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REDEEMING LOVE

Book of Ruth

Dr. Adrian Rogers

A little boy went into a pet store to buy a puppy...he went in with his Dad...and there was a box full of puppies...and you know, puppies are wonderful, at least they are as long as they're still puppies. They were all there in the box. There was one little puppy that the little boy wanted more than any of the other puppies. It was a puppy that was happily wagging his tail. And the little guy said, "I want the one with the happy ending."

Well, the story we have today has for us a happy ending. It doesn't start happily, but it ends happily. It starts with a funeral, but it ends with a wedding. It starts with a famine, but it ends with fullness. You know, the Bible says that weeping may endure for the night, but joy comes in the morning.

This is the wonderful story about two people who get married and we just want to add a last verse to this book and say, "And they lived happily ever after." It is the story of a marriage between a woman whose name was Ruth and a man whose name was Boaz.

It's a wonderful love story in and of itself. Ruth was a Moabitess and Boaz was an Israelite. Ruth was a stranger and alien. She was from Moab, a nation hated and also a hateful nation that had a curse upon it. She was alienated from the commonwealth of Israel. Boaz redeemed her and married her and Ruth has become a picture of all of us. Ruth is a picture of the church...the bride of Christ. Boaz, who redeemed her, is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ...our Kinsman Redeemer.

Now we don't want to belabor that point, but I do want to keep it in your heart and your mind. In **chapter 4**, the key word is "redemption." Have you got that? The word redemption is used in this one chapter at least fifteen times. Let's just take one verse and you'll get the idea. **Verse 4:** "And I sought to advertise thee saying, 'buy it before the inhabitants and the elders of my people, if thou wilt redeem it, redeem it, but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me that I may know, for there is none to redeem it besides thee and I am after thee.' And he said, 'I will redeem.'"

Now, I know you may not know the meaning of that verse...all I'm reading that verse for is to show you the word "redeem". We're talking about redemption...and our Kinsman Redeemer...the One who is very near to us, the Lord Jesus, has redeemed us.

So, here's the story...remember it begins with a funeral but it ends with a wedding. It begins with a famine and it ends with fullness. It begins with weeping, but joy has come.

Now, there are three things I want you to see in this **4th chapter**...three pictures. Remember we told you that in the Old Testament we have pictures of salvation and pictures of our Lord Jesus Christ? Sometime we have to look for them a long time to see them and then they just burst out in front of us. Why does God hide these things? Well, I think for one reason so that we can have the joy of discovering them. I think for another reason it's one of the great affirmations and confirmations of the inspiration of the Scriptures...none of this could have happened just by chance. But, you're going to see three pictures of salvation here in the **4th chapter of Ruth**, and what you're going to see is a picture of our **Redeeming Lord** and a picture of our **Renewed Life**...what happens when we come to Jesus and then we're going to see a picture of our **Restored Legacy**...what we get when we come into the family of God.

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1) Our Redeeming Lord

Ruth 4:1-6...

Now, right away, if you're not familiar with Scripture, or if you're a new Christian or new in the Bible, this is all very confusing to you and makes perhaps very little if no sense at all. But let me give you some background that will help clear it up...

This took place in ancient Israel and there were some laws in ancient Israel that you need to understand. For one, there was the **Law of the Kinsman Redeemer**. Number two, there was the **Law of the Levirate Marriage**... Now, God would give to a tribe and a family land and He wanted that land to stay in the family. Sometimes the owner of the land would mortgage his land...he'd go bankrupt and he'd sell his land to somebody else. But God had a plan that if a man did this that somebody else who was a near relative could come and redeem that land and buy it back. So, obvious the name "kinsman redeemer". There was also a law in the land called the "levirate marriage." If a man married a woman and they didn't have any children and the man died, then in order to keep his name alive a brother of this man was to come and take this man's wife, who is now a widow...and marry her and endeavor to have children so the dead man could have his name perpetuated. So, the land and the name were very important to the Jews.

