

A Redeeming Love (Ruth 4)

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Preacher: William HC

- [0 : 0 0] Righty, so last chapter of the book of Ruth today. Who's excited? Yeah, nice. Okay, so before we invite William up to speak to us, I'm going to read us chapter four, right?
- Ruth chapter four. So pull out your Bibles if you want, follow along, and we will go through the conclusion of this really sweet, but also really encouraging story.
- Ruth chapter four. Meanwhile, Boaz went up to the town gate and sat down there just as the guardian redeemer he had mentioned came along. Boaz said, come over here, my friend, and sit down.
- So he went over and sat down. Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said, sit here, and they did so. Then he said to the guardian redeemer, Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech.
- 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.
- [1 : 0 7] For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line. I will redeem it, he said. Then Boaz said, on the day you buy the land from Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property.
- At this, the guardian redeemer said, then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it. Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off a sandal and gave it to the other.
- This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel. So the guardian redeemer said to Boaz, buy it yourself, and he removed a sandal. Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Killian, and Malon.
- I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Malon's widow, as my wife in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property so that his name will not disappear from among his people, from among his family, or from his hometown.
- Today you are witnesses. Then the elders and all the people at the gate said, we are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who was coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel.
- [2 : 3 0] May you have standing in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem. Through the offspring the Lord gives you, by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.
- So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. The woman said to Naomi, praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a guardian redeemer.
- May he become famous throughout Israel. He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.

Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. The woman living there said, Naomi has a son, and they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

This then is the family line of Perez. Perez was the father of Hezron. Hezron, the father of Ram. Ram, the father of Aminadab. Aminadab, the father of Nashon.

[3 : 36] Nashon, the father of Salmon. Salmon, the father of Boaz. Boaz, the father of Obed. Obed, the father of Jesse. And Jesse, the father of David.

That's the word of the Lord. Thank you, Isaac, for reading that so well.

And good afternoon, PCBC. It's so lovely to see you all. I've been at all three services this weekend, so imagine yourselves, and then times two and three. And yeah, it's been such a blessing to worship with you all this weekend.

Today we are in Ruth chapter four. This is the grand finale of this very sweet story, as we heard. And so let us ask God for help to really sharpen our attention to all the wonderful riches of the gospel in this passage.

Let's pray together. Father, we come to you this afternoon, perhaps distracted, tired, perhaps ready to hear about your redeeming love.

[4 : 49] And so be with us, strengthen us with your spirit. Lord, as we hear from your God-breathed words today, would you remind us afresh how costly your redemption is and how full your rescue can be from your King of Kings.

We thank you and we pray all these things in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. A huge Black Friday sale. The ad on my screen promised last week.

And by faith, I tapped the link, as you do. And by faith, I browsed the site, as you do. And after scrolling past way too many oversized and random colored shoes, I realized, right, that the only shoes that fit me on that website was not on sale.

Being a cheap Asian, I logged out in bitter disappointment. And with my wallet intact, right? So don't ever trust ads on social media. Another example, last weekend, we were offered another promise to claim by faith, right?

Stay at our place over the weekend. And you'll get to swim at the hot pools down the road for just eight bucks instead of 35. Too good to be true, surely.

[6 : 04] No way. But as we lined up with the kids and as the staff member heard us redeem our promise, or the promise, and waved us through at the staff prices, my wallet was much less full, but my heart was overjoyed.

Claiming a promise by faith. Now, what happens when you exercise faith and claim God's promises, God's covenant promises? Well, we've been hearing from the book of Ruth, haven't we, right?

Ruth chapter three shows, if you claim a promise, right, by faith, you may be blessed beyond what you deserve. Remember who Naomi and Ruth were in this story.

They were two childless widows, breadless in Bethlehem, the house of bread. And yet after tasting the first fruits of our Lord's loyal love, right?

Last week we heard from Pastor Albert that they enacted a bold plan to claim by faith Boaz's covenant obligation to redeem this family.

[7 : 09] And you know what? I say by faith because actually, if you think about it, what we heard last week was a chapter full of faith. Full of faith. Right, what did we see last week?

