

“THE SCARLET THREAD . . . *A Love Story*”

by Averine Pennington, 7/08/20

Last night I experienced something very unique. I received a ‘hug from Jesus!’ You may ask how that is possible so I will oblige with an answer. I was viewing a very encouraging YT video posted by our brother Mark Murchison. All of a sudden, he leans forward into the camera and explains that Jesus has instructed him to give a hug to His bride. I don’t know if anyone else has watched that video, but my friends, it was awesome! Thank you, Mark, for your obedience. I know you may have felt foolish, but our Lord knew what He was doing. He uses what may seem foolish in this world to confound the wise. During the hug, brother Mark began to pray for the Bride. It was so heartfelt, I began to weep. It was as if all the pent-up emotion after weeks and weeks of refining was released from my weary spirit. That hug was just what you would expect from our gentle Savior. Mark was just the physical representation, but I truly felt what it was like for my heart to be embraced by the one who loves me most!

If you have read any of my other posts, you know that the Lord seems to talk with me when I am trying to talk to Him. Sometimes I just will not shut up long enough for Him to speak. The Holy Spirit is still working hard at teaching me to ‘Be Still and Know That He Is God.’ So, during my prayer time this morning, I was thinking about how much I love my Lord and how much I want everything and anything I do to please Him. **I have laid myself at His feet.** No sooner had that thought crossed my mind than I was reminded of the wonderful love story told in the book of Ruth. It is a very short book and I would recommend that everyone take the time to read it, especially if you like romance. Yes, the Bible is full of romance. The book is only four chapters long but speaks volumes for those who see how it fits into God’s tapestry, masterfully woven with scarlet thread.

I will just share a few select scriptures from Ruth which are relevant to the point I wish to make:

Chapter 3: 1) Then Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? 2) And now is not Boaz of our kindred with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to night in the threshingfloor. 3) Wash thy self therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. 4) And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do. 5) And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do. 6) And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother in law bade her. 7) And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down. 8) **And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.** 9) And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman. 10) And he said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. 11) And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.

If you read the remainder of Chapter 3, Boaz explains to Ruth that there is another kinsman nearer than he is, but if that kinsman will not do his part, then Boaz promises to be the kinsman redeemer.

Chapter 4 describes what happens next. According to the Jewish custom of the day, Boaz goes to the gate of the city and calling together witnesses he brings the matter before the other kinsman. That kinsman declines to do his part opening the way for Boaz. I found it almost funny that the transaction was sealed by the two men swapping shoes. (Somehow shoes always play a part in my dreams and writings. Can't seem to get away from it!)

Now, **let us follow the SCARLET THREAD** as it weaves throughout the tapestry of history:

Chapter 4: 11) And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and **be famous in Bethlehem**. . . . 13) So Boaz took Ruth and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son. . . . 17b) . . . and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Do we know of anyone that fulfills this prophecy to be famous in Bethlehem? Lets turn to the book of Luke in the New Testament:

Luke 2: 4) And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) 5) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. 6) And so it was that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 7) And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. . . . 11) For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. . . . 21) And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

As we **still follow the scarlet thread**, some may want a more detailed genealogy of Jesus. That can be found in the book of Matthew:

Matthew 1: 1) The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 2) Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob: and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren: . . . (Note here that Jesus is from the tribe of Judah. Also see Matthew 1:16-18 for more into of Jesus' genealogy.)

Then in verse 5 you find how Ruth and Boaz fit into God's intricate design of the ancestry of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Doesn't that make their love story all the more special? **What if Ruth had never laid herself at the feet of Boaz? What if Boaz had not taken his shoe off for Ruth?** Those two individuals would not have been woven into the story of Jesus our Lord. Oh, I have no doubt that God would have found another way, but Ruth and Boaz would not have been a part of it.

I am prone to chase rabbits when I write, so I hope you will allow a short deviation from my main story. I would like to share an incident that happened to me personally back in the mid-90s. At the time, I was on staff at a very large church in Virginia Beach and had helped to coordinate a huge gathering of all the area churches to meet together at an outdoor amphitheater on Easter Sunday. I'm talking thousands in attendance! Because the offering was expected to be huge, we had armed law enforcement on hand as a precaution. I was positioned during the sermon on the back side of the stage standing next to the

Deputy Sheriff that was there to guard the offering once it was received. He was standing maybe two feet from me. We were just steps from the door of the green room that was used for all the special singers, the evangelist, and other pastors and dignitaries that were participating in this huge event. The green room is where they got fitted for their microphones and perhaps had some sort of refreshment prior to the beginning of the service. One of my associates was stationed inside the green room to take care of those needs. All these people were now on stage seated behind the evangelist. The invitation had just been given. All who wished to accept Christ as their Savior were urged to make their way forward. If you've ever seen a Billy Graham crusade, it was something like that. I don't ever recall sharing the entirety of this incident with anyone other than my family, but I would like to share it with you now. It was FREEZING cold that day and since it was an outdoor stage, I was dressed in my heaviest coat and bundled up pretty cozy. All of a sudden, I felt this warm feeling beginning in my abdomen, like a stream or something being released. At first it frightened me. You may laugh, but it was such an extreme feeling, the thought crossed my mind that perhaps my appendix had burst, but I had no pain! My whole torso began to feel hot (like a fire that did not burn . . . hard to explain . . . only in retrospect did I realize it was the fire of the Holy Spirit)! **Then I heard the audible voice of God!** I tremble even now as it is so fresh in my memory. The voice told me to speak to the Sheriff's Deputy about accepting Christ. I am ashamed to admit to every one of you that I hesitated . . . *just a couple of seconds* . . . I think I was still in shock as I had never had such an experience in my life. Those two seconds of hesitation was like saying NO TO GOD! The moment passed, the Deputy turned and entered the green room, and my associate was blessed to lead him to Christ. When God chooses the moment, that's it! He means it when he says, "TODAY IS THE DAY OF SALVATION!" That was that man's ordained moment to receive Christ! Who knows, it may have been his last chance. God used another person to do what He had just asked me to do. I failed my Lord! I am so glad to know that the Deputy did accept Christ. How would I live with myself today if I had to wonder if someone went to hell because of my hesitation . . . let's call it what it was . . . disobedience!

God's purposes will be accomplished with or without us! But don't we want to be a part of His plan? I made a vow to God that very day. I will never hesitate or SAY NO to God again! I am so thankful that Mark Murchison did not hesitate to give the bride a 'hug from Jesus.' God has asked many things of me in the last year that have been a radical change for me. My family sometimes struggles with the new me, but I must follow Jesus, whatever the cost. I am so glad that my God is a God of second chances!

Let me return to The Love Story. No, I'm not speaking of Ruth and Boaz now. I am speaking of Christ and His bride. His love for us is so immeasurable. I'm not sure our minds can even comprehend such love! He has waited a very long time for us and very soon He will be delivering our hugs IN PERSON! If **we place ourselves at His feet, He has promised to be our Kinsman Redeemer.** Oh, what a day that will be when My Jesus I shall see, when I look upon His face, the One who saved me by His grace. When He takes me by the hand and leads me to the Promised Land, what a day, a glorious day that will be!

Matthew 25: 6) And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.

I am a part of This Love Story . . . the tapestry lovingly woven with scarlet thread. I hope you are too!

Much love,

Averine