So there was the kinsman redeemer who could come and buy back the land and then the kinsman who would come and marry the widow and raise up children. Now, Boaz is a kinsman redeemer and also he's one who is going to marry Ruth. Ruth is a widow. Her husband had died and her estate has been sold and so that's the background for this passage of Scripture and if you don't understand that, it's going to be hard to understand...

Now, there were three things that were necessary in order for a man to be able to buy back the estate and to take the widow that came with the estate. Number one, he had to have the **legal qualifications**...that is, he had to be a near kinsman. Number two, he had to have the money to do it...he had to be **wealthy** enough to buy the land. Number three, he had to be **willing** to do it, because he wasn't forced to do it. So, he had to be a near kinsman. He had to be wealthy enough to do it and he had to be willing enough to do it.

Now, that's a picture of our redeeming Lord. I want you to see that very clearly. Let me just go back before we get into this a little deeper and show you how Jesus is a picture of that. If you want to find these laws they're found in **Leviticus 25** and **Deuteronomy 25**.

I want you to see how Boaz was legally worthy. **Verse 6** says, "...the kinsman said, 'I cannot redeem it for myself lest I mar mine own inheritance. Redeem thou my right to thyself for I cannot redeem it.'" Now, what does that mean? Well, Boaz says to Ruth, "I'd be happy to buy this land back and I'd be happy to marry you, but I'm not the first in line. There's somebody else who's first in line. I am a near kinsman, but there is somebody that is nearer to you than I, and he has to have first chance. And if he doesn't do it, then I will do it."

So, they went out to the gate of the city and Boaz waited until he saw this man who was the nearer kinsman than even Boaz and he said, "Hey you, come over here...I want to talk to you." And he explained to him about Ruth and Naomi and the land and all of that. He said, "Do you want to buy this property? Do you want to redeem this property? You can do it. You have the right. You're standing in line. You're a near kinsman. You're a kinsman redeemer." He says, "Alright, I'll buy it." But then Boaz said, "Wait a minute...along with the land comes a woman, Ruth. You're going to have to marry Ruth if you buy this land...you're going to get Ruth along with the land." And the man said, "Oh no, I'm sorry, I cannot redeem it, lest I mar mine own inheritance."

Now, who is this nearer kinsman? If Boaz pictures the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the nearer kinsman who cannot redeem? He's Adam! See, everybody's either in Adam or they're in Christ.

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You see...who is my real, real close relative? Adam. We're all related to Adam, are we not? And "in Adam, all die." He is the near relative that we all have.

I was preaching in a revival one time and a woman said to me, "You're a Rogers, aren't you?" I said, "Yes ma'm." She said, "Well, I've been doing some work on our genealogy because I'm a Rogers, and you will be happy to know that the Rogerses came over on the Mayflower." I said, "Well, that's wonderful. But I've traced it back further than that." Boy, did she get excited. And I said, "I traced it all the way back and you need to know that we came from a crooked farmer and a drunken sailor...the farmer was Adam and the sailor was Noah. That's how far back we go." And that let some of the air out of her just a little bit.

But folks, I want to tell that our near kinsman is Adam! "And in Adam all die." Remember what Boaz said... He sat at the gate and he said, "Let's get ten witnesses...one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten." Who are the ten witnesses that say our Adamic nature cannot save us? The Ten Commandments! Count them up! And by the way, all of us are guilty of breaking all of them. You say, "Well, I've never committed adultery. I've never killed anybody." Oh listen, Friend, the Law hangs together. The Bible says that if we break the law in one point, we're guilty of breaking them all. God demands perfection! You say, "Well, I've only broken two or three of them." Let's say you've only broken one of them. Let's say you're hanging over a fire by a chain of ten links. Nine of those links are forged steel and one of them is crepe paper. How safe would you be? You see, Friend, God demands perfection. There are ten witnesses that we cannot redeem ourselves and this nearer kinsman...notice how full of "self" he is, **Verse 6**... "I, I, I, me, my, mine inheritance." NO! He cannot do it...he's so full of self and selfishness.