Well, first, we saw a very risky faith, right? It was risky because, right, to follow through on Naomi's plan was actually very dangerous. If one person saw this single Moabite woman enter Boaz's threshing floor alone, in her culture, she would have been instantly disgraced.

He would have been too. No more redemption. Family line deleted. Game over. A risky faith. Well, last week we saw too, right, a very vulnerable faith.

A vulnerable faith from verses five to nine. It took great courage, didn't it? For Ruth to propose to Boaz, as it were. And yet you and I must come to Jesus, our bridegroom, with that kind of vulnerable faith.

We must let go of anything else for safety and come to Jesus. Cling to our Redeemer. Cleave to Him. We must hide under the shadow of His wings by faith.

[8 : 24] There is no other hope in this world. Last week we also saw a very intimate faith. We heard, actually, the word intimate, right, raised as we were singing about our worship, right?

We have an intimate relationship with our Lord. Look, as Pastor Albert explained last week, nothing immoral happened between Ruth and Boaz on the threshing floor. The text is quite clear.

And yet it is still a very intimate scene, isn't it? And have you ever realized that in Christ we have a very intimate faith?

Jesus is not just some far-off Redeemer. He's our personal Redeemer. He has cast His loving eyes, not just on a group of people here at PCBC, He has eyes on you when you entrust your life to Him.

And finally, at the end of chapter 3, we saw a patient faith. Right? There's a nice engagement story. There's a little bit of a wedding ring moment. Okay? Engagement ring moment, sorry.

[9 : 28] Right? Because Ruth brings home six measures of barley. I don't know how much that would translate in terms of engagement ring and carrots of diamonds and so on. But look, that's a tangible taste, isn't it?

Of a permanent future. And yet as Naomi's words close chapter 3, she's pretty confident this will be settled today, there is still tension in the story.

Here is an engaged couple, as it were, waiting to discover what the final outcome will be. And likewise, as Jesus' words on the cross is true, it is finished.

It guarantees eternal hope for us when He said that and died for our sins. There is still tension in the story. Because we are waiting patiently, aren't we? For full redemption of our bodies.

We're not there yet. We are longing for that true and final wedding day, as it were, where we, the church, will walk down the aisle as a spotless bride.

[10 : 28] We have seen risky faith, vulnerable faith, intimate faith, patient faith. But one key aspect about Naomi and Ruth's adventure remains, right?

Look, they have exercised faith, haven't they? But one aspect remains unanswered. The big question as we enter this final chapter is this, will Ruth's faith be effective faith?

Right? Will Boaz be able to truly be her guardian redeemer? Or will someone else take that role? So we're gonna just briefly take another look at this passage.

I won't read through it again. It was read very well. Basically, in chapter four, we have a chapter of two halves. Two halves. And so I have two points for us. Firstly, Ruth four shows that, firstly, every blessing God's people receive comes through a costly redemption.

If you're gonna be blessed as God's people, you're gonna get it through a costly redemption. Have a look at verse one in your Bibles. You want it in front of you, right? Verse one says, right, that Boaz goes up to the town of Bethlehem.

[11 : 39] He goes to the town gate and then he sits there. So here in the story, we go from night to day, right? We've gone from lying down to now sitting down.

Now I'm standing up here before you to preach this sermon, but actually, in those days, to sit down was what carried a lot of weight. A lot of authority. If I were preaching in Ruth's days, I probably would be sitting down, maybe cross-legged, shoes off, and that's the posture of serious business, of authority in that time.

And so Boaz sits down. And verse two, look, when the nearer guardian redeemer just so happens to walk by, he says to him, hey, come over here, my friend, and sit down.

So he sits down. And then he gathers some elders of the town and they sit down. So how many people are sitting down now? Twelve, right? Two potential redeemers, ten elders.

Sounds like a very wholesome group, right? Seems like they've got quorum to make some kind of big decision here. And before the presence of everyone seated here, verse four, we see Boaz begin to speak.

[12 : 54] He says, Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our brother, Elimelech.

