

# And They Lived Happily Ever After

When Fairytales Come True – Part X

Ruth 4:13-22

## Introduction

At the beginning of nearly every fairytale I read to my little girls as they grew up were the words, “Once upon a time”. These words alone evoke memories of damsels in distress and courageous princes coming to their rescue.

We have actually seen a fairytale come true, in a very real way. In the days of the judges and throughout the history of Israel, not only would the people be given the inside scoop on a portion of the genealogy of the Messiah, they would be given a model of character, virtue, purity, and obedience to God.

“Once upon a time” really did happen. And a damsel in distress was really and truly rescued by a prince of a man.

Even though we are dealing with imperfect people who are sinners and in need of God’s grace throughout life, it is obvious that Boaz and Ruth followed after God before they married and after they married. They not only remained together, but raised a godly son who continued on the heritage of following after God. This went all the way down the line until we come to the most famous relative in the family line of Boaz – their great grandson, David, the poet-king of Israel.

Let us watch as this wonderful true-to-life fairytale finishes telling its God-inspired account of a prince named Boaz and a damsel in distress named Ruth.

## A Wedding Ceremony Consummated

Notice verse 13 of Ruth chapter 4.

*So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went in to her. And the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.*

Now we immediately notice how quickly this dramatic tale is wrapping up. In twenty-nine words, or two sentences, we have a wedding, a honeymoon, a home being established, conception, nine months of expectancy, and the birth of a son.

If we slow this down and climb back into the scene, we know from history that the wedding of a couple like Boaz and Ruth would be an elaborate event and the entire village would show up. The bride and groom would be dressed as much like a king or queen as they could. If the groom was rich, as Boaz was, he would wear a headpiece or crown made of gold. It was also the custom of the groom to have his garments scented with two special fragrances – frankincense and myrrh.

This is just one more picture, perhaps, of the Messiah, the legal descendant of Boaz, and our Kinsman Redeemer, who as a little boy was presented with gifts befitting a man who was ready to redeem His bride!

Boaz and Ruth’s marriage was consummated and in just a few brief words later, we are told she gives birth to a son.

Look ahead to verse 17, where we are told,

*The neighbor women gave [this boy] a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi!” So they named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.*

It was unusual for the women in the village to name the child. They may have come up with the name in their excitement and Ruth and Boaz agreed with it.

Perhaps you have had family members or friends give you a name that you have agreed to use for your own children. Perhaps family and friends have suggested names that you would *never* use!

It is interesting that Ruth and Boaz, for the most part, disappear from the story and the focus of the divine author returns to Naomi.<sup>i</sup>

## A Widowed Grandmother Invigorated

Look at verses 14-15.

*Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed is the Lord who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel.*

***“May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who [by the way] loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.”***

These women are saying, basically, “Naomi, because of Ruth, you are surrounded by care, protection, and love. And here’s another close relative – a grandson – who will restore your life and sustain you in your old age.”

In these closing verses, we not only have a wedding ceremony consummated, but we also have a widowed grandmother invigorated.

Can you imagine this incredible reversal? Do you remember how this started? If this is a fairytale, it opened more like a nightmare.

Naomi is taken by her husband with their two sons to Moab. It was an act of disobedience to the God of Israel. Her husband died and then, both of her grown sons, one after the other, died. She finds herself traveling back to Bethlehem with little hope of even surviving. Even more, there is no heir to her husband’s estate. All that they owned in Bethlehem will belong to the highest bidder. Naomi will have nothing except whatever she and Ruth can scrape together to make a living.

You may remember that Naomi even changed her name to “bitterness” and assumed that God had walked away from her.

Now look at her!

Notice verse 16.

***Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her lap, and became his nurse.***

“Nurse” could be rendered “guardian or caregiver”.

Suddenly, in the space of a chapter, Naomi is being cared for by Boaz, a leading statesman and landowner in Bethlehem and a relative of her deceased husband; she and Ruth are now being taken care of royally; and Ruth, who did not or maybe could not have children during her earlier marriage to Naomi’s son, is suddenly pregnant and now delivers, of all things, a male heir to Naomi’s husband’s estate.