But, there is One therefore...the Lord Jesus Christ. So, Jesus became a human being that He might become our near kinsman. You see, that's the reason for the incarnation. Why did Jesus step out of the glory? Why did He come down to that dark Judean night to be born through the portals of a virgin's womb? Why did the great eternal God become a man? Why the incarnation? Why the virgin birth? So, that He could be our nearer kinsman.

Let me give you a verse...**Hebrews 2:14**... "For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same." Because you and I are flesh and blood, Jesus became flesh and blood that He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil. The Bible now calls the Lord Jesus Christ our "brother." You see, that's why He became man...that He might be our near kinsman.

So I want to say...put this down if you make notes and like an outline...

a) Jesus is legally worthy...

He could not redeem us as God, though He is God. He had to redeem us as man. He had to be our near kinsman. Our estate was lost by man...the nearer kinsman...It is redeemed by man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me just share with you from the **Book of Revelation**. The Apostle John was on the Isle of Patmos, and he has a vision of things to come. Here's the vision... **Revelation 5**: "And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne a book written within and on the back side..." Now, the One sitting on the throne, of course, is Almighty God. And John sees the Father has a book, a scroll, written on the front and on the back... "sealed with seven seals. But I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?'" Now, this book, Friend, is the title deed to planet earth. This book is the official document that determines the outcome of all history, and John sees this book and it's sealed and he says, "Who is able to open this book?" "...and no man in heaven or on earth, neither under the earth was able to open the book, neither to look thereon and I wept much because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, 'Weep not. Behold the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of

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David, hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof,' and I beheld and lo in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts and in the midst of the elders stood the Lamb as it had been slain." The word for "Lamb" here is "little lamb"... Here's a Lamb that has been killed, but this Lamb has seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth and He came and took the book out of the right hand Him that sat on the throne and when He had taken the book the four beasts and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odors and incense, which are the prayers of the saints, and they sung a new song saying, 'Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people.'"

Now, John sees this book and there's nobody who is able to open the book. No one in politics, no one in government, no one in religion, no one in science, no one in philosophy, no one in economics, no one can open the book! You know, the question is not who is willing, but who is worthy!! John sees that no one is worthy until he sees the Lamb and the angel says, "Don't you cry, John, the Lamb is able to open the book."

Now, I want you folks to listen to me very carefully. Our world is in a mess...you know that, don't you? And you know how Satan is described number one, as a dragon. You know how the coming antichrist is described? As a beast. Now here's the great and ferocious dragon and here is the beast with his militant millions and you know who the Lord sets against the dragon and the beast? A little Lamb. And Friend, I want to tell that that Lamb has redeemed us with His blood. He alone is worthy. Now, put it down! Worthy is the Lamb. Jesus is legally worthy!

But now only is Jesus legally worthy,
b) **Jesus is lavishly wealthy!**

Now, in order to buy back Ruth, Boaz had to have money. **Chapter 2:1**, Boaz is not just called a wealthy man, he's a mighty man of wealth. Remember the kinsman redeemer had to be a near kinsman and he had to have sufficiency to buy the estate back. Now, Jesus is lavishly wealthy. You see, Jesus paid a greater price for us than Boaz paid for Ruth. Put this in your margin... **1 Peter 1:18-19**... "For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold (underscore the word redeemed) but with the precious blood of Christ as a Lamb without blemish and without spot." Then put down **Ephesians 1:7**, "we're redeemed through His blood." And then, remember **Revelation 5:9** that we already read... "Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." There's no redemption without a price. Jesus paid that price. Put down **1 Peter 3:18**... "For Christ has also once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."

