

Resting in our Redeemer

Lord's Day evening, 2nd March 2018

'Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.' Ruth 3:18

Ruth is a precious, if short and perhaps unusual book of the Bible. Importantly it fills in part of the family tree of our Lord. It gives a wonderful illustration of God's dealings in providence, how God overrules things for the good of his people.

You will remember that Ruth's parents-in-law went down from the promised land, the land of their inheritance, into the land of Moab, because they thought they would do better there. Trouble followed. First one died and then another, till Naomi was left alone, bereft of her husband and her children. She only had her two daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah left. Yet the Lord overruled that strange and trying providence so that Ruth was brought in among the Lord's people. In doing so, he made Ruth, a Moabitess, a type of the future bringing in of the gentiles to Christ.

In passing, we would note the remarkable fact that all four of the women mentioned in the first chapter of Matthew, in the line and lineage of Christ, were gentiles. They were gentiles who the Lord brought in to Israel, according to the election of grace and his sovereign working.

Here in Ruth we have an example of how the Lord brings about strange and mysterious providences in order to bring one of his little ones, those to whom he has a purpose of grace, into his church. Are we saying in our souls this evening that such things are too hard for the Lord? Perhaps we look at the many that surround this place and wonder, 'How will they ever come in? How will they ever be saved?' Friends, as long as we have accounts like Ruth on record, showing how the Lord can bring in those who have no background, no knowledge of the gospel, we do not need to despair. The Lord works things out so that none of his people will ever be lost. Do we really believe this evening that the one who is in control is King Jesus, and that although with men things are impossible, with him *nothing* is impossible? He reigns and rules over everything.

Note for a moment the wonderful way in which Ruth's providence is described in this book. 'Her *hap* was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz.' (Ruth 2:3) She happened to light on this part of the field. As it happened, it was the field belonging to Boaz. Has your 'hap' this evening been to light on the gospel field? If so, it is not chance, is it? The soul that can trace out in experience the moving of providence, and can see the sovereign hand of God in bringing them under the sound of the gospel, they can say,

The fictitious powers of *chance*
And *fortune* I defy;
My life's minutest circumstance
Is subject to his eye.

Friends, when we can sing that, what does it mean? Charles Wesley begins that hymn like this:

Thrice comfortable hope
That calms my stormy breast;
The Father's hand prepares the cup,
And what he wills is best.

When we can rest on the providence of God, it means that we have a *comfortable hope*. You know, it is the most blessed thing to be able to trace out in our life the finger of God. The small circumstances, the little things around which our lives revolve. The Lord richly blesses them towards his purpose of grace. The account of Ruth is an example of this.

Now, we can look at our text simply in the plain sense. We must be careful not to over-spiritualise the Old Testament. There are some most important practical lessons for us, bound up in the historical parts of the Old Testament. It is often good advice for people who find their life at a crossroads, who do not know how things are going to turn out tomorrow: 'Sit still.'

Sometimes we need to be exhorted to patience. By nature we want to be in control of things. We want to know how and when things will happen. Therefore, we always want to be up and doing. The last thing we will do by nature, many of us, is to sit still. But sometimes this is wise counsel: 'Sit still.' Wait. Learn a bit of patience. See how things will happen. Do not prejudge circumstances. See what

will happen next before we think about what our next move may be. ‘Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall.’

If we are one of the Lord’s people, and know a God of providence, and if we have a hope that this God, who lives and controls all, is our God, sometimes we need to sit still to see how he is pleased to work in our providences. Sometimes we need to wait to see what he is going to do. It is a hard thing to nature, isn’t it? Learning patience. We want to know what we are going to be doing tomorrow, where we are going to be in a year’s time. When we are brought to a sense of uncertainty and we do not know how matters will turn out, it can be the hardest thing to sit still. But when we are reminded, and when we can see by faith, that the Lord is overruling all things, we can sit still. ‘The Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear.’ (Isaiah 59:1) He controls all things for the good of his people, for his purposes in grace, and works out everything for his honour and his glory. Friend, what have you got to lose this evening by sitting still to wait to see how the matter will fall? Our gracious God will not be in rest. He is working in all your providences for your good. ‘All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.’ (Romans 8:28) We may often quote that verse, but do our lives really demonstrate that we believe it? If we really believe it, if faith could settle down there more often, and if old nature was put in subjection and enabled to wait, sure that *all* things – nothing excepted – will work together for our good, would we not be more often able to heed this gracious injunction: ‘Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall.’

