

It's Not Just A Fairy Tale

CINDERELLA'S PRINCE LIFTED HER FROM SHAME TO ACCEPTANCE. THE PRINCE OF PEACE WANTS TO DO THE SAME FOR YOU.

Everything Cinderella had ever hoped for was given to her, but there was one condition: She needed to be home by midnight. Even the princess in the fairy tale was given instructions that she was expected to obey.

Life is like a fairy tale when we put our trust in God. He guarantees that we will live happily ever after in heaven. And if we obey Him in this life, we can expect blessings today as well.

He sets before us the choice to love and obey Him. When we choose rightly, He works all things together for our good (see Rom. 8:28.)

The truth of this verse was greatly tested when my husband and I suffered injuries from a serious car accident. I suppose you could have called me a barefoot princess then.

NEVER IS A LONG TIME

Anyone other than a family member who passed by and saw me sitting on the floor in front of my closet would have thought, She must be straightening her shoes.

My family would have thought, Oh no! She has fallen! What in the world is she doing in front of her closet sitting with her shoes?

Only I knew how long I had lain in my bed, staring at the ceiling, rehearsing the words I had heard, "She can wear only one shoe."

Nearly six months had passed since the car accident. The sound of the sirens still rang in my ears as I recalled watching the

emergency rescue team make certain that my husband, my mother and my 2-year-old twin boys were all OK.

Right before the impact, I saw the Jeep approach the intersection and prepare to make its turn—right in front of us. My husband's cherished, silver-anniversary edition Trans-Am plowed into the front of the Jeep. His head cracked the windshield.

My mother cradled the boys in her arms. Disregarding the blood that trickled down his face, my husband beat against the door on the driver's side in an attempt to open it.

Before I knew it he had climbed through the bucket seats into the backseat, forced the passenger door open and stood by to assist us out.

Mother, somewhat shaken, stood nearby while my husband stared with disbelief at my right foot. As he lifted me from the car he saw the blood oozing from my ankle where the bone protruded.

My entire heel cap had been dislocated to the side of my foot. They whisked me into the back of the ambulance with my husband up front peering at me through the window.

Lying on the stretcher in the hall of the emergency room, I overheard the doctor on call speaking to my husband. He lifted the sheet, and with the compassion of an ice cube, informed us that I would never walk again.

A CRIPPLED SPIRIT

Month after month I would lie in bed. The voice of the tormentor affirmed anything and everything that would deflate my ego. His words added to the defeat of my self-esteem.

I could not walk without crutches. Even with crutches, my spirit still could not walk.

Then came the day when I lowered myself from the bed to the

floor. From the pile of pumps and sandals lying there, I began to pull only my right shoes.

The one shoe represented my destiny: never to walk again. Or if I did, with a metal brace and cane.

My husband interrupted my pity party. He extended his hand to me as I sat on the floor wallowing in depression.

I stood resting against his strong chest as his heart beat with his love for me. In my ear he whispered, "If you never walk again, I will push your wheelchair, and I will never leave your side."

That day was the first day of my deliverance. His love for me insisted that I close the mouth of the enemy who was robbing me from believing God for my healing.

My hero stepped back from me and took my hands. He looked through his tears into mine and said, "Just take one step."

With the agility of an elephant I picked up my foot, and it landed like a club. My hero told me that I had "done good."

"Take one more step. That's good! Take another step. Now rest."

My steps began to turn into brief walks from the chair to the couch and from the couch to the table. In a matter of time, love lifted me and God moved on my behalf (see Is. 64:4). My husband, my pastor, my friend, taught me how to walk again.

There were times during my recovery when I felt ashamed of my unattractive gait and single shoe. But I learned that I could walk barefoot in the presence of my Lord and my lover, whom God had given to me.

I remembered that when Moses stood in the presence of God on the mountain, God told him to take off his shoes because he was on holy ground (see Ex. 3:5). Perhaps God didn't want

anything to separate Moses (or me) from His presence.