And I will study and try to imagine and to take from Scripture all the stories, at least all of the things, the events that surround dark Gethsemane and bloody Calvary and sometimes I will be so moved when I study that I will weep. And I want to make it so real to the congregation and so I said, "God, help me to tell people the price that was paid...Lord illumine my mind...Father, anoint my tongue, energize my thoughts...help me Lord, to tell a jaded congregation the price that was paid..." and I want to tell you something, Folks, I've been preaching long enough to know that people's eyes glaze over...they become numb...they don't seem to pay much attention.

Let me tell you a story... There was a fisherman who went out fishing and he took his dog with him. This fisherman was a great fisherman and catching a fish was very important to him and the dog somehow got sight of some movement on the shore, maybe some waterfowl or something and the dog began to bark while the fisherman was trying to be very quiet so he could catch fish. It irritated the fisherman and he spoke to the dog and the dog kept barking. Again, he hit the dog and the dog kept barking...

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This fisherman, in a fit of rage, took out a hatchet he had in the boat, and took one of that dog's paws and put it on the gunnel of that boat and with that hatchet cut off that paw and threw it in the water. Then, he took another paw of that yelping dog and took his hatchet and cut off that paw and threw it in the water. Then he cut both paws of the hind legs from that dog and with blood pouring out and with nothing to swim with, he threw that dog in the water to drown.

I've been watching your face now as I've told that story, some of you have been going like that...how terrible... Friend, I've seen people get more upset over a dog having his paws chopped off than the Son of God hanging upon a Cross in agony and blood.

You see, what's wrong with us? What is wrong with us is that we have heard the story of Calvary so much that we fail to understand the price that was paid for us! Jesus, with the silver of His tears and the gold of His blood redeemed us...He redeemed you. Say to yourself... "He redeemed me! He died for me!" Jesus was legally worthy! Jesus was lavishly wealthy...because He redeemed us with His blood...

Lastly,

c) **Jesus is lovingly willing...**

You see, Boaz didn't have to buy Ruth. Nor did the Lord Jesus have to buy us. There's nothing that says that He had to redeem us. I've told you many times, He does not love us because we're valuable...we're valuable because He loves us. Friend, He just loves us by His sheer grace, just as Boaz loved Ruth before Ruth ever knew his name. And we love Him because He first loved us...that's the great love that He has for us...and so, I want you to see that first of all Boaz is a picture of our redeeming Lord...have you got it?

Legally worthy...lavishly wealthy...and lovingly willing.

Alright now, here's a second thing I want us to see. Not only do we have a picture of our redeeming Lord, but we also have a picture of:

2) **Our Renewed Life**

Now, I want you to think about who Ruth was, and what Ruth was like. Ruth had three major problems. I'd like very much if you'd turn in your Bible to **Ephesians 2:12-13**. If you're an unsaved person, you have the same problems that Ruth had... Now, Paul is describing what we were before we met the Lord Jesus Christ. He said:

"At that time ye were without Christ."

Now, everybody here in this room is either with Christ or without Christ. Here's the description of those without Christ...

"...being aliens from the common wealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world, but now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ..."

Now, Friend, that's the story of Ruth. Ruth had three problems: Her past, her present and her future. Every unsaved man and woman, boy or girl is like Ruth...and you've got three problems...your past...what was her past? She was born a Moabite! She was an alien. Look if you will again in this passage in **Ephesians 2:12**... "being aliens from the common wealth of Israel..." She was a Moabite. She was under a curse. She lived under a curse. **Deuteronomy 23:3**... "An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter the congregation of the Lord..." The Moabites were descendants of Lot, who had a child through an incestuous relationship with his daughter. They were a thorn in the side of Israel. And the curse was upon them and according to the Law

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the Law could not admit Ruth. By the Law, she was shut out! Spiritually, she was born on the wrong side of the tracks!! And so were everyone of us! "In Adam all die."

Now, she was an **alien**...and that's her **past**. Now, her **present**...Look in **verse 12**... "strangers from the covenant of promise..." She did not enjoy the things of God. She was robbed the things of God. She was a stranger to these things. The joys of life in Christ were not hers...hers was a life marred by tragedy and sorrow and her dreams were turned to dust and her hopes had melted away. That's her present, and if you're without Christ, that's your present...that's where you are today!

