

# A VERY UNFAIRYTALE WEDDING WITH A VERY FAIRYTALE ENDING

Aaron Beard  
Trussville  
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## INTRODUCTION:

- A. Certainly everyone wants to have a wedding right off the pages of a fairy tale, but sometimes life presents a very different and sometimes harsh reality:
1. People say that from the time a girl is three years old she starts planning her wedding:
    - a. In her dreams no cost, time, or effort is spared (Give examples of what she dreams of)
    - b. From her childhood she's loved all the movies & stories, like Cinderella, and she's only been limited by her imagination as she's dreamed of that one day being her with her prince charming. She dreams of the fairy tale wedding where everything is perfect
  2. Most could never afford fairy tale weddings, at least in the physical aspects of them, but the fairy tale aspect of two young people meeting, falling in love, living happily ever after is the dream
  3. But sometimes life presents a different reality – Not every wedding is a fairy tale wedding!
  4. Hear the fairy tale music, see the majestic wedding scenes, see the princess arriving in a chariot, prince charming follows riding on a white horse. Suddenly the music comes to a screeching halt & the movie screen goes fuzzy. Reality shatters the dreams! Happily ever after is over!
- B. This morning we are going to focus on the marriage of Ruth and Boaz – Although their marriage was far from a fairy tale wedding, it had a fairy tale ending.
1. Start by telling the story of Ruth and Boaz from the beginning to the end...
  2. Their marriage defeated the odds, conquered the obstacles, and overcame the barriers... How did their marriage work so well? They each possessed some godly qualities and lived them out

## CHARACTERISTICS OF RUTH AND BOAZ WHICH ALLOWED THEM TO LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER

- A. The godly characteristics displayed by Ruth:
1. Ruth was a woman of great loyalty and love (**Ruth 1:8-9**)
    - a. How many mother-in-law jokes are there? Why? Because many people have strained relations with their mother-in-laws. But not Naomi & Ruth... they were inseparable!
    - b. Ruth wouldn't have been wrong if she returned to her people – Naomi sounds insistent in telling them to return home, but Ruth loves Naomi and knows she needs her!
    - c. Ruth showed a loving devotion to her mother-in-law Naomi when there was absolutely nothing she could personally gain from it (**verses 10-14, 19-21**)
      - 1) Physically – Naomi had no sons to offer them in marriage, she's too old to have any more kids & even if she did Ruth & Orpah would be too old by the time they grew up, she was too old to get married again, and she's empty handed!
      - 2) Emotionally – Naomi is broken in spirit & feels God has dealt bitterly with her. She is so broken that when she returns home she is almost unrecognizable!
      - 3) Verse 14 is beautiful! I don't think the comparison is meant to minimize the love Orpah had for Naomi but to magnify the greatness of the love Ruth had for Naomi! Ruth clung to her from that moment on and Ruth never let go!
    - d. Verses 16-18 → Ruth isn't stubborn, her words are words of total commitment!
      - 1) She's offered a comfortable & easier route but she refuses it for Naomi's sake

