

# Ruth 4:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And 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.

## Analysis

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Refusal: '**And 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**'. The kinsman refuses when he understands full obligation. His concern about marrying 'mine own inheritance' means producing heir for Mahlon would complicate his estate—children from Ruth would compete with children from his existing wife for inheritance, creating family strife and diluting his children's portions. His calculation was purely financial and self-protective, lacking covenant loyalty. He transfers rights to Boaz, unwittingly facilitating God's redemptive plan. His namelessness in Scripture contrasts with Boaz's honored remembrance—selfishness earns forgetting, covenant loyalty earns memorial.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Israelite inheritance practices divided father's estate among sons. Taking another wife (Ruth) and producing sons who would inherit Elimelech's portion without adding permanent estate threatened existing children's inheritance shares. The kinsman's refusal showed he valued personal wealth protection over covenant responsibility to preserve brother's name and care for his widow. His choice was legally permissible (Deuteronomy 25:7-10 provided opt-out mechanism) but morally questionable—avoiding sacrifice when covenant loyalty required it. God's providence worked through this refusal, positioning Boaz for redemption and Ruth for messianic lineage.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. What does the unnamed kinsman's refusal teach about how self-protection can blind us to kingdom opportunities?
2. How does this illustrate that God's purposes often advance through others' unfaithfulness or refusals?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיֹּאמֶר	לְגַאֲלִי:	ל א	ל אֹכֵל	לְגַאֲלִי:	לְגַאֲלִי:	
<b>said</b>	<b>And the kinsman</b>	H3808	<b>I cannot</b>	<b>And the kinsman</b>	<b>And the kinsman</b>	
H559	H1350		H3201	H1350	H1350	
פֶּן	אֲשַׁח יֵת	אֶת	נַחֲלָתִי י	לְגַאֲלִי:	לְב	
H6435	<b>it for myself lest I mar</b>	H853	<b>mine own inheritance</b>	<b>And the kinsman</b>	H0	
	H7843		H5159	H1350		
אֶתָּה	אֶת	גַּאֲלָתִי י	כִּי	ל א	ל אֹכֵל	לְגַאֲלִי:
H859	H853	<b>thou my right</b>	H3588	H3808	<b>I cannot</b>	<b>And the kinsman</b>
		H1353			H3201	H1350

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