



Daily Devotionals

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RUTH 3:10-13 LIVING BY THE COVENANT

Written by Rev. Dr. Charles D. (Chuck) Alley, Ph.D., Rector of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Richmond, Va.

¹⁰ "The LORD bless you, my daughter," he replied. "This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. ¹¹ And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character. ¹² Although it is true that I am near of kin, there is a kinsman-redeemer nearer than I. ¹³ Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to redeem, good; let him redeem. But if he is not willing, as surely as the LORD lives I will do it. Lie here until morning."

The man of God lives in the community of God and within the web of covenantal relationships. Boaz was clearly enamored with Ruth, and yet he did not take matters into his own hand. He knew the law as a grace from God to regulate relationships among the members of the covenant community. It is through these relationships that God provides for the welfare and posterity of even the least of these his children. Boaz was both honored to be identified as a potential kinsman-redeemer and careful to not usurp the place of another or take advantage of the objection of his redeeming. Once more his actions demonstrated his other-centered character, this time to the point of self-denial.

God has not changed. The will of God is that we live in covenantal relationships with one another as he relates to us through his covenant. According to Jesus the greatest commandment is that we love God and our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39). In addition, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40). As children of God we are responsible for the well-being of the other members of the community, even if it means sacrificing or postponing our individual will and desire. To live life in such a manner is more than being compassionate and generous; it is a strong witness to the nature of the God of the covenant. What a difference a covenantal lifestyle could make in our families, churches and neighborhoods. It would provide a vivid contrast to the surrounding world of the futility of competition, ego-fulfillment and abuse.

Father God, teach me more about your covenant love and empower me through the Holy Spirit to develop an attitude of covenantal love toward my brothers and sisters. May I always look to you for guidance in my relationships and for the discipline to overcome my natural self-centeredness. Help me to glorify you by the way I live. Amen.

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