- 2) Going with Naomi meant uncertainty – She doesn't know the future, doesn't know the people, and she doesn't really know the culture – This was a big sacrifice!
- 3) They have nothing and they have no hope – She's trading what'd likely be a pretty comfortable life for what'd likely be a servant's life in a strange land!
- e. It was said that Ruth's love and devotion made her more valuable to Naomi than seven sons! This is a very powerful statement in light of the culture of that day! **(Ruth 4:15)**
- 2. Ruth was also a woman who was a very hard worker **(Ruth 2:7, 17-18)**
  - a. Ruth is such a hard worker that Boaz's own reapers took notice of her! It's almost as if they're saying, "She's been working all day and she'll hardly stop to take a break!" She worked from early morning until the evening – Sunup to Sundown... ALL DAY!
  - b. One impressive thing about Ruth's work ethic is what is not said – No sign of complaint, argument, or even a lack of a desire. She is doing what she knows needs to be done!
  - c. Gets dark so she quits gleaning, but she keeps working! She beats out what she's gathered and has enough to last her and Naomi for 5 days – 20 to 25 lbs of useable grain!
  - d. Her hard work paid off didn't it! She "just happened to come" to Boaz's property and he noticed her. What if she hadn't been working hard? What if she didn't work at all?
- 3. Part of Ruth's great loyalty and love is the fact that she was a very unselfish person **(Ruth 2:10-11)**
  - a. What was it that attracted Boaz to Ruth? We know she was young, but the scriptures say nothing about her looks. Was she pretty or ugly? He was attracted to her character!
  - b. Her reputation had preceded her – Everyone, including Boaz, had heard how much she had done for Naomi... Ruth went the extra mile & then some! She had given up everything she knew, including her own family, to take care of her mother-in-law
  - c. With the death of her and Naomi's husband she seamlessly slips into the role of provider
- 4. One of the main causes of Ruth's great qualities is that she came to trust in God **(Ruth 2:12)**
  - a. When Ruth left Moab with Naomi to live in Judah it is possible that she had not yet come to fully believed in and feared God.
    - 1) Why? Because Naomi had told her and Orpah to return to Moab to worshipping their gods there. If Ruth was now a believer, Naomi wouldn't have said this.
    - 2) When Ruth said she was going to Judah she told her, "Your God will be my God." Notice the future tense... That commitment doesn't seem to be true yet
    - 3) If she wasn't a child of God yet, she was well on her way due to her character! She's the type of whom you could say, "You are not far from the kingdom!"
  - b. But by the time Boaz speaks to her, he is able to make a powerful statement concerning her faith – That she had come to take refuge under the wings of Jehovah!
  - c. A statement like this reminds me of the faith of her great grandson, David! **(Psalm 57:1)**
  - d. She showed this trust by moving from Moab to Judah, leaving behind her family for God's family, leaving behind the idols of Moab for the God of Israel... Relied fully on God!
- 5. Ruth was a woman of high virtue and moral character **(Ruth 3:11)**
  - a. The KJV & NKJV both read that they "know that you are a virtuous woman" – She was a woman of great worth because of the beautiful inward qualities she had developed!
  - b. She was so worthy & virtuous that the townsmen were abuzz talking about her... You can hear all the guys standing around talking about what a great catch Ruth was!
  - c. She showed her virtuousness by who she sought to be her husband. Even Boaz says she could have done better! She could've picked someone younger and maybe more appealing physically, but she found a man of great character & godliness! **(Ruth 3:10)**

- d. She also shows virtuousness by not taking advantage of the “alone time” she had with Boaz & try to commit fornication with him. Surely there was desire but she refrained
6. Want to live “happily ever after?” → The key is not in having the fairy tale wedding, but in having the godly character and virtuousness as displayed by Ruth! (**Proverbs 31:10-31**)

## **B. The godly characteristics displayed by Boaz**

1. The greatest characteristic of Boaz is the fact that he was a God-fearing man (**Ruth 2:4**)
  - a. You can tell a lot about a person’s spirituality and their attitude toward the Lord by the things they say and how they conduct their daily life. Is Christ really their life? (**Col 3:1-4**)
    - 1) Writing is all over the walls of their life – You can tell if they’re spiritually minded, if their top desire is to please God, if Christ truly is the center of their life!
    - 2) **Illustration:** “Wall” on Facebook – I can tell a lot about a person based on what they post, their pictures, and the way they communicate with their friends
  - b. You can tell by the spiritual nature of the greeting shared between Boaz and his servants that he led a very God-centered life!
    - 1) Sometimes when we say things like, “May the Lord bless you...” there is a degree of awkwardness to it, why? It’s not necessarily part of our every day speech
    - 2) The exchange between Boaz & his reapers comes across so naturally... there’s no hesitation & no awkwardness because this was a common practice for them
    - 3) This greeting shows a focus on God, his faith is part of his daily life, a recognition of the need for God in his life & others, & God as the source of their blessings
  - c. Ruth may have met Boaz before this, but the text doesn’t indicate it. Boaz is not even speaking to Ruth here, but if this is her first encounter with Boaz, what a powerful impression this would have left. These are the words of a godly man! (**Jas 4:15**)
  - d. Even though Boaz appears to have experienced a certain level of prosperity & even though he had many physical concerns, he was a spiritually minded man who walked by faith
2. Part of Boaz’s godliness was his concern with morality and God’s law: (**Ruth 4:12-14**)
  - a. Boaz wanted to marry Ruth and Ruth wanted to marry Boaz – Now they find themselves alone and able to not only act upon their desires but also to follow the custom of their day in becoming husband and wife... But Boaz knew that this wouldn’t be right!
  - b. Boaz had a strong knowledge of God’s law and a strong respect for it! He knew he wasn’t the closest kinsmen redeemer, so he had to give the other guy a chance first. Doing this might mean he’d lose the chance to marry Ruth, but it was the right thing to do!
  - c. Later Boaz goes to the gates of the city, meets with the elders and the nearest kinsmen redeemer, and follows God’s law for redeeming Ruth & her land to the letter. Why? He cared about pleasing God and obeying His laws. Boaz was a pious man!
  - d. As a man concerned about morality & God’s law, he was also concerned about protecting their reputation. He made sure they gave no one a chance to question their purity.
3. Boaz also displayed great character by the way he treated others so kindly (**Ruth 2:8-10; 14-16**)
  - a. You can tell a great amount about a person by the way they treat others:
    - 1) This is especially true if it is a person you are interested in for dating or marriage
    - 2) You see, someone will treat you really well if they are interested in a relationship with you, but how do they treat others they contact in their lives?
    - 3) Of special concern is how they treat others who are different from them, who are from a lower social status, and could never pay them back for their kindness!