No wonder the women are all saying to her, “This little boy is further proof that your life has been restored. This little grandson is going to put a bounce back in your step; he is going to wind the clock back and reinvigorate your mind and heart.”

You had better believe this is one invigorated grandmother! She is so excited about this grandson

that, in fact, she dedicates herself to the task of helping Ruth and Boaz raise him in a godly fashion. Do not hold her back.

Warren Wiersbe, commenting on Naomi’s joy in this text, and writing as a proud grandparent himself, wrote, “Grandchildren are better than the Fountain of Youth, for we get young again when the grandchildren come to visit.”<sup>ii</sup>

I am not a grandparent yet, but I am looking forward to the opportunity to grow young again. And I am also looking forward to enjoying grandkids without being responsible for their actions!

Someone wrote that children and their grandparents are natural allies.<sup>iii</sup>

Is this not the truth?!

Have you ever been to a Cracker Barrel restaurant and seen in their store one of the “Grandmother Paddles” for spanking the grandchildren? It is a long stick, and at its end, there is a soft cushion.

This is about right.

Parents are struggling through the daily chores of civilizing their little barbarians and Grandma comes along and says, “Look at my little angels.” The parents have a completely different picture in mind!

One guy asked a mother, “If you had it to do all over, would you have children again?”

She replied, “Yes, but not the same ones.”

Grandparents cannot understand this – their grandchildren are just about perfect little people.

Grandparents let grandkids get away with stuff, right? Frankly, grandparents do not have to replace the torn jeans or the muddy shoes, and they do not seem bothered that the grandkids ate dessert first – or that the only thing they ate was dessert.

This is okay – and listen, grandchildren need a dose of this every so often.

Granted, this is my opinion. There is no verse on this one. Grandparents probably have one, but they have taken it out of context.

This is not in the book of Ruth – other than the fact that Naomi was a grandmother, which is the *only* connection I have! However, let me chase this rabbit until I have made a point or two.

One medical doctor, who authored a number of books on the subject of grandparenting, wrote that the bond between a child and a grandparent is the least complicated form of human love.<sup>iv</sup>

A child who has this is blessed.

My grandmother, on my mother's side, lived in my hometown. She also served in the Servicemen's Center in Norfolk – the flagship center for Missions to Military which my parents began in 1958. Every Friday night we went downtown to the center – a large three-story building with everything from bunk rooms, a library, a kitchen, and a study, to game rooms with ping pong, shuffleboard, table games galore, cookies coming out of our ears, and a soda fountain to which there was free access. As missionary children, my three brothers and I looked forward to Friday night.

Nearly every Friday night, one of us four boys went home with Granny, as we called her, to spend the night at her home. She had been widowed for many years. Spending the night at her little house was icing on the cake. She had a television. We did too, when my brothers and I were older, but we were rarely allowed to watch anything but sports and *Daniel Boone*.

Are any of you old enough to remember the *Daniel Boone* theme song?

*Daniel Boone was a man,*

*Yes, a big man;*

*With an eye like an eagle*

*And as tall as a mountain was he.*

We are way off the book of Ruth!

The once-a-month sleepover at Granny's house meant staying in pajamas and watching Saturday morning cartoons, while eating our own box of cereal that she had already purchased. Our choice! Not Bran Flakes, which was the best value for the money. No, not Bran Flakes, but our choice – always – Captain Crunch. Yes, Captain Crunch was around in 1968; in fact, in 1967 the Crunchberries version came out, and the Peanut Butter Crunch came out in 1969. I know what I am talking about. Captain Crunch has been ruining kid's health for over fifty years!

There is more, if you can believe this sordid tale. Granny would even let my brothers and me have our own cup of coffee. My parents knew it – they wisely figured that once a month would serve as a couple hours away from the chores, homework, and disciplines of normal life.