And then **Ephesians 2:12** goes on to say "...having no hope..." That was her future! Hopeless! Her **past: cursed!** Her **present: crushed!** Her **future: condemned!** God help people understand where they are with Christ! That's where you are...sitting in church won't change that...you need Jesus!

Ruth is a picture of all of us. She had three major problems. You could sum them in these three words...**sin, sorrow and death**. That's the enemy of all of us.

Now, wait a minute. I want you to see what happens now. Remember...put this verse down...**Ephesians 2:19**... "Now, therefore, you're no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and with the household of God." Why? Because Boaz had redeemed her. Do you know what the word "redeemed" means? It means "to purchase...to buy back." He had redeemed her. I did a word study on the word "redeemed" this week. It also means "to buy or buy out of the market place." That is "to take off the slave block." When our Lord redeemed us, not only did He buy us, but He took us out of the market place. That is, we're no longer for sale...that speaks of our eternal security. And then, to "redeem" means "to set free." And that's what happened to Ruth...that's what happened to Adrian...I have been bought...I've been taken off the market place...and I have been set free in the Lord Jesus Christ!! That's redemption! That's the wonderful doctrine of redemption that we read over and over and over again.

Now, let me show you something very interesting. This will help make it clear. Look if you will beginning in **verse 7** and read through **verse 10**. Remember that they are there at the gate of the city and this near kinsman says, "I can't buy her back. I don't want to mar my own inheritance." Now, notice in **verse 7**... "Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing for to confirm all things...a man plucked off his shoe and gave it to his neighbor and this was a testimony in Israel. Therefore the kinsman said to Boaz, 'Buy it for thee so he drew off his shoe.'" Here's the way it worked...they would say, "Look, do you want to buy Ruth" and he says, "No, I can't buy Ruth. You buy Ruth for me." And then he took off his shoe and said, "She's yours." That's the way he confirmed it! He just took off his shoe and handed it to the other guy. That's a strange custom!

But you know what? There's so much richness in that! The Bible is a rich and wonderful book. I believe this is where we get the statement, "Boy, I'd hate to be in his shoes" or "I'd love to be in his shoes" or "If I were in your shoes, here's what I'd do". It talks of one person taking the place of another person. Listen, that's what Jesus did when He saved us...He stands in our shoes...He takes the sin, the hell, the degradation...all that we have coming...He takes the price that we cannot pay and Jesus says, "I will stand in your shoes" as Boaz stood in the shoes of that near kinsman...the old flesh, the Adamic nature. He said, "I'll do for you what you cannot do for yourself...I'll stand in your shoes."

They asked an old man one time, who had been saved...he wasn't Biblically literate. He hadn't been to the Bible Fellowship Classes at Bellevue...and he wasn't Biblically literate, but he was saved...good and saved. He didn't know anything about the Book of Ruth, but somebody said to him, "Okay, what's it like to be saved?" He said, "Well, I don't know if I can explain it to

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you where you can understand it, but to me it's like I'm standing in Jesus' shoes and He's standing in mine." Friend, a theologian couldn't have said it better than that. That's what it is! "Him who knew no sin God hath made to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Here was this woman...her past, she's an alien...her present, she's outside the common wealth of Israel, outside the promises of God...her future...no hope! Boaz says, "I'll take her place. I will redeem her."

Now, here's a third thing that I want you to see. We've seen our redeeming Lord...we've see our renewed life. Now, I want you to see

3) **Our Restored Legacy**

And very quickly some things that Ruth got back and I just have time to run through these real fast.

Ruth got five gifts...beginning at **verse 10**. First of all, look at the **family** she received... "Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Naomi's son, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren..."

Now, Ruth comes into a family and Friend, when you get saved, you come into the family of God... "I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God..." She received as a legacy a family.