Hang on. Did we not just say over and over again in the story that Naomi and Ruth were poor, destitute, had nothing? Now we learn she owns land, more land than most Aucklanders.

We're not told the exact situation that led to her circumstances. So one possibility from some scholars is that after ten years of being away in the fields of Moab, she's kind of given up the right to use her land, right?

It's unclaimed land and someone's kind of moved in and taken it. Or maybe Naomi still has access to the land, but there's ten years worth of weeds and it's pretty yucky land that you can't do much with it.

So even if it's in her name, she needs a redeemer to help her out with it. More important though, okay, whatever the situation with her land is what Boaz is going to propose to the group next, right?

[13 : 59] He's going to suggest a chance to redeem that piece of land that once belonged to his brother, his relation, Elimelech. And that sounds like a very unexpected blessing, doesn't it?

But the story says it's not being offered to Boaz, it's being offered to this other guardian, redeemer. And at this point, you know, we're thinking, oh no, is this story going to end differently to what we'd hope?

Right? If you're shipping Boaz right now, you're like, no, what's going on? Verse 5, then Boaz said, on the day you buy the land from Naomi and from Ruth, the Moabite, you acquire the dead man's widow in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property.

Our modern ears hear this and instantly they burn, right? They're like, oh, what's going on here? Ruth is about to be acquired? Is this like some old medieval tale? Look, the idea here is that if you redeem your right to Naomi's family plot, you need to take up the duty of looking after the family who own that land or who are part of that land.

So here, he's basically saying, look, if you take that plot of land, you need to look after Naomi and Ruth as well. Take them under your wing, as it were. The way that Boaz frames this in this kind of legal discussion, he's very shrewd, isn't he?

[15 : 25] He reveals only now, right, after the man said, yeah, I'll redeem it, that there's not just a financial benefit, but there's a family obligation as well. And at this, verse six, we see the closer guardian redeemer says, oh, I've done the maths and you redeem it yourself.

I cannot do this. It's hard for us to understand it in 2023, but what initially seemed like a great property deal now comes with way too many strings attached.

You see, if Mr. Redeemer, this guy, if he takes Naomi's land, look, if it was just Naomi, he knows, okay, I've got to take care of this older woman, this widow, and provide for her until she dies, but look, she's too old to have kids, so on balance, right, I can get some income from the land and that will meet her living costs and afterwards her land becomes part of my estate.

That sounds good, that's a good deal, right, that's just the thinking behind the scenes. But now that Ruth is in the works and part of the deal, right, now there's two family members to look after, to feed and provide for and look, if Ruth has children, then that's more mouths to feed and because of the customs of the time, Ruth's eldest son would inherit the land, not this redeemer person.

Hang on, suddenly now that leaves him really out of pocket, right, it's going to cost a lot and potentially it will cost him his own current property and his own estate.

[16 : 58] So here, at this point, it looks like he says no deal. Here's a wrong turn to make when we look at this story. We don't want to look at this and then cast judgment on the closer redeemer.

I'm sure some of you have heard, this closer redeemer, wow, you know, what a loser, right, missed out on marrying Ruth or something like that. We've got to be careful not to make that wrong turn because the narrator does not actually say that.

And do you remember chapter one, how Orpah, look, she wasn't deliberately wicked, right, when she turned back to her people in Moab. I think here in chapter four, we have another common sense, just seeing what's in front of me, making a normal decision in life.

Responding to just the plain facts before him. That's what the guardian redeemer's doing. It's just being a normal citizen. But sometimes being a normal citizen is not enough.

Because Ruth and Naomi, they're in a deep crisis. And to bless them with a family and a future will take an immensely costly rescue.

[18 : 09] I think if the author had not included this bit of legal drama in the mix, at the gates of Bethlehem, you and I would have just assumed that, wow, Boaz, what a guy. Smooth, spontaneous, romantic.

He's going to go claim Ruth in a day. But this legal drama reminds us, no, there is more behind the scenes. Actually, Boaz is very calm and collected here, isn't he, in this story.