However, let me tell you that what I remember most is not how much Granny bent a digestive rule or two. And be careful with this, grandparents, there is a fine line between cartoons and Captain Crunch and compromising moral standards and encouraging disobedience to Christ in your allowances and in your own behavior. What I remember is that after

breakfast was over and it was time to get ready to go home, Granny would come over, open her Bible, read a chapter, and then she would preach a little sermon to me about how I needed to follow Christ and give Him my life. Then, she would pray – the longest prayers you can imagine.

Granny prayed around the world – she prayed for lost people she was witnessing to, for new sailors she had led to Christ at the center, for all the missionaries we supported and the work of Missions to Military, for family members, and then, she prayed for me.

Granny did nothing but compliment my parents desire to see me grow up to follow Christ.

My grandmother, that I knew best, who was known to many as Mom Hagen, prayed for me until she eventually lost her mental capacities and finally went home.

When I see this little phrase about Obed being taken into the care of Naomi, it means something to me – and maybe to you.

A grandparent has the ability to impact their grandchildren in so many ways. Let me suggest several quickly.

- A grandparent can offer an emotional and, perhaps, physical safety net when parents fail or falter.
- A grandparent can teach their grandchildren the gospel and the plan of salvation – Timothy learned just that from his mother and his grandmother (II Timothy 1:5).
- A grandparent can be a unique witness of the way God has been faithful to their family over the years. This is God's desire as revealed in a tangible way in Joshua 4 with memorial stones placed on the banks of the Jordan for the lesson to be taught to the generations to come of His miraculous power and providence.
- A grandparent can be a wise counselor with years of experience and biblical knowledge combined.
- A grandparent can come across more easily at times as a non-judgmental counselor to their grandchildren as they share difficult questions and experiences.
- A grandparent can be a place of refuge and comfort for grandchildren who feel that beyond Mom and Dad, there is no one they can confide in with trust and confidence.

- A grandparent understands uniquely the passing of life and the significance of milestones in a child's life. They do not have to worry with the details so much and they can more freely cheer their grandchildren along.

We all need to pay attention to this subject of grandparenting and its growing potential and influence. I have learned in my research that half of the adult population over the age of 45 is a grandparent. In fact, 83% of people aged 60 and older are grandparents. There are now more than 75 million grandparents in America.

In fact, by the year 2000, at least four million children were living in their grandparent's home.<sup>v</sup>

Of all the books on parenting that have hit the Christian bookstores, where is the godly advice on grandparenting?

This text in Ruth is a great text and context for just that.

Parents and grandparents play different, but essential roles.

Naomi could offer something that Ruth could not. As a new convert, Ruth knew nothing of Jewish customs and traditions in the home. She had so much to learn from the Law of Moses and the history of God's people, she would have barely had time to learn it all before Obed began asking questions.

What a wonderful asset Naomi provided Boaz and Ruth in raising their son – and her grandson – to follow after God.

So in these closing verses, we have a wedding ceremony consummated, a widowed grandmother invigorated, and finally, a wonderful Kinsman Redeemer anticipated.

## **A Wonderful Kinsman Redeemer Anticipated**

The book of Ruth ends as quickly as it began. We have the genealogical record of descendants in verse 18 and following.

*There is Perez, the father of Hezron,  
and Hezron is the father of Ram, and  
Ram is the father of Amminadab,  
and Amminadab is the father of Nahshon,  
and Nahshon is the father of Salmon,  
and Salmon is the father of Boaz, and  
Boaz is the father of Obed,*

*and to Obed was born Jesse, and to Jesse, David.*

*(Ruth 4:18-22 paraphrased)*

Immediately, we are struck by the fact that Ruth, the Moabitess widow, the once impoverished gleaner in the fields of Bethlehem, has become the great grandmother of King David. It is possible that she lived long enough to see him born.

However, this is not really the end of the story.

Would you not like to know a little more about them? I would.

Just a few weeks ago, Paul Harvey passed away. He was known for his news commentary and, for fifty years, he enthralled people with the inside scoop on current events and historical events. For decades, he narrated a program called, *The Rest of the Story*.