She also received a **fortune**. **Verse 10**...Boaz, remember is a mighty man of wealth, marries Ruth. No longer is Ruth just gleaning in the fields, picking up handfuls of grain...Folks, listen, when she married Boaz she owns the shebang! I mean, she owns it all! She is married to him and she shares his wealth. Did you know that the Bible says we're heirs of God and joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ! Do you know what joint-heirs means? It means "share and share alike." I mean everything that belongs to Jesus belongs to us! Have you ever thought about that? The Bible says "the meek shall inherit the earth."

She received a **family**. She received a **fortune**. Now, notice...and by the way, don't you ever be envious of the prosperity of the wicked...NEVER! Friend, you're a plutocrat! You're married to the Lord Jesus. And then, she received fame! Look in **verse 11** of this same chapter. The Bible says, "...and be famous in Bethlehem." The name of Ruth today is spoken of with reverence. One of the most beautiful names in the world...and we're talking about her now...thousands of years later...she is famous!! Without Jesus, you're going to die! Your body is going to rot in the grave and your soul will burn in hell! But if you know Jesus, you'll shine as the brightness of the stars forever and ever and ever! If you know Jesus, Folks, you have fame...you're a royal blueblood...you're a prince...you're a princess...you're married into the family of God!!

She also received fruitfulness. A **family**. A **fortune**. A **fame**. A **fruitfulness**. Look if you will in **verses 11 and 12** of this same chapter here... "And all the people that were at the gate and the elders said, 'we are witnesses, the Lord make the woman come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah which did build the house of Israel and do thou worthily in Ephrathah.'" The word "Ephrathah" means "fruitful." She became fruitful. When you go, what difference will it make? Jesus said, "You've not chosen Me, I've chosen you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit." She became fruitful.

I wish I had more time, but last of all, she received a **future**. Look if you will in **verse 16**, "...she had a little baby, and Naomi took this little child and laid it in her bosom and became a

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nurse unto it...and the women, her neighbors, gave it a name saying, 'there's a son born to Naomi and they called his name Obed and he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.'

David, of course you know, is the ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ! What a future this woman had. She's up in heaven right now, serving the Lord...glorifying in the Lord. I wish I more time...but time is gone.

But think...listen...if people knew what they had in the Lord Jesus Christ, and had any sense, Folks, you couldn't keep them away with a machine gun. You could not do it! You see, listen...here you are...your past, you're an alien...your present, you're a stranger to the covenants of promise...your future, you're without hope! But there is a Boaz...a Kinsman Redeemer. He, Friend, is legally worthy. He is lavishly wealthy. He is lovingly willing. And He says, "Hey, I want to marry you...I want to give you a family...I want to give you a fortune...I want to give fruitfulness...I want to give you fame...I want to give you a future. I want to marry you." And that's what Jesus is saying to you today. "I gave My life to redeem you...I want you to be My bride." That's what the church is...the bride of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, back in **verse 11**, when they got married, the Bible says all those witnesses were standing around. Can you imagine Ruth saying, "Well, you know, Boaz, I really would like to be married to you, Boaz, but I don't want anybody to know it. Could we just do this in secret?" No, she didn't feel that way. She was happy that everybody knew that she loved Boaz.

That's why we have a public invitation. That's why we ask people to come forward. I stand here and we have weddings and coming down this aisle...dressed in white is the bride...and there's the bridegroom! She's not hoping that no one sees her! She's hoping that everybody sees her! Here she comes to him...not ashamed of him. Jesus Christ said, "If you're ashamed of Me and My Word before this sinful and adulterous generation, I'll be ashamed of you when I come in the glory of the Father with the holy angels." How can you be ashamed of the One who died in agony and blood on that cruel Cross for you? You can't do it! He's your Kinsman Redeemer! Legally worthy! Lavishly wealthy! And lovingly willing! He said, "I do" to you. It's time you said, "I do" to Him!

Amen!