



## Daily Devotionals

[click here to go to our website – stmatthewsrichmond.org](http://stmatthewsrichmond.org)

### RUTH 4:1-12 WILLING TO PAY

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

<sup>1</sup> *Meanwhile Boaz went up to the town gate and sat there. When the kinsman-redeemer he had mentioned came along, Boaz said, "Come over here, my friend, and sit down." So he went over and sat down.*

<sup>2</sup> *Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said, "Sit here," and they did so. <sup>3</sup> Then he said to the kinsman-redeemer, "Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our brother Elimelech. <sup>4</sup> I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of these seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you will not, tell me, so I will know. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line." "I will redeem it," he said.*

<sup>5</sup> *Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the land from Naomi and from Ruth the Moabitess, you acquire the dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property."*

<sup>6</sup> *At this, the kinsman-redeemer said, "Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it."*

How could a man turn down an offer like this – land and the possibility of more sons? The simple answer is that the cost was too high for the closest kinsman. He would have to use the resources due his heirs to purchase the land which would then be left to any new son born to the Moabitess. By presenting the land before the levirate marriage responsibility, Boaz has made that high price obvious to this relative.

No one can properly redeem anything without first determining the true cost; otherwise the transaction will result in onerous obligation and bitterness. Then the object or person being redeemed will be devalued and either neglected or abused. Such a state is not one of redemption at all, but merely a replacement form of bondage.

The spirit of the levirate law is that of loving-kindness. It is a steadfast love that not only counts the cost but joyfully pays the price so that redemption can be realized. In the case of our redemption by Jesus Christ, our Savior was not an unwilling victim who was sacrificed unaware of the circumstances. Jesus as the Son of God knew the awful price he had to pay for the redemption of sinful human beings from all eternity. As our kinsman-redeemer, Jesus was

willing to endure separation from God and physical death so that we might experience the loving providence of the Father. Through Jesus the emptiness of our lives is transformed into the abundance of a life lived in the presence of God. Thanks be to God that our Redeemer said yes – for there is no other eligible redeemer.

***Your loving kindness, O Christ, is the only provision through which my life has meaning. As the object of your sacrificial act of redemption, may I never succumb to the lies of the enemy that tell me there is no meaning and that I have no worth. I acknowledge the price you willingly paid and in gratitude give my life into your most loving hands. Amen.***

[\(click here to go to our website – stmatthewsrichmond.org\)](http://stmatthewsrichmond.org)