



Part 3:

The Appropriateness of Inappropriateness

INTRODUCTION — Following The Rules

The Law of Levirate Marriage...

- If a husband dies, his brother must marry the widow and give her children that will carry on the lineage and inheritance of her dead husband. Requires no ceremony, but is consummated through sex. **Deuteronomy 25:5-10**
- Would most benefit Ruth, who would have a husband and a future.

The Law of the Kinsman Redeemer (Hebrew = go'el)...

- If someone becomes poor and has to sell or in some other way loses their property and possessions, a near relative must buy it back for them. **Leviticus 25:25-55**
- Would most benefit Naomi, who would have land and security, and still have Ruth as her companion and caregiver.

LOOK TO THE BOOK – Breaking The Rules

HURDLES TO RUTH GETTING MARRIED

- No man to speak for her
- A Moabite
- No social connections
- No dowry or other forms of negotiating leverage
- History of barrenness

SEXUAL SUGGESTIVENESS ON THE THRESHING FLOOR

- The place is suspicious. Threshing floors were known places of prostitution and sexual seduction. (e.g., **Hosea 9:1**)
- The timing was suspicious, being at night and after a party.
- Ruth is suspicious, being a Moabite (**Numbers 25**), whose race was begun through illegitimate sex between a drunken man and his daughter (**Genesis 19:30-38**).
- The verbiage is at least ambiguous; if not sexually suggestive (e.g., “feet”, “know”, “lie”).
- The context is suggestive, since Levirate Marriage was solidified without a ceremony

Picturing God's Embrace of Israel... **Ezekiel 16:6-8**

TAKE OUTS – I'll Have That To Go Please

TAKE OUT #1: Moving From Law to Love, Not From Law to Anarchy

In every case where the players move beyond precepts to principles, beyond law to love, beyond rules to relationships, they do so *in order to serve another*, not to take advantage of grace. The implications are twofold: a) The rule-transcending grace of the gospel will always be abused by the selfish and immature, but we must still preach the gospel and live the gospel. b) While we stay uncompromising on the gospel, we must call each other away from spiritual abuse of the gospel. Love must always guide our decisions. (For more on this listen to our teaching series “rEVOLution” and read chapters 7 and 17 in *The End of Religion*.)

TAKE OUT #2: Sifting Culture from Christ

“Jesus’ announcement that “my kingdom is not of this world” [John 18:36] should alert us to expect that the culture God intends to establish in this earth is nothing like the human cultures the world has witnessed so far. The biblical story is told against the backdrop of fallen human culture. This backdrop is *not* the Bible’s message, but serves to intensify that message.” (Carolyn Custis James, *The Gospel of Ruth*) We must always read Scripture through the Jesus filter.

CONCLUSION – Seeing The Gospel On Every Page

Matthew 5:17

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS...

WARMING UP...

1. Take time to review this week’s message. Talk about what most challenged, puzzled, or encouraged you.

LOOK TO THE BOOK...

2. Read through Ruth 3 again. A) What verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why? B) Each of the three principle characters shows amazing love. List the ways that i) Naomi serves Ruth ahead of herself; ii) Ruth serves Naomi ahead of herself; iii) Boaz serves Ruth and Naomi ahead of himself. C) What do you think really happened that night on the threshing floor? In what ways was Ruth’s encounter with Boaz sexually suggestive and in what ways was it pure, other-centred, and filled with restraint? D) List as many things as you can from this passage that Boaz finds attractive about Ruth? (Also remember **2:11-12**.) What do you think Ruth finds attractive in Boaz? E) List the ways that Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz show strong faith in God? F) What lessons are Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz teaching you about faith, hope, and love?

SO WHAT?...

3. Review TAKE OUT #1: A) Can you think of a time when you felt a culturally or religiously inappropriate decision was the most appropriate in God’s eyes? B) Can you think of a time when you were tempted to abuse grace to make inappropriate decisions under a banner of spirituality?
4. Review TAKE OUT #2: A) How does separating the *message* of the Bible from the *culture* of the Bible help us clarify its message? B) What are some ways you’ve witnessed the Bible used inappropriately. C) For each example, talk about how a Jesus hermeneutic would help correct the poor use of Scripture.

Bruxy Cavey @ THE MEETING HOUSE – Sunday, July 19, 2009

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