He is playing by the rules of his people. And he knows, all right, that it's going to be a costly redemption. You see, I think the loving kindness that Boaz is about to show in what he does is not primarily romantic.

It's not sexual. In fact, he tells us the reason why he makes this costly redemption. Verse 5, right, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property. Verse 10, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property.

You see, Boaz's act, his greatest act of loyal love is to bring no less than a physical resurrection to a dead man's family, his fortunes, his future, and at the cost of his own.

[19 : 21] Does that sound familiar to you? That kind of costly redemption? That kind of loyal love? One that benefits the person who rescues you, not one bit.

It should. It's echoes of grace. And so, from verse 7 to 11 in our Bibles, before the elders and all the people, right, they do this interesting shoe-swapping ceremony.

Yeah, I'm not sure what's happening here. Likely, he's kind of like literally, in a way, stepping into the shoe of the other person, the closer redeemer, ceremonially and symbolically.

And by doing this kind of ceremony, the deal is done. And the story mentions all the witnesses present, not just once, verse 9, twice, verse 10, but three times, verse 11.

He's telling us this is a really solemn decision done in front of everyone. It's like a wedding ceremony. It's like a public declaration. It is an irreversible agreement.

[20 : 24] And from here, we see, don't we, every blessing that this poor family is about to receive has come only through a costly redemption. A costly redemption.

You know, in our day and age, I think it's quite hard to grasp fully what costly redemption means. We live in an age of Uber Eats and instant movies on Netflix and, you know, we can get chat GPT to write our assignments and essays and exams.

And yet, it's costly behind the scenes. Every customized image that AI draws for you, it's come only through the costly efforts of thousands of other artists whose works have been scraped in a sense.

every sermon you are listening to, right, here at PCBC, it's come through the costly sacrifices of our families who've had to put up with, you know, the preacher's mind being in another place all week.

I don't know, even every bagel or donut you ate cost the baker some sleep, cost a driver some fuel, cost a farmer some time. And every spiritual blessing we are blessed with in Christ Jesus, has come through a far costlier redemption.

[21 : 44] Do you believe this? At the cross, our Lord Jesus redeemed us and it cost him far more than a piece of lamb or some stuff.

It cost him his precious blood. Do you believe this? If you call yourself a Christian, there is no better topic to meditate to dwell on to celebrate this month, this year, than the costly sacrifice of the Son of God for your sin and my sin.

He bore the wrath of God. He carried the shame of our sin. He forgave all our wrongs. As the old hymn goes, hallelujah, what a savior.

every blessing comes through a costly redemption. That's what we see, right? We can glean from the first half of Ruth chapter 4. But in the rest of Ruth, can I share another point we learn?

Because in Ruth chapter 4, we also see too that every blessing for God's people points to a fuller redemption from a coming king.

[22 : 57] As much as they are blessed here in this story, it points, every blessing here points to a greater rescue, redemption to come from a coming king.

Have a look at verses 11 and 12 in your Bibles. We're going to pick it up from the second half. It says here, the elders and all those at the gate said, we are witnesses. And then, the blessings start to flow.

What do they say? May the Lord make you, sorry, make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel.

May you have standing in Ephrata and be famous in Bethlehem through the offspring the Lord gives you by this young woman. May your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.

Wow. Blessing after blessing after blessing declared to Boaz by the people of Bethlehem. And now, we start to see the horizons are expanding beyond just this one family's redemption.

[23 : 59] And we're going to start to see it connect to the big picture of the whole Bible's rescue plan. Have a look again, right? The first blessing is extraordinary.

They bless them and say, may Ruth be like the great mothers of Israel, Rachel and Leah. May they be, may she be like a new matriarch, right? To build up the house of Israel, to create a new dynasty.

This is a blessing given to a childless foreign widow. It's extraordinary. The second blessing is just as beautiful, right? May you, Boaz, have standing and fame.

When we first heard about Boaz in chapter two, we heard about a worthy man. And now, he's going to father a significant family line. And then the thirdly, there's another blessing, right?

