have not yet read the book of Ruth, let me say I'm so happy you're here! Every Sunday I want you to hear a message that's easy to understand and helpful to you. Today we're studying the very last part of Ruth, so it's like watching the credits of a movie. But even if you've never read the Bible at all, keep listening because there's essential information for your life in today's message.

Everyone, let's remember this main point as we continue to look at Ruth 4:18-22.

MAIN POINT Jesus Christ is the King, the bridge, and the groom. イエス・キリストは王、橋、花婿である

This last passage contains a very abbreviated genealogy of King David. We just read about how Ruth and Boaz are the great grandmother and great grandfather of King David.

The book of Ruth serves as a bridge because it connects the Bible book of Judges and 1st Samuel. The book of Ruth fills in details between Judges and 1 Samuel. Let me invite you to

pick up your red pencil or a pen and write a word into your bulletin. Please write the two words "Biblical Theology." Again, the term is "Biblical theology."

That's a big word but it just means "How are the stories in the Bible connected together?" The Bible is not just a list of random events, dates, kings, and facts. The Bible contains all those, but God is the author of the whole Bible. Different human authors wrote the words as God directed them. So every word and every little story serves as an episode in the larger story. The story of Naomi, Ruth and Boaz is a beautiful story but it's a "little story." Biblical theology explains how that little story relates to the "big" story of the Bible. Biblical theology helps us understand "What does Ruth have to do with Jesus Christ?" Jesus Christ is the main character in the whole Bible.

Jesus Christ is our King. Jesus Christ is the bridge that connects us to God the Father. Jesus Christ is, in a sense, our groom.

We human beings so often forget that Jesus Christ is present in our lives. We often don't pay attention to God. Most people in Japan still live as if Jesus Christ is not the King of Kings. Yet, Jesus Christ truly IS the King of all Kings.

Jesus' name does not appear in the list in Ruth 4, however, we learn much about Jesus through these words. Let's look together in the New Testament at part of Jesus' genealogy.

Matthew 1:5-6

⁵and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶and Jesse the father of David the king."サルマがラハブによってボアズを生み、ボアズがルツによってオベデを生み、オベデがエッサイを生み、エッサイがダビデ王を生んだ。ダビデがウリヤの妻によってソロモンを生み、"
マタイの福音書 1章5～6節

By connecting Ruth 4 with Matthew 1, we learn that Ruth and Boaz are ancestors to King Jesus. We also learn that Boaz' mother is Rahab. That's important because Rahab was not born and raised as a physical descendant of Abraham. In other words, Rahab was a foreigner to God's other people. Rahab was a prostitute, actually! Yet, Rahab chose to believe in the goodness of the Biblical God! Rahab married the father of Boaz. So Boaz' mother is Rahab who was a foreigner. That might explain why Boaz shows so much compassion to another foreigner named Ruth. Just like his father, Boaz marries a foreign woman. Just like his father, Boaz marries a woman who loves God.

This is incredible information because it shows that one of Jesus' ancestors was a prostitute. It also shows that another of Jesus' ancestors was a foreigner. Not just any foreigner but a Moabite. Moabites and Israelites were not friendly neighbors to each other. In Jesus' genealogy, we see sinners, foreigners, prostitutes, and adulterers. Jesus is the King of all those kinds of people. When you believe in Jesus Christ, you receive forgiveness of all kinds of sins. As the book of Ruth unfolded, in every sermon in this church, we pointed to Jesus Christ. Ruth

and Naomi were acting according to their circumstances. Naomi was starving, so she moved to Moab. There she met Ruth. Ruth believed in Naomi's God. Ruth found herself in a field owned by Boaz. Long story short, Boaz pursues Ruth and marries her. Naomi gets the grandchild she always wanted. Ruth and Naomi, in the end, they don't starve. God himself was sovereignly working together all the details of their lives to bring about this happy ending!

It's worth mentioning that God cared about the details of the lives of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz. God cares about the details of your individual life too. God cares about His people as a whole, God cares about Israel. God cares about you, singular, the individual, but God cares also about His whole church. God cares about the individual in Hiroshima. God also cares about the entire nation of Japan. God cares simultaneously about the individual person AND the whole group.