I remember, years ago, hearing him on the radio telling the story of Dick and Allen, who worked together repairing watches in the early 1900s. But they soon discovered that they could make more money by selling them to friends and relatives. Before long, their business expanded and they ventured into selling other items. They eventually began printing a booklet – a catalog, they called it – so their clients could order items without ever having to leave home. They even opened some stores and began to sell a variety of items. Their business flourished.

Then, the Great Depression hit. Allen sold his share of the business to Dick and headed for Europe to spend his money. Dick slugged through the Depression and kept the business intact – in fact, he'd never even bothered changing the name of their business. Dick eventually died a multi-millionaire, and Allen, over in Europe, read about his death and decided to return.

Allen walked into a stunned board room, announced who he was, and asked for a job of some importance. Poor old Allen had no idea how this thriving corporation was managed, but for old time sake, they gave him a job opening mail in the mailroom and at special occasions being introduced as the cofounder.

Until he died, Allen was able to tell the stories of the early years – the early days of Dick Sears and Allen Roebuck.

And now you know the rest of the story.

I love the rest of the story – and I would like to know more about this eternally significant story between Boaz and Ruth.

Look at chapter 5 and notice verses 1-5.

*And so it came to pass that Boaz and Ruth were married in the presence of many witnesses. The wedding guests came from all around Judea to add their blessings to the union and future home of Boaz and Ruth.*

*The morning after all the guests had departed, Boaz awakened while it was still early. He searched throughout the house and could not find Ruth anywhere. He began to search diligently for her outside and upon entering his fields, he saw his bride gleaning in the fields.*

*Once again, she was dressed in rough clothing and her sack for grain was about her shoulders.*

*“Ruth!” he called as he ran to her. “Ruth, why are you gleaning in the fields today?” She bowed low to the ground and said, “My husband, surely I must find something to satisfy the hunger I will have today.”*

*Upon hearing this, Boaz embraced Ruth in his arms and said, “Ruth, do you not understand that since you have become my bride, all that belongs to me, belongs to you?”*

Okay, I made all this up! Stop looking for Ruth chapter 5!

However, this is the rest of the story, is it not?!

Boaz is a picture of our Kinsman Redeemer, who has taken us into the family of God – and everything that belongs to Him now belongs to His beloved.

*... [He has given us] an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away ... (I Peter 1:4)*

The rest of this story is found in the New Testament description of *the* final Kinsman Redeemer.

Let us compare briefly the illustration of Boaz with Christ our Redeemer. There are more similarities between Boaz and Christ, but I will highlight four.

### **1. First, kinship with the bride was required.**

In other words, in order to meet the conditions of the law, the kinsman redeemer had to be related to the bride.

So Jesus Christ, in order to redeem us, became our relative. He came to take the sandals of humanity and walk among us. John writes,

***And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us ... (John 1:14a)***

Jesus satisfied this condition of Kinsman Redeemer. He became a member of the human family so that He could make us members of His family.

### **2. Secondly, a kinsman’s desire to redeem his bride was voluntary.**

A kinsman redeemer still had to be willing to redeem his bride. Boaz could have walked away.

You may remember that there was another potential redeemer and he did walk away.

Boaz did not walk away. Why? Because he loved Ruth.

The Bible says, “You want to talk about love? Well ...”

*... this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His son to be the [satisfaction] for our sins. (I John 4:10)*

In other words, the Son came to redeem us.

And He was willing!

*... [He] for the joy set before Him [this joy included winning His bride] endured the cross ... (Hebrews 12:2a)*

*... He ... became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:8b)*

This is how willing Jesus was.

Boaz was related to Ruth and he was willing to redeem her.

In the same way, Christ came in the flesh – fully God, yet fully man; God incarnate – and now related by flesh and blood was willing to redeem us, His bride.

Not only must the redeemer be related and willing, let us look at another requirement.

### **3. Thirdly, the kinsman redeemer had to be capable of paying the redemption price.**

No matter how much Boaz loved Ruth, he still had to buy the land and settle the estate. It cost! The other near kinsman redeemer might have given Boaz his sandal to seal the covenant, but Boaz had to give him silver to settle the deal.