But moving away from the lessons and encouragements in providence, I believe that there are also lessons and encouragements in spiritual things in the account of Ruth. These can be found in this sense, as the book of Ruth illustrates the *law of the kinsman redeemer*. This is what I want to principally look at this evening. In the account of Ruth and Boaz, we have a precious example of the working out of the law of the kinsman redeemer, a law of God’s holy appointment.

This morning we considered the promise of Jesus to his people: ‘I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.’ (John 14:2-3) Tonight, in considering the account of Ruth spiritually, as it regards the kinsman redeemer, I would like to consider the grounds for comfort and certainty we have in our Redeemer in preparing this place for us.

To begin with, a little background about the law of redemption. You will find the law of the kinsman redeemer set out in Leviticus chapter 25 and Deuteronomy chapter 25. The land of Canaan had been given to the children of Israel. They were God's chosen people. It was important therefore to ensure that the land was kept within the possession of Israel, and not lost from the seed of promise. Therefore God made provision for a situation where an Israelite became too poor and needed to sell their land, so that the land would be kept within the family. This was achieved by giving the right of purchase (or the right of redemption) to members of the family, the 'next of kin' or the 'near kinsman.' Consequently, the possession of the land was kept within the family, within the tribe, and thus within Israel.

A similar law applied if a man died without an heir. Then his near kinsman (generally his younger brother) was to marry his wife, so that children would be raised up to the family, so that the family line would not die out. This was important because it was from the line of Israel, the line of Judah, that the promised Messiah was to come.

It was essential, according to the covenant given to Abraham, that the seed should be perpetuated, that the line should not become extinct. It was equally vital that the land which had been promised as part of that covenant also should not be lost. So God made provision for this. God knew, if I may put it this way, that some Israelites would die young because of the effects of sin, and he knew that some Israelites would come into poverty and be unable to help themselves, and be forced to sell their land and give it up. So God provided a way according to law by which the covenant would be kept intact, and a way by which the purposes of the covenant would be fulfilled. The land which had been promised to Abraham and his children would remain with the family. But more vitally, the greater promise that had been given to Abraham, the promise of a son, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, would also be fulfilled. As a consequence, the law of the kinsman redeemer is a very important part of the law. God knew the difficulties that might arise and God provided for them.

In the law, Ruth's situation was provided for before her husband died, before her and Naomi were brought into the extremity of having no money and no means to provide for themselves. Facing rack and ruin, there was already a near kinsman, a redeemer.

Now spiritually God saw the fall, and he provided a means of redemption for us sinners before we fell. That is a wonderful thing about the salvation that has

been provided. Before the Israelite came into poverty and became unable to redeem their land, and before the husband died without an heir, God had provided a mechanism in the law to provide a way to overcome that tragic situation. And before we had even fallen in Adam, before we had forfeited our right to heaven, before we had spiritually died, before we had fallen into the state of death, God had already provided a means of salvation in the covenant. In the terms of the covenant he provided a surety for those on whose behalf the covenant was made, the election of grace. He provided one who could make payment on behalf of his people, one who could redeem, one who had a right to redeem. That surety, our kinsman redeemer, was his own dear Son, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is the blessing of the everlasting covenant.

That then is some brief background to the law of redemption by a near kinsman.

In the point in Ruth's history where we have our text, with the legal apparatus in place, the legal process was now in motion, redemption was being made. The previous night, Ruth had appealed to Boaz for help, and in the morning Boaz was going to start going through the legal negotiations. It was a tremendous transaction that Boaz was going to make on Ruth's behalf. Boaz's success, redemption, would secure Ruth's future happiness; the failure of her redeemer would doom her to personal and financial hardship for the rest of her and Naomi's lives. You know yourselves how much turbulence we feel inside us in the face of tremendous events in life. Often we literally cannot sit still. We anxiously pace the room as we wait for news.

