

Laying Down Your Life for Christ

Scripture

“Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, ‘My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, [is he] not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your [best] garment and go down to the threshing floor; [but] do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.’ And she said to her, ‘All that you say to me I will do.’ So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down. Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. And he said, ‘Who [are] you?’ So she answered, ‘I [am] Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative.’ Then he said, ‘Blessed [are] you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you [are] a virtuous woman. Now it is true that I [am] a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be [that] if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you—good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, [as] the LORD lives! Lie down until morning’” (Ruth 3:1-13 NKJV).

Commentary

The commentators are at a difference concerning the respectability of Naomi’s instructions to Ruth. Naomi advising Ruth to go and uncover a man’s feet there to lie until morning has implications in our society that throw this into the suspicious shadows of possible immorality.

However, Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown write: Singular as these directions may appear to us, there was no impropriety in them, according to the simplicity of rural manners in Bethlehem. In ordinary circumstances these would have seemed indecorous to the world; but in the case of Ruth, it was a method, doubtless conformable to prevailing usage, of reminding Boaz of the duty which devolved on him as the kinsman of her deceased husband. Boaz probably slept upon a mat or skin; Ruth lay crosswise at his feet—a position in which Eastern servants frequently sleep in the same chamber or tent with their master; and if they want a covering, custom allows them that benefit from part of the covering on their master’s bed. Resting, as the Orientals do at night, in the same clothes they wear during the day, there was no indelicacy in a stranger, or even a woman, putting the extremity of this cover over her.

It would seem appropriate to view these actions as normal decorum for the time because in keeping with Naomi’s objective to have Boaz redeem Ruth, doing something so promiscuous to a man with Boaz’s religious piety would certainly have risked his disapproval, something she would not dare do at this time. Still, this is not proof positive because God has used the poor decisions of many to carry out His providence.

However, it is clear that Ruth was laying down her life at this point. She sought redemption from Boaz. She was desperate, a condition in which all without Christ find themselves, and willing to have Boaz redeem her. She was convinced of his good character and his favor towards her.

This is the way of redemption. A person must understand his/her need, and believe in the goodness of God. Without the righteousness of Christ imputed to a person, that person must die for righteousness

sake. No one is good not even one, therefore people must have a redeemer who is able to paid their debt. Christ is such a Savior!

If you have never come to the place of humility, and called upon the name of the Lord, then do so today. No one is guaranteed to live another day. Therefore, “while it is said: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion’” (Hebrews 3:15 NKJV). Lay down your life for Christ. Live for Him and not yourself. Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Him.

Prayer

Father, there are many who have never trusted in your redemption. They hope to merit salvation on their own. Lord you have made it clear, the just shall live by faith. There are no righteous people in this world. You have declared your children righteous because of their faith in Christ. May you grant faith to our friends, relatives, and all who will humble themselves by your grace that you may be glorified? To the praise of your glory we pray, amen.