Verse 12. It connects Boaz's decision to another older man, right? Judah's story is found in Genesis 38. It's in a much earlier time in the Bible's history.

[25 : 02] It's actually quite a morally ambiguous, complicated story if you've read it before. But what came out of that, the sin and brokenness in those relationships was also redeeming love.

The people of Bethlehem, they remember the story and they likewise blessed Boaz and his young widow. And they say, you are going to start a great family line. There is blessing in this one family's fortunes being raised from the dead, yes.

But the people of Bethlehem are looking forward. They're praying for even greater blessing and honor and glory to come from way past this one generation. And so, in verse 13, these wedding speeches kind of lead on to the wedding night.

We see in the Bible, Ruth and Boaz, literally the verse says, come together in marriage. But actually, notice who's in the bedroom with them, who's the cause of their baby announcement, right?

What does it say? The Lord enabled her to conceive. Just as the Lord came to the aid of his people in chapter 1, verse 6, here the author explicitly states it is the Lord, the promise keeping God, who helps this formerly childless family with conception, with the birth of a son.

[26 : 25] Fuller blessing promised beyond this too. But what is curious is that from verse 14 onwards, the story shifts gear one last time.

Now, here it says the women, right? So you want to imagine like a townsfolk kind of scene, right? In many stories and films, like what the chorus says is important. So here's a scene from Beauty and the Beast, the animation, right?

And in that first opening montage, the townsfolk are singing about Belle, right? Okay? They're singing about Belle. Look, there she goes, that girl is strange, no question. Dazed and distracted, can't you tell?

Right? You can finish the rest later. They're commenting on this person, their fortunes, right? Or maybe if you like Harry Potter, right?

As soon as Harry Potter walks through the room in first year, everyone's whispering, he's the boy who lived. He's the boy who lived, right? The chorus is telling us about this person. And so from verse 14 to 17, we have another chorus, chorus of women.

[27 : 28] And the women of the village are going to offer the final words of dialogue in our story. But it's not about Boaz. It's not about Ruth.

who's it about? It's Naomi? What? And this is when we realize that perhaps this whole book has not been a romance between some sweet girl and a noble older man.

This is a story about the redemption and restoration about a suffering servant. because I think if we read this story, not as the book of Ruth, but as the book of Naomi, right?

We will see the true purpose of this book for your life and my life today. Where can we turn to when life brings bitterness and sorrow?

Chapter 1 tells us we turn back to the promised land and go back to God's people. What will we find when we turn back to God's people in God's place?

[28 : 33] Ruth, sorry, chapter 2 of the story tells us we will find a redeemer. And what will it take to receive this redeemer's promised redemption? Chapter 3, we learn, active faith.

And finally, in this final chapter, how does this blessing come to us? It will come through costly sacrifice that points to a fuller redemption from a coming king. This is the gospel of Naomi, isn't it?

This is wisdom for our hearts, is it not? Look, this book is masterful storytelling. But I think it's actually wisdom literature. In fact, in the earliest copies of this book, this story, right, in the earliest manuscripts, right, they used to write stuff on scrolls, they used to place this story, this scroll, not between the history books of Judges and Samuel, Israel.

But they used to put this story alongside the writings, like the Psalms, like Proverbs, like Ecclesiastes, and stories like Esther, and stories like Job.

Do you remember Job's story? We went through this as a church. There was a righteous man from the land of Uz, and he lost everything before he met the Lord in the whirlwind. And we don't want to just smush everyone's stories of suffering.

[29 : 58] Your story, your story is different to my story of trial and loss. Yet I do not think it is a stretch for us today to draw connections between Job's suffering and Naomi's suffering.

Right? In both stories we see much bitterness and loss. And both stories end with restoration, and redemption, do they not?

And brothers and sisters, I do not know every single detail of the trials you are in the midst of right now. A painful illness, a broken friendship, something else.

But I do know the Bible shows us that sometimes, sometimes, your deepest suffering is a doorway into a blessed future.

God's just as Job was right to say to his friends and family, right, blessed be the name of the Lord. And just as he was right to say, I know that my redeemer lives and in the end he will stand on the earth.