We are not told expressly, but I suggest that Ruth was able to sit still, able to obey Naomi's instruction. Why? I would like to look at two reasons with you this evening.

I. Firstly, Ruth could sit still because of the man who was making redemption for her.

II. Secondly, Ruth could sit still because she knew that that man would not rest until he had secured her redemption.

I. Firstly then, Ruth could sit still because of the man who was making redemption for her.

Like Ruth, we will sit still as we come to know our kinsman redeemer. In particular, we can think of our kinsman redeemer as one who (a) has a right to redeem, (b) who is able to redeem, (c) who is willing to redeem.

(a) In the law, **the near kinsman has a right to redeem**. In Ruth's case her near kinsman was Boaz. Boaz said that there was a kinsman who was more closely related than he was, but Boaz was also closely related. (For the sake of simplicity, I will leave the various opinions on the nearer kinsman, and what the nearer kinsman may represent, and just consider Boaz this evening.) We are not told the precise relationship between Boaz and Ruth's dead husband, but there was clearly a close relationship between them. As a consequence of this relationship Boaz had a right under the law to redeem. In the law not everybody could redeem a person. If you belonged to the tribe of Judah, no Benjaminite could ordinarily redeem you, or anybody from the tribe of Simeon, for example. It needed to be a close blood relation, so that the property would remain within the tribe, and it needed to be as near a relative as possible, so that the property would not only remain within the tribe, but within the family, between brethren.

Now, spiritually, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has a right to redeem us, because he has become a near kinsman unto us. The Word was made flesh. God became man. God cannot die, consequently he could not pay the price of redemption on behalf of sinners, the price of death. But the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, the God-man, could suffer, bleed and die in our place. He was born of a woman, made under the law, therefore he is found in a place where he could keep the law to work out a perfect righteousness for sinners. Jesus is our near kinsman, he became our near kinsman by the incarnation. It is a matchless mystery that he who fills eternity, who fills space and time, should be, as the hymn writer puts it, 'contracted to a span.' (William Gadsby) He was made man. When we get a sight of that, do not we have to say with another hymn writer:

I love the incarnate mystery,
And there I fix my trust. (Isaac Watts)

Our redemption hangs on this, that God became man, so that he would be able to save. He entered into a state in which he could save, in which he could fulfil all the demands of the law, in which he could become our redeemer, and restore what had been lost, what had been taken away. In this state he could restore life, and everything that we had forfeited by our sin. Indeed, he could even grant us heaven.

Jesus is our near kinsman. He has a right to redeem us, because he has become flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone, our brother, our near kinsman.

(b) Now you see that under the law, not only must the redeemer have the right to redeem, but **the near kinsman must have the ability to redeem**. If your brother was as poor as you, and perhaps facing bankruptcy just like you, clearly he would not be able to redeem you. The redeemer needed to have sufficient wealth to redeem. Boaz had the ability to redeem Ruth. Boaz was a wealthy man. Redeeming Ruth, and redeeming the land which had belonged to her father-in-law, was no hardship to him. He not only had a right, as a relative, as a near kinsman, but his wealth gave him the ability.

The near kinsman also needed to be in a personal position to redeem. The other, nearer, kinsman in the account of Ruth said that he could not redeem Ruth lest he mar his own inheritance, that is, in case he impaired his own inheritance. Some have suggested, and it is quite possibly true, that the nearer kinsman already had wife and children. So by taking Ruth (which he could do according to the law) and raising up seed, the seed raised up would have been in the name of Ruth's dead husband rather than in his name, and this would have spoiled his own inheritance. But Boaz had no inheritance to mar, and no wife already (as far as is revealed in the Scripture), therefore as well as his wealth he had the ability in his personal situation to redeem Ruth.

