

Pastor Shaun Arndt

January 2, 2022

Sermon Text: Ruth 4:13-17

A Look into Jesus' Family Tree

Shout with joy to God, all the earth! Sing the glory of his name. Amen. Dear Friends in Christ,

In recent decades, learning about family history has exploded in popularity. While people have long been interested in knowing about their family tree, the internet makes it easier than ever to search national archives and immigration records to learn about ancestors. Several companies even offer DNA tests to help people learn more about their family history.

Our Old Testament lesson gives us a look into the most important family history of all: ***Jesus' family tree: Then Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went to her. The LORD enabled her to conceive, and she bore a son... and they named him Obed. He became the father of Jesse, the father of David.***

Though they might not be our favorite parts of the Bible to read, the genealogies and lists of names do teach us beautiful lessons. They can remind us that God knows His people by name, and that means He cares for you as an individual.

These Bible family trees also show us how God kept His ancient promise to give the world a Savior. They show how the promise of the Savior was traced down from Eve and Adam to Abraham and all the way down to that amazing birth in Bethlehem that, we just celebrated at Christmas!

The list of names in our lesson takes us aback to somewhere around 1100 years before Jesus. It tells us about the birth **Obed**, the son of **Boaz** and **Ruth**. This son **Obed** in turn, would be the grandfather of King David. Mary, the mother of Jesus was descended from David's family.

So that makes **Ruth**, the great-great-great-great-great-great-(you get the idea) grandmother of Jesus, according to His human nature.

By the way, if you haven't read the book of Ruth recently, I encourage you to do so! It will only take you about 20 minutes to read the four chapters of **Ruth** or listen to it on a Bible app. Besides giving important insights into Jesus' family tree, the book is filled with examples of Christ inspired love and how the Lord keeps His promise to use even hardship and difficulty to do what is best for His people!

As you read the book, you find out that though **Ruth** ends up in Bethlehem, where Jesus would be born, yet **Ruth** was not from Israel. She was from **Moab**, a nation that was often an enemy of Israel and worshipped a false god. Ruth married an Israelite man, who later died and left her a widow, just like her mother-in-law, **Naomi**.

At some point, the Holy Spirit had brought **Ruth** to faith in the Lord's promises, so that Ruth refused to remain in her homeland but travel with her mother-in-law to Bethlehem, saying: **Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.** (Ruth 1:16).

Then the book of **Ruth** tells the amazing events that brought her to marriage with **Boaz**, so that Ruth became King David's great-grandmother, an ancestor of Jesus Christ.

So if we **look into Jesus' Family Tree**, we find **Ruth**, an outsider, a non-Jew, a Gentile from a nation that had been hostile to God's people, but the Lord makes her part of the Savior's family line!

So just like the Gentile **Wise Men** who came to worship Christ, **Ruth** stands as a powerful reminder for us on Epiphany, that Jesus is the Savior for all people, for all nations, for all races, for all languages, for all backgrounds. No one is excluded from those Christ came to save!

Now I know this is most likely not new information for you. You already know Jesus is the Savior of all people who came to take away the sins of the world. Of course we know and believe that He is the Savior for all people and all nations.

Yes we *know* this, but sadly we don't always act like it! Otherwise, wouldn't we pray more than we do for God's Word to reach more souls in mission fields in all nations – both in far off countries and right down the street in our own neighborhoods?!

After all, we do live in a huge mission field with the latest data saying that at least 60% of our community is unchurched. That means at least 2 out of 3 of our neighbors are not regularly hearing God's Saving Word.

If we always *acted* like Jesus was the Savior for all people, might we with our words, actions and offerings *demand* that our Synod open up more missions both around the world and in our country?

And wouldn't we pray for more pastors and teachers to proclaim the Word and pray for God's people to share the love of Christ with family, friends and neighbors in word and action? Wouldn't we spend more time in God's Word that we might encouraged, strengthened and prepared to speak to others about the Savior who came for them?

Yes, Jesus is the Savior for all people and wants us to bring that message to all people, and yet fall horribly short of taking even this simple 'well known' truth seriously. Yet another way that shows us we are sinners in desperate need of a Savior.

Of course we also see this truth when we **look into Jesus' family tree: Then Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went to her. The LORD enabled her to conceive, and she bore a son... and they named him Obed. He became the father of Jesse, the father of David.**

Ruth, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David had something in common. They were all sinners just like you and me. Indeed, Jesus' entire human **family tree** is filled with sinners, with people who did not perfectly live their faith.

There's **Adam** and **Eve**—the original sinners, **Abraham** who lied because he didn't trust God to keep him safe, **David** who became guilty of adultery and murder, and countless others! **Look into Jesus' family tree** and we see imperfect sinners, repulsive to God's holiness and deserving His punishment, just like you and me.

And yet, the eternal and sinless God the Son chose to be born into such a family and into such a fallen human race. He who should have nothing to do with us sinners, chose to be *related* to us, to become our flesh and blood brother—the sinless one born to save His sinful family. Jesus not only came for people of all nations, but He came for fallen, imperfect people of all nations like **Adam and Eve, Abraham and David, Naomi and Ruth, you and me.**

This little section of Jesus' family Tree even contains a beautiful picture of how Christ saves us: **Then the women said to Naomi: Blessed is the LORD, who has not left you without a redeemer today.**

Redeemer, also called a **kinsman-redeemer** is a key theme in the book of Ruth and a picture of Jesus as our Savior. If an Israelite family was in trouble and in danger of losing their land, a relative (or **kinsman**) could **redeem**, or buy back the land and give it back to the family. If an Israelite was sold into slavery, a **redeemer** would pay the price to set them free.

So a **redeemer** was a family member who would pay the price to rescue. If you read through **Ruth** you can hear how **Boaz** became such a **redeemer**.

Thank God you and I also have a **Redeemer**. This is why in Jesus Christ, the eternal God became our **kinsman**, our relative. This is why Jesus became man and became our brother in Bethlehem!

He did it to pay the price to rescue us from the **slavery** of our sins and purchase us a place in the true and eternal promised land of heaven.

As our **Redeemer** Jesus paid the price to save us from our sins by living a life of total commitment and obedience to God's mission to save souls and bring the good news of His Kingdom to others!

As our **Redeemer** Jesus suffered the punishment to set us free, enduring hell's pains and laying down his life on the cross. As our **Redeemer** Jesus has paid for our every failure to act according to what we believe. As our **Redeemer** Jesus paid the price that sets us free from every sin, not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death.

As our **Redeemer**, Jesus fought and won the victory over death and grave, rising from the dead to give eternal life to all who trust in Him.

As our living **Redeemer** Jesus sent His Church out to make disciples so that through Word and Baptism the Holy Spirit brought you to faith in Jesus, the Savior all, so that with Job of old you can say: **I know that my Redeemer lives... in my own flesh I will see God... I myself will see him. My own eyes will see him** (Job 19).

As our **Redeemer**, Jesus lives and rules to forgive our sins and to be our refuge in life's struggles. He lives to give us strength and encouragement from His Word so that in prayer, word and action, we may imitate His love and concern for all people of all nations –those far away and those right on our block.

Look into Jesus' Family Tree and remember He is indeed for all people, He is your dear brother, the **Redeemer** who lived, died and lives forever to be your Savior. Remember Jesus, your **Redeemer** lives and live for Jesus. Amen.

The LORD redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him. Amen.

We sing the next hymn.