HAPPILY EVER AFTER

There is a story in the Bible that surpasses the make-believe of Cinderella. It is the tale of Ruth and Naomi. Like the princess in our fairy tale, Ruth began her life in hardship, but she inherited all the land upon which she once walked barefoot.

During a time of famine in Bethlehem, Elimelech took his wife, Naomi, and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, to the country of Moab.

The sons took wives after their father died. The wives, Orpah and Ruth, lived with their husbands and Naomi for about 10 years until their husbands also died.

Naomi decided to return to her homeland and encouraged her daughters-in-law to go back to their homes. Eventually, Orpah heeded Naomi's advice and returned to her parents, but Ruth didn't want to leave Naomi (see Ruth 1:16-17).

One daughter went back to her old identity, and the other one decided to follow Naomi, even though she would have to move to a foreign land. Ruth loved Naomi and felt that this woman could teach her the ways of her God.

When Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem, Ruth asked permission to glean in the fields of a wealthy kinsman after the reapers had passed through (see Ruth 2:2). When Boaz, the owner of the field, saw Ruth, he told her to glean in his fields and offered her protection.

At his demonstration of kindness, Ruth fell on her face, bowing to the ground before him. Boaz invited Ruth to eat with his reapers and made sure that she was allowed to glean where there was plenty of grain left.

She continued to work in his fields until the end of the

harvest. Naomi, recognizing Boaz as next of kin, instructed Ruth about how to approach Boaz with her request for their continued protection.

When Boaz became aware of Ruth's request, he blessed her for the loving-kindness she continued to show her mother-in-law. What Boaz said to Ruth is very important for all of us daughters of the King to understand. He said, "Fear not. I will do for you all you require, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of strength (worth, bravery, capability)" (Ruth 3:11, The Amplified Bible).

Ruth was a noble woman whose humility lifted her to great honor. She served her mother-in-law and offered to serve Boaz as his maidservant in exchange for protecting and providing for Naomi.

Ruth's humility did not belittle her, but elevated her to the highest position that a woman in Bethlehem could hold. She moved from being the wife of an invalid to the wife of the man who owned the fields she had walked upon.

Ruth was brave, capable, and highly valued, yet willing to serve her mother-in-law, her God, and her fellowman. She was the great-grandmother of King David, an ancestor of Jesus.

SURRENDER TO THE PRINCE'S PROTECTION

When Ruth approached Boaz, she asked him to spread the corner of his garment over her because he was her nearest kinsman and her rightful redeemer. The Amplified Bible says that she asked for his "wing of protection" over her (see v. 9).

Today's society has pushed for women to become independent and self-serving. But God wants us to be totally dependent on Him. God does not want us to prove ourselves but to prove Him.

Boaz carefully followed the law in order to legally take Ruth as his own. When he went to the elders and told them of his intent, Boaz received a blessing because of Ruth (see

4:11-12).

Through her willingness to submit to the counsel of Naomi, the protection of Boaz, and the plan of God, Ruth brought blessing even to you and me. She helped to continue the line of Jesus Christ.

Do you see the parallel of Boaz and Ruth to what Jesus has done for us? When we come to the Lord and submit ourselves to His protection, He grants our petition because He has followed the law to legally win the right to be our Redeemer.

We are under the protection of our Kinsman Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Why would we ever want to live our life apart from Him?

Why would we ever want to prove our independence from the very One who loves us more than His own life? We are the bride of Christ, heirs to the kingdom of God.

When Cinderella's prince learned the truth about her, that she was poor and destitute and not a real princess, He was able to prove his great love for her by saying, "It doesn't matter, I love who you are. All that I have is yours, if you will simply say yes."

It's time to get rid of whatever keeps you from saying yes and walking into the presence of God. As Christ's bride, we walk as heirs on ground owned by the One who owns the universe.

Kick off those painful, high-heeled shoes, Princess, and enjoy the feeling of holy ground beneath your feet! The Prince of Peace is waiting for you!

Read a companion devotional.

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