Now, leaving Boaz, let us come to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He has ability to redeem. 'He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.' (Hebrews 7:25) Why? Because he is the Son of God. He has got a right. All things are given unto him. All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth. There is infinite merit in his mediatorial work. Therefore, what reason can you bring this evening why he is not able to redeem you. Why would he not be able to save you, sinner? The precious blood that he shed draws its efficacy from the fact that it satisfied divine justice and that it was shed by the Son of God. Though it was real human blood, it has cleansing power. As John Kent says,

That sacred flood, from Jesus' veins,
Was free to take away
A Mary's or Manasseh's stains,
Or sins more vile than they.

You see, Jesus is able to save, and *he did save*. His precious blood is able to take away the worst sins, able to pay the price for the greatest sinner.

Are thy sins beyond recounting,
Like the sand the ocean laves?
Jesus is of life the fountain;
He unto the utmost saves. (John Kent)

He is able. It is a precious thing when we are brought to see the power in the atonement made by this redeemer. The price that he paid is of inestimable value. It is of infinite value. You see, friends, you can never get to the end of this. You can never run up debts too high for this redeemer to pay. I don't say that that you should go and sin that grace may abound – God forbid! But it does not matter how deep dyed your sin is this evening. It does not matter how long your lists of sin are. It does not matter how guilty and how vile you find yourself to be. This redeemer is able to redeem. You see, the price he paid – his own heart's blood – it is of infinite value. He can redeem from *all sin*.

Maybe someone is saying this evening, 'But I am so far off. My sins keep me far from Christ.' But this redeemer is able to find you in a waste howling wilderness, as he found Jacob. 'He led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.' (Deuteronomy 32:10) He came to seek and save that which is lost. As the hymn writer says:

Glory to God! They ne'er shall rove
Beyond the limits of his love. (Joseph Hart)

The redeemer's love is everlasting love. It is love that we can never get to the end of. The breadth, the depth, the height, the length of the love of Christ – it surpasses all understanding and all knowledge.

This is the ability this gracious redeemer has to save. He not only has a right to save as a near kinsman, but he is able to save because of his wealth and because of his love. He is able to save to the uttermost. He is able to save to the ends of the earth, he is able to save the sinner sunk most deeply in sin. Whatever dimension you might name to the uttermost this evening, Christ can reach you and bring you redemption. *He is able*.

(c) Then, we would notice that the redeemer not only had to have a right and ability, but **he had got to be willing to redeem**. Ruth had a near kinsman who

was unwilling to redeem; it would have marred his inheritance. What a precious thing for Ruth that there was another kinsman, Boaz – not as near, but a kinsman who was willing to redeem her.

We have a willing Saviour too.

How willing was Jesus to die,
That we fellow-sinners might live! (Joseph Swain)

He came willingly. He set his face as a flint to go to Jerusalem. He had a baptism to be baptised with, and he said, ‘How am I straitened till it be accomplished?’ (Luke 12:50) He came into this world for a purpose. He never flinched. He never showed any sign of unwillingness. He willingly carried out this redemption. And, friends, if he went to the cross for you, where are your grounds for doubting his willingness to finally save you? He is a willing redeemer from beginning to end.

So we see that the first reason why Ruth could sit still was because of what she knew of Boaz. She had come to know that he was a near kinsman, as Naomi had told her. She had come to know the fact that he was wealthy and therefore able to redeem. And Boaz had told her that he was a willing redeemer. He had given her a token that he was willing. ‘These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother in law.’ (Ruth 3:17) Furthermore, Boaz had promised Ruth. She had more than just the barley. Boaz had given Ruth his word. He had said, ‘And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.’ (Ruth 3:11) You know, if the Lord has said to you, ‘Fear not,’ if he has said, ‘Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee,’ (Song of Solomon 4:7) – ‘Thou art a virtuous woman’ – if he has spoken to us of his willingness to redeem, then we will be able to sit still.

Because of the knowledge she had of this redeemer, Ruth had come to love Boaz. When we get a sight of the heavenly Boaz, this precious man, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ – when we get a sight of him as the appointed redeemer – then we will love him too. As we sang together this evening,

In Jesus combine all the riches of grace,
What glory and grandeur I see in his face!
Jehovah’s eternal and co-equal Son,
Took all our transgressions and made them his own.