This was no, “IOU and I’ll see what I can do later.” No, Boaz had to have enough money to pay

the debts of the widow he wanted and her family's estate. Fortunately, Boaz was wealthy enough to pay off the debts against the property of Elimelech and settle the estate of Naomi and Ruth.

Listen, bride of Christ,

*. . . you have been bought with a price . . .  
(I Corinthians 6:20)*

Christ, who is infinitely wealthy, can handle any cost. The purchase price was not money. The legal tender for our redemption was the blood of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote,

*In Him we have redemption through His blood . . . (Ephesian 1:7a)*

I found it interesting to discover in my study that according to Jewish custom, it was the responsibility of the kinsman redeemer to also buy out of slavery any member of the bride's family who had been forced to sell themselves into slavery to pay off their debts.<sup>vi</sup>

A kinsman redeemer literally stepped in and settled any and all debt against his beloved; he wiped the books clean.

In the same way, our Lord hung on the cross and then said,

*. . . "It is finished" . . .*

"Tetelestai" was the Greek word Jesus used, which literally meant, "paid in full".

The debt of sin has been paid in full! Every single legal claim of the law; every debt of sin attached to His beloved's name was completely paid off; the books have been wiped clean.

Jesus Christ is both willing and able to pay the redemption price.

#### **4. Fourthly, the kinsman redeemer's provision for his bride was comprehensive.**

Boaz lifted Ruth to his high estate. She was no longer the Moabite widow, but was the bride of Boaz. She was made a legal partaker of his name – her status was altered from alien to accepted. Boaz made provision for all debts – past, present, and future.

In the same way, Christ has comprehensively raised our status from:

- sinner to saint;
- stranger to friend;
- outcast to child;
- lost to redeemed;
- beggar to becoming the bride of Christ.

## Conclusion

Most fairytales I read to my girls when they were little began with the words, "Once upon a time . . .". And nearly all of them that I can remember ended with the words, "And they lived happily ever after."

It occurred to me that these words are an absolutely appropriate ending for every one of us today who are the bride of Christ – every one of us will live happily ever after.

This is the rest of the story – for all of us, no matter how difficult our biography has been; no matter how muddled, challenged, or painful. At the end of our biographies, after we take our last breath, our story can close with the words, "And he/she lived happily ever after." We will have been taken away by our Prince; swept away by our Bridegroom; kept eternally in the joy of our Lord forever and ever.

The only thing different about our lives and the fairytales I read to my girls is that after the words, "And they lived happily ever after," there were always the final two words on the last page, "The what?" – "The End."

This is not the case for us – there will never be an end to our "happily ever after".

Imagine this! Frankly, we cannot. However, we believe by faith in our Kinsman Redeemer – our Lord Jesus – and we cling to His promise of grace, mercy, love, and purpose, and know that, one day, we will enter the glory of heaven forever.

Why? Because:

- He was related to us;
- He was willing to redeem us;
- He was able to redeem us;
- He was able to comprehensively cover our debts.

And, the last words on the biography of the church – the bride of Christ and every individual member of the bridal party; those who belong to Him – are *not* the words, "The End"; they are the words, "And we lived happily ever after!"

<sup>i</sup> A. Boyd Luter and Barry C. Davis, God Behind the Seen (Baker Books, 1995), p. 79.

<sup>ii</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, Be Committed (Victor Books, 1993), p. 58.

<sup>iii</sup> Robert J. Morgan, Nelson's Complete Book of Stories (Thomas Nelson, 2000), p. 388.

<sup>iv</sup> Dr. Arthur Kronhaber, quoted by Robert J. Morgan in Nelson's Complete Book of Stories (Thomas Nelson, 2000), p. 388.

---

<sup>v</sup> Ibid., p. 389.

<sup>vi</sup> Robert L. Hubbard, The Book of Ruth (Eerdmans, 1988), p. 188.