Times of the Judges

BLESSINGS OF COLD FEET

Saturday, November 21

Reading: Ruth 3-4

> ***Ruth 4:13*** *So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. Then he went to her, and the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.* ***14*** *The women said to Naomi: "Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a kinsman-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel!* ***15*** *He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth."*

Over the months of Ruth's gleaning in Boaz's field, the romantic feelings between the two grow. Naomi notices this and performs her role as head of household to provide a home for her daughter-in-law Ruth. She instructs Ruth to "get pretty" (perhaps dress as a bride?) and go down to the threshing floor where Boaz will be spending the night. The strange ritual of uncovering his feet could have the dual purpose of slowly waking Boaz up as his feet got cold and was also a kind of marriage proposal on Ruth's part. She was putting the ball in Boaz's court.

When he suddenly awakens, he is shocked to find Ruth lying at his feet. She then requests that Boaz perform his responsibility as the kinsman-redeemer - the one who would carry on the family name for the widowed Ruth (4:9-10). In Hebrew, her literal response to Boaz is: "Spread your wings (kanap) over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer." She uses the same word that Boaz had used in his earlier blessing - "the God of Israel under whose wings (kanap) you have come to take refuge" (2:12). She had already chosen to live under God's protective wings and now is asking Boaz to take her under his wing and fulfill the blessings of God he had spoken of earlier.

Boaz is willing to marry Ruth but there is a closer relative that had first rights to redeem Ruth and her property. Naomi assures Ruth that Boaz will not rest until it is settled. The next morning, Boaz goes to the city gate and settles the matter with this other relative who relinquishes his rights to Boaz. He then marries Ruth and they have a son who will become the grandfather of King David.

LESSON ONE: This whole story shows the sovereignty of God. He was working behind the scenes to continue this family line that would lead to Israel's greatest king and ultimately the Savior Himself. How do you show your trust in God's control even when you can't see it?

LESSON TWO: Ruth took a big risk in coming to Boaz. She could have been rejected. Her actions could have been seen as provocative or immoral by others. There was much risk involved in obeying Naomi's instructions, but Ruth was willing to risk it. She approached humbly (laying at his feet) and following God's law in asking Boaz to redeem her. When was the last time you risked anything to fulfill God's Word?

LESSON THREE: The story comes full circle as Naomi, who was bitter towards God, now has joy in God's provision of someone to care for her (both Ruth and Obed). When have you seen God move you (or someone else) from a place of emptiness to one of purpose? What could God do in our lives if we commit them to Him for His glory?