(Henry Fowler)

When by faith we see Jesus, we can rest on him. We will be able to sit still, and we will love our redeemer for the perfection we see in him.

II. I want to notice in the second place, that Ruth could rest not only in her knowledge of the man who was her redeemer, but also in the certainty that this man would not rest, until he had finished her redemption.

(a) **How could Ruth be sure that Boaz was going to finish his duty as kinsman redeemer?** Why would Boaz not be in rest until he had finished her redemption?

1. The first reason is that *Boaz loved Ruth*. This was shown by how he graciously spoke to her. He singled her out, even in the beginning, and told her to stay by the reapers and instructed the reapers to let drop some handfuls on purpose for her. Boaz was obviously naturally drawn to Ruth. But then as the account proceeds, he finds Ruth at his feet in the middle of the night. Again he speaks graciously to her, and he gives her the six measures of barley to go on her way with. That was a sign to her of his love. It was also a sign to Naomi of the love Boaz had to Ruth. Now because he loved Ruth he must do the decent thing, and redeem her, so that she would be his wife.

True love doesn't rest. Jacob served seven years for Leah, and then another seven years for Rachel, and yet they seemed but as a week to him. Why? Because he could not rest. He was in love. That is the nature of true love, and therefore Ruth could sit still knowing this, that this man would not be in rest because he loved her.

2. The second reason why Boaz could not be in rest was because *he had a duty under the law*. It was a serious thing if the near kinsman refused to redeem. If a close relative had the ability, and they failed to redeem, it was disgraceful. We read in the law, 'And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother. Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her; Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.' (Deuteronomy 25:7-10) Boaz was bound by law. He was obliged to redeem Ruth by his position as a near kinsman, otherwise it

would be a shame to him and to his household for ever. If he failed to redeem her, then throughout all the generations of Israel, his house would be known as ‘the house of him that had his shoe loosed.’ Boaz’s duty under the law was another reason why he would not be in rest until he finished the thing. No wonder Ruth could sit still. Boaz’s reputation was at stake under the law.

3. There is a third reason why Boaz could not rest. In one sense it is included in Boaz’s love, but it is distinct – *Boaz had given Ruth his promise*. A promise may be made in love, but the promise is distinct from love. A man may love a woman, but it something different when he promises to marry her and puts an engagement ring on her finger. The promise springs out of love, it flows from love, but it is distinct from love. Ruth had Boaz’s promise that he would redeem her, to add to his love for her. He couldn’t break his promise, without bringing himself into serious shame. He explained that there was a nearer relative, and that he had to see what that man would do first, but he promised that he would redeem Ruth otherwise.

In the knowledge of these three things Ruth could sit still. She could rest on them: the love of her redeemer, the fact that her redeemer was bound by law, and the fact that she had her redeemer’s promise.

(b) Now it is just the same with the child of God and their kinsman redeemer.

What have we got this evening that our redeemer has given to us, on which we can rest?

1. First of all *we have his love*. We are loved with an everlasting love. He loved his people in eternity past. Proverbs 8 gives us such a beautiful picture of this. In eternity past the Father, Son and Spirit were in perfect felicity within the Trinity, and yet their thoughts, their love ran out towards the sons of men. Our redeemer’s love is an eternal love, an everlasting love. He loves his own to the end. He loves his people.

Because he loves his people, Jesus will not rest until they are all redeemed and brought to heaven as his bride. As we were considering this morning (John 14:2-3), he is not resting while he is preparing that place for us. He will come again. Why? Because he loves us, and therefore he desires that we should be with him where he is. We are his bride, and he will love us for ever. He will ravish us with his love in glory. There we shall see him, we shall know him, he will love us and we shall love him.

Our redemption is built on love, built on the certainty of his love. Every token we have of his love confirms his good pleasure to help us quite through.

Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review,
Confirms his good pleasure to help us quite through.

(John Newton)

Friends, have you got an ‘Ebenezer’ this evening? Have you got any love tokens from this precious kinsman redeemer? If you have, can’t you sit still? Can’t you rest on the fact that this ‘man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day’? He can’t rest, because he loves his people! He will not have his love frustrated. Love must have its perfect end – that we should be with him where his is, forever his.