Now this one story of Ruth and Boaz connects to the rest of the Bible. Remember how the book of Judges, which precedes Ruth, remember how it ends. If you go to Ruth chapter 1 in your Bible and turn back one page, you see the end of Judges. Judges ends with "There was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in their own eyes." So there was no king when Ruth started. When Ruth ends, we see King David there in Ruth 4:21. So Ruth begins with no king and it ends with the mention of King David. You see how Ruth is a bridge connecting Judges and Samuel. When you're reading Ruth, you're crossing a bridge. Behind you is chaos. In front of you is hope.

As you go forward in the Bible, you see how God raises up David to be King over His people. You'll see how King David was a great man, but he failed and he sinned. We all know that all of us are imperfect, we fail, and we sin. We need a king to save us from our sin. We need a King that's even greater than David. We need a King who Himself never ever sins. We need a good King who IS perfect and DOES love us. King David was a good king, but King David can't save us.

Jesus Christ is the King of all Kings. Only Jesus Christ can save us. Jesus Christ suffered and died for us on a cross. Jesus Christ has all power and all authority. Jesus Christ died but death does not have authority over Jesus Christ! Jesus came back to life on the third day!

Jesus Christ is the king who can save us! You might ask "How can Jesus save me? What does Jesus Christ have to do with my life? I'm from Japan and we Japanese don't really have religion." Dear friend, please let me plead with you to consider Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ can save you! Jesus Christ is not just an awesome King, Jesus Christ is also a bridge.

When you cross a bridge, you MUST trust that the bridge will not fall down. Jesus Christ is the bridge between your sinful state and the peace of God. You must believe in Jesus Christ. There's only one way to God! There's only ONE way to eternal happiness! There's only ONE way to make your life count. There's only ONE way to have all the things that you should want. There's only ONE way to know the one, true God. There's only ONE bridge between us and God. Jesus Christ is the King and the bridge. So please come to Jesus. Jesus Christ is the King who descended from Ruth and Boaz. Jesus

Christ is the bridge that will never fall down no matter how many people cross it. This world we're in will pass away. The evil in your heart, the sin in your heart, wants to kill you. There's only one way to escape from anxiety, from war, and from death. Trust in Jesus Christ. Believe in Him. Pray to Him today. Mark on your communication card that you're interested in Christianity and want to learn more. Then let us talk together, dear friends.

Jesus Christ IS a bridge, but he's not JUST a bridge. Jesus Christ is NOT just a means to an end. We cross a bridge in order to get to the other side. Jesus Christ is not ONLY a bridge that we cross to get to the other side. Jesus Christ is the one we'll love forever and ever.

Jesus Christ is our groom. Collectively the worldwide church, every single individual Christian added together. We are collectively the bride of Christ. Think of how happy a wedding makes you. Think of the joy in the reception. When we meet Jesus Christ, it'll be like a wedding.

Revelation 21:9

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." "また、最後の七つの災害で満ちた、あの七つの鉢を持っていた七人の御使いの一人がやって来て、私に語りかけた。「ここに来なさい。あなたに子羊の妻である花嫁を見せましょう。」"
ヨハネの黙示録 21章9節

Brothers and sisters in Christ, love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. Remember Biblical theology. Remember that every story in the Old Testament can teach us about ourselves and about our God. Remember Ruth and Boaz and that happy ending. Remember a happy ending awaits you in Christ. You'll see Him and He will love you with a perfect love. Jesus Christ is going to fix every broken thing in you. You will see Jesus' smile. Jesus wants you to be with Him so much that he died for you on a cross. Praise Jesus.

Dear friends who are not Christians, please remember this next part. Yes, there's only ONE way to eternal happiness and it's through Jesus. That might sound exclusive. But remember, EVERYONE is welcome to believe in Jesus Christ. ANYONE, Japanese, American, Filipino, African, it doesn't matter. You can be a man or a woman. You can be a child or a grandparent. You can be half-Japanese or Korean or Chinese. Jesus Christ will welcome you if you come to Him. In this sense, Christianity is very, very inclusive. So please come to Jesus. Choose to be included. No one else died on a cross to save sinners like us. Please come to Him. He'll make you happier than you can imagine for longer than you can imagine. Jesus Christ is what's been missing in your life until this point. You can have the King of Kings be your closest friend. Just believe in Jesus and be happy with us forever.

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