[31 : 05] Here, in this final chapter, the women are right to say to Naomi, right, verse 14, may the Lord be praised, who has not left you without a guardian redeemer.

love. Isn't that good? Think of Naomi's story, the widow who once refused to be called anything but marah, which means bitter, now has a grandson in her bosom, a worthy son-in-law, a daughter who loves her better than seven sons.

If you want a love story, the only time the word love appears in the original text is right here. And it's not between Boaz and Ruth, it's Ruth's love for Naomi.

Once this woman of God, Naomi, was emptied of all hope, now she is full in every sense. Can you see our sovereign Lord has restored her? This is the redemption story we need to hear.

And can I point out the obvious for us? You do not have to be married or widowed. Jew or Gentile to experience the same kind of blessing today.

[32 : 20] Because you don't have to be a courageous Moabite to satisfy your hunger. Because in Christ, our Lord provides food that will endure forever, body and soul.

You don't have to be hitched to a barley boy like Boaz to have a family or a future. Because our Lord promises you in Christ that he is and he will set the lonely in families.

Physical, spiritual too. And brothers and sisters, you do not need to hide your past. You don't have to be ashamed of your failures to experience a glorious future.

Why? Because our Lord promises and provides, doesn't he? He provides the hope of eternal life, that God who never lies promised before the ages began.

began. And so we ask you, we implore you, look to your Redeemer. You were bought with a price.

[33 : 22] The Lord's blessings are going to flow from this story of love and loss right through to our own. How do we know this? Well, this is how the book of Ruth ends, doesn't it?

Because the lad in Naomi's lap, his name is Obed. Your father's Jesse. Your father's David. Future generations, right?

The Hebrew word toledot, right? Okay, generations of God's blessings, pointing to a future king. And then, Matthew chapter 1 tells us, David father's Solomon, who father's Rehoboam, who father's Abijah, who had Asa, who had Jehoshaphat, and Joram, then Uzziah, Yotam, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoiakim, then Shealtiel, then Zerubbabel, Abbehood, Eliakim, Azor, Elihood, Paliazah, Matan, Jacob, Joseph, and Mary, and Jesus Christ.

And through his redeeming love, a spiritual dynasty is born. There is good news in him. In him, there's a new generation, and then a new generation.

Think of Mary, his mother, who believes. Peter, James, and John, Paul, Lydia, Chloe, Phoebe, all in the Bible, right? Barnabas, and Luke, and Timothy. You can keep scrolling on.

[34 : 55] Blondina of Leon, Perpetua of Carter, you may not know these names, but they are part of the dynasty of faith. Athanasius, Augustine, Anselm, Martin Luther, John Wesley, Hudson Taylor, Lady Jane Grey, Gladys Aylward, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Corrie Ten Boom, William Carey, Samuel Basden, Tewidamu, Tarore, George and Beth Wilson, Rodney and Sandra Chin, Ross and Brenda Chin, Albert and Janice Tang, Karis Tang, Ricky and Candy Chan, Gary Chan, Isaac and Cynthia, Vincent and Eva, Jan, Jan and Sophie, Maggie and Dominic, Fran and Chris Long, or what about Widamu, Billy Davis, or Bernice C.

Who else will redeeming love bring into God's family? I don't know. But I do know this, because of Ruth's story, every blessing we receive has come through costly redemption, and every blessing we experience now will lead to an even greater redemption to come.

One for us, by the King of Kings, who is, who was, and who is to come. So let's give thanks to Him. Father, we thank You.

We thank You that in Christ, we are going to receive an incredible future. A family that is saved by grace, from every tongue and tribe and language.

And so even as we move to the Lord's table, the Lord's supper, and remember our Lord Jesus, we thank You for His sacrifice for us. Help us never assume how costly His redemption was for us.

[37 : 01] Help us never assume that we have finished here as a family. Help us to even look beyond the people here, and to see who You will bring into Your kingdom, into Your spiritual family.

We thank You and we ask all these things in Christ's precious name. Amen.