2. But then our gracious redeemer is also bound legally – *he is bound by covenant*. In the eternal covenant he came under obligation to be our surety. He was bound to stand in our place to redeem us, bound to fulfil all the demands of the law for us, bound to give his own heart’s blood as a ransom price to redeem us. He is bound by law: ‘Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.’ (Hebrews 10:7) Our salvation is a covenant salvation.

Our God is bound in the everlasting covenant. In everyday life, we may be legally tied into some transaction, but there may be some fretfulness against it, there may be a desire to get out of it. We do sometimes see people trying to get out of their legal obligations. But when we speak of God being bound by the everlasting covenant, there is no hint of anything like that. The covenant was not made for God, it is not made as something for him to work to, not imposed on him against his wishes, or something he regrets entering into. No. It was made for man. God chose to make this covenant. The Father was not forced into it and the Son was not coerced into keeping it. It was because he loved his people that he made the covenant, and because he loves his people he will see to fulfilling all the terms of the covenant. Though God was not obliged to make the covenant, yet now he has entered into covenant, he cannot escape its requirements without denying himself and his own faithfulness. God in revealing this covenant for our salvation has condescended to us in our frailty. He has set out in very clear terms in the covenant how he purposes to fulfil our salvation. We know where we are. He has given us both the promise of the covenant itself and the additional confirmation of his oath, so that by these ‘two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie,’ the oath and the promise, ‘we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.’ (Hebrews 6:18) The everlasting covenant is also sealed with the precious blood of

Christ, for the testament is made of effect where there is the death of the testator. By a divine covenant, and a covenant sealed with blood, we have a sure salvation. Consequently, we can rest on a covenanted redemption.

We have a salvation which our redeemer is bound to for his honour and his glory. He will be honoured and glorified in this, that not one jot nor tittle of the terms of the everlasting covenant shall ever fail. Now you see, when we get a sense and a sight of the sureness of Jehovah's 'shalls and wills', when we get a sense of the fact that:

Bound by his word, he will display
A strength proportioned to our day. (Philip Doddridge)

Then we can sit still. This covenant provides a resting place for the Lord's people, a place where we can sit still in the knowledge of the certainty of this fact, 'For the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.' The place that he is preparing for us, and the fact that he is coming again to receive us unto himself – we can sit still knowing that he will certainly finish these things, because it is all bound up in the everlasting covenant, the covenant that can never be broken.

The tokens of this covenant are many. 'Seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.' (Genesis 8:22) 'Thus saith the Lord; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; Then may also my covenant be broken.' (Jeremiah 33:20-21) Sooner the covenant of day and night should be broken, or the waters of Noah should cover the earth and that the world should be drowned with a second flood, than that this everlasting covenant should be broken. Every time we see the rainbow in the cloud; every time the dawn comes again and we wake up; every time the night again falls; every revolving season, seedtime and harvest, summer and winter, are precious tokens of the everlasting nature of the eternal covenant. It cannot be broken, therefore this 'man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.'

3. Then the third reason for confidence that the redeemer will finish the work is that *we have his promise*. We looked at one of those precious promises this morning, a promise that our redeemer will not be in rest concerning us. 'I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.' (John 14:2-3)

Friend, has any one of the promises ever failed you? We may be forgetful of the promise, we may fail to plead it as we ought to. Sometimes the promises become rebukes to us. Has a promise ever been a rebuke to you, when in a particular situation you were brought to realise that although you never pleaded the promise, yet his promise has not failed? You had forgotten the promise, but the redeemer had not forgotten his promise to you. These precious promises shall never fail. They cannot fail. They are the word of God, and what he has said must come to pass. We can rest upon them because ‘God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?’ (Numbers 23:19) They must be fulfilled in all their fullness.

These promises spring forth from the everlasting covenant, they spring forth from the redeemer’s love. In our salvation these three, love, the covenant, the promise, are all bound up together. They are covenant promises; they are loving promises; it is a loving covenant. We cannot get to the end of our salvation. When we get a sense of this, we have a realisation of the security of the salvation by which we are saved. An everlasting salvation. A river that cannot be passed over. Therefore, can we not be obedient to the word of the Lord? ‘Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.’