- b. We first see Boaz's kindness to others how he greeted his reapers – They were words of great warmth & thoughtfulness for his workers. He cared about even lowly workers!
  - c. Boaz then notices Ruth among his gleaners. He treats her with great respect, compassion, and protection. He even told his workers to drop extra grain behind... this would let Ruth maintain her dignity while providing for her needs (*as an anonymous quiet gift*)
  - d. When Boaz sits down to eat, notice who sits around his table – Boaz, his reapers, and Ruth... If these reapers are servants they are certainly being treated extremely well!
  - e. Boaz' kindness shines in how he continues to provide for Ruth & Naomi... He made sure any time Ruth left his presence she never went away empty handed (**Ruth 3:15-17**)
  - f. Just as Ruth left behind a legacy of faith that'd be seen in the life of her great-grandson David, Boaz left behind a legacy of kindness to be seen in David as well! (**2 Sam 9:1-7**)
4. Boaz was also a man who saw past the externals of Ruth's poverty and the baggage of her circumstances to see a very beautiful woman (**Ruth 2:19; 4:10-11**)
- a. When we think about Ruth we think about those beautiful inward qualities which made her such a godly woman, but it could have been difficult for Boaz to notice these
  - b. Ruth is a woman who has nothing to offer physically:
    - 1) Her family is back in Moab & is no longer part of her life, her father-in-law is dead
    - 2) She & Naomi are poor. They returned to Judah from Moab with nothing and now she has been gleaning in other people's fields after the reapers to meet their daily needs... A special provision in the Law of Moses for the poor (**Dt 24:19**)
  - c. Ruth could also have had some emotional baggage with her – She's not only been married before but her first husband died. Some men in Boaz's place may feel threatened by her love for her first husband or fear what emotional trauma she may be carrying.
  - d. Some may think Boaz was doing Ruth a favor by taking notice of and marrying her, but Boaz would quickly tell he was getting the better end of the deal! He was "marrying up" in his mind. He is a humble man and one who appreciates a spiritual woman!
5. Ruth's godly characteristics were only half the equation that made this marriage have a fairytale ending, Boaz's godly characteristics were the other half. Do you want to live "happily ever after?"
- a. Walk in the fear of the Lord in every aspect of your life, don't allow their to be holes in your morality and your obedience to God, treat others (not just your spouse) with kindness and mercy, and value & praise the inward beauty & godly characteristics
  - b. These can't just be something that is true of your marriage for it to make your marriage great. They have to be part of something bigger. They must be part of who you are at the core, part of your faith and character. Then they will flow into your marriage!
  - c. Boaz is an example of a real man! In our generation we need more men like Boaz. Will you be the man who will build a wall and stand in its gap? (**Ezekiel 22:30**)

**When Benjamin Franklin was the Ambassador to France, he occasionally attended the Infidels Club -- a group that spent most of its time searching for and reading literary masterpieces. On one occasion Franklin read the book of Ruth to the club, but changed the names in it so it would not be recognized as a book of the Bible. When he finished, the listeners were unanimous in their praise. They said it was one of the most beautiful short stories that they had ever heard, and demanded that he tell them where he had run across such a remarkable work of art. He loved telling them that it came from the Bible!**