Boaz didn’t rest. He fulfilled his word in its entirety. Why? because he was an honest man, a man of integrity, he was good to his word. He fulfilled his promise to the very end. So will the one that is gloriously set before us in the type of Boaz – Jesus Christ, our kinsman redeemer. He will fulfil our salvation in all its glorious fullness. John Kent says:

In heaven there’s ne’er a vacant throne;—
He hates to put away.

He *cannot* put away, friends. We know where the hymn writer is coming from, because the prophet says God hates to put away, that is divorce his people (Malachi 2:16), but in heaven there is never a vacant throne because he *cannot* put away. *He cannot turn away from those he loves.* He cannot break the terms of the everlasting covenant. He will not go back on his promise. All his sheep redeemed by precious blood, must be brought to Zion. These are the terms of our salvation. This is the salvation by which we are saved. Can you see this evening a place you can rest? A

place where you can find rest for your weary soul? You see, this is what the Saviour makes known in his gracious call, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' (Matthew 11:28-29) What is Jesus saying? He is saying, 'Sit still, sinner. Sit still, daughter. I won't be in rest, so that you will have rest, and all the while I am not in rest, you can rest.' This is the beauty of it. Our dear kinsman redeemer, he is not in rest this evening although he has entered into his glory.

I fear sometimes, left to ourselves, we have same misconception of our kinsman redeemer as the saints of the Old Testament. During the long years between Adam's fall and the fulfilment of the first promise of a redeemer, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel,' (Genesis 3:15) there was much darkness. There were times of terrible backsliding, times when the Lord's people seemed utterly overcome, when the promised land was snatched from them, when the glory of the Lord's house departed. When the question was asked, 'Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?' (Haggai 2:3) Don't you think some of those Old Testament saints left to themselves, they questioned, 'Will he ever come?' 'What is happening to our salvation?' We know they did, because we read in Isaiah: 'Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.' (Isaiah 49:14) You know, we come into just the same place.

What the Old Testament saints could not see was the working out of God's eternal counsel. In the fullness of time – not before – all things would be accomplished according to his purpose, for his honour and glory. His word would be fulfilled in its entirety. You can see as you read Matthew's gospel (and it is beautiful for this aspect), how that in even the smallest thing about the person of Jesus Christ, all the Old Testament promises were being fulfilled. Everything came to pass absolutely perfectly.

So it will be with the second coming. 'If I go ... I will come again.' As we see the signs of the times, the falling away, the darkness in the world, a day of small things in Zion, sometimes we get in just the same places as Israel of old. We fret. 'Is his mercy clean gone forever? Has he forgotten to be gracious? Has he forgotten us? What is going on? Why is he silent? Why isn't there a greater appearing Zion? Why isn't there a gracious ingathering? Why isn't Galilee full to overflowing this

evening?’ We ask these questions. Old nature frets. But the Lord says, ‘Sit still. My work is ongoing.’

What we cannot see with our natural eye and what nature cannot comprehend, but what faith rests on is this: that this priest, this kinsman redeemer, he is ever living to make intercession for us. While Jesus lives we cannot die. While Jesus lives his work is going on above. It is upon this rock he builds his church. ‘I will work and who shall let it?’ (Isaiah 43:13) And while Jesus is living this evening and continuing to make intercession for us, he has got no rest. Though he has entered into his rest, having offered that one sacrifice for sin, he is there in heaven making intercession for us, pleading his own precious blood, bringing our names before the Father, reminding him, praying again and again that prayer, ‘Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.’ (John 17:24) He is making intercession for us, he is fulfilling his purpose concerning us, he is sitting as the refiner, the trier of gold and silver, refining us, waiting to see his image in us. And, when the work of grace is done – and not before –

All must come, and last, and end,
As shall please my heavenly Friend. (John Ryland)

He will bring to fruition our salvation in all its glory. Then we will be a partner of his throne. Then we will be a jewel in his crown, then we will be a royal diadem in the hand of our God. That will be the final outworking of our salvation. And this man, our precious redeemer, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is not in rest this evening. He has gone to prepare a place for us, he is preparing it, he is working our salvation out in all its fullness, he is bound by his love, by his everlasting covenant, by his promise to his people. Therefore, dear tried child of God this evening, sit still.

‘Until thou know how the matter will fall.’ I would just say this concerning this expression. We may think it implies there was something haphazard, something which might not fall out as expected. I do not believe Naomi meant that. Naomi had a realisation of the sovereignty of God. That nothing could frustrate his purpose, but that he would work everything according to his purpose. As we sit still, yes, we have to wait to see how the matter will fall. We don’t know the time and the manner of his coming. We don’t know the times when he will draw near

to bless us. We don't know how he will work things out for us, but that does not undermine the certainty of them.

It is the certainty of these things which means we have to be constantly expecting, always waiting, certain that our redemption will be brought to a full accomplishment. As we come up to the house of God we have plead the certainty of the covenant as the ground for his blessing.

Those that are given the assurance that this man will complete their redemption have a sure token that it won't only be well for them at the end, but it must be well with them throughout life until they reach their end.

... Well with them while life endure,
And well when called to die. (John Kent)

The two things, blessing in life and blessing after death – *grace and glory* – are bound up together.

Safety on earth, and after death,
The plenitude of heaven. (Augustus Toplady)

That is what is assured to us. Then, friends, we can sit still, can't we? We can wait. Because this man, the man Christ Jesus, our Saviour, 'will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.' As we live each day we have to be pleading that he would prepare us for our end. Sometimes when we are filled with the precious love of our kinsman redeemer, we may pray that he would shorten those interposing days and hasten the completion of his work in us, when we shall enter into the fullness of what he has prepared for us, and when we shall forever be feasted and satisfied with the precious love of our kinsman redeemer.

Now I just say this in closing. Is there anyone here this evening who desires to know that this man, Jesus, the Redeemer, is working on their behalf this evening? Is there someone who needs to know that they have a portion in this redemption? One who wants to know this kinsman redeemer to be their own redeemer?

Well, friends, if you are weary, weary with trying to find redemption yourself, remember what the kinsman redeemer says. 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' (Matthew 11:28-29) The redeemer himself is the resting place. We rest on him. This is where the Lord's people can sit still, as he grants us faith in the assurance of this fact that he is our redeemer, and therefore

he will not be in rest until he has performed and perfected that which concerns our soul's salvation.

'Come unto me!' 'Look unto me,' this redeemer says. You won't find any rest while you are looking to yourself. If you are wearied by the state of your soul, wearied by your sin, wearied by your inability to keep the law, there will never be any rest for you all the while you are looking somewhere other than Christ. But Christ says, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.' (Isaiah 45:22)

Christ is rest – he is salvation – he is the only redeemer, the only redeemer who is able to save us, the only near kinsman that can save us. There is no other man or woman on the face of this earth who can save your soul but this dear man. There is nobody else who has any ability, because they are sinners just like you. But Christ, 'who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, (Hebrews 7:26) has died in your place. He has!

And, friends, he is a willing Saviour. 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' (John 6:37) That shows a willing Saviour, doesn't it? Hear what he said himself in that last great day of the feast, when he stood and cried with a loud voice. 'If *any* man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.' (John 7:37) That is a willing Saviour! He is a willing Saviour!

What can I say to you this evening? Sit still – wait on him at the throne of grace. Be constantly calling on him. This stillness is an urgent stillness, a stillness of calm certainty about the outcome alongside an urgent longing to see the outcome brought to pass. When the Lord's people have rest they are still exercised at the throne of grace. When they have rest they still urgently desire to see his face. This is real resting on Christ. If you want to find a place in this redemption, keep your eyes on Christ. Plead at the throne of grace that he would redeem you, that he would draw near, that he would spread his skirt over you and that he would bless you with his love, that he would show you that you have a portion in the everlasting covenant and a promise of his grace. That will enable you to rest on him for redemption.

'Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.'

Amen.