

Why We Long for "Happily Ever After"

Session 3: The Story We Were Made For

By Hope Wooten | NarroWay Productions | 6 Minute Read
Devotional 03 in this series

The Pull of Fairytales

There's something in us that leans toward fairytales.

We're drawn to stories where everything begins beautifully, where love is certain, and where—no matter what goes wrong—it all works out in the end. The kind of stories where the prince returns for the one he loves, the obstacles are overcome, and the final line promises what we all secretly long for:

"...and they lived happily ever after."

We hear that phrase so often that it almost loses its meaning. And yet... something in us still responds to it. Not because we actually believe life always works out that way, but because somewhere deep down, we feel like it was supposed to.

Formed by the Stories We Hear

From a young age, those stories shape us.

They give us a sense of how things *should* be—what love should feel like, what life should look like when everything is right. And even if we grow up and stop believing in fairytales, that expectation doesn't really go away.

It just gets quieter.

The Pattern of Every Story

Because if you think about it, every fairytale follows the same pattern.

It begins in a world that feels right. There's order, beauty, and a sense that everything is as it should be. Often, there's love at the center of it—a relationship that feels secure, meaningful, and full of promise.

It's the kind of beginning that doesn't need an ending... because everything already is as it should be.

But then something happens that changes everything.

When Trust is Broken

Another voice enters the conversation.

Trust is questioned.

What once felt whole begins to fracture.

And at the center of it all is a choice—a decision to trust something other than God, to listen to a different voice, to define good and evil on our own terms.

The Bible has a word for this: sin.

Sin is not just doing something wrong.

It's deeper than that.

It's the breaking of trust, the stepping outside of relationship, the choice to live independently of the One we were created to walk with.

Sin didn't just break a rule.

It broke a relationship.

And relationships don't usually break all at once.

They drift—slowly, quietly, almost imperceptibly at first—until one day what once felt natural no longer is.

When that happens, it's easy to reduce the problem to something smaller than it really is: a mistake, a bad decision, a moment of weakness.

But what's actually been lost is something much deeper.

It's not just disobedience.

It's relationship.

Not just a wrong choice, but a broken trust.

Because from the very beginning, this was never meant to be casual.

It was covenant.

Echoes of Something Lost

Maybe that's why these stories resonate so deeply. Because they're not just stories—they're echoes. They remind us, whether we realize it or not, of something we already know: a memory of how things were meant to be, a longing for a kind of love that doesn't fail, a hope that what is broken can somehow be made whole again.

And that desire didn't come from storybooks. It came from our beginning.

The First Garden

Once upon a time—
before anything was broken,
before trust was lost,
before another voice entered the story—
there was a garden
A world that is whole, ordered, and good.
God is near.

Humanity is at peace—not only with Him, but within themselves and with each other.

There is no fear, no shame, no striving to prove worth or secure love.
Relationship flows freely, just as it was designed to.

Scripture describes God as walking in that garden—not distant, not removed, but present.

Close enough to walk with.

That was His design.

Humanity was created to live in relationship with God—to walk with Him, to trust Him, to remain within the life He had given.

Everything was as it should be.

And if we're honest, that's still the life we long for.

A Fractured World

But that's not the world we live in.

Because somewhere along the way, another voice was believed. Trust was broken. The relationship was fractured. The wholeness of the garden is now shattered. And that's where the story could have ended.

But it doesn't.

God's Plan to Restore

Because from the very beginning, God already had a plan—not just to address what was broken, but to restore it.

To restore all that was lost in the garden—but at the center of it all, our relationship with Him.

A covenant relationship so personal that God would one day describe it like a marriage—a faithful husband pursuing an unfaithful bride.

And not just as a metaphor, but as a story He would actually step into. The Bible begins in a garden—a place where God walked with His people, where relationship was whole, where nothing stood in the way.

But from the moment that relationship was broken, God did not step away.

He moved toward it.

Through generations, He continued to pursue.

He spoke.
He called.
He made covenant.
He remained faithful—even when His people were not.

Again and again, the story shows the same pattern: God drawing near, and His people drifting away.
Returning.
Leaving.
Trusting.
Turning.

Like a relationship that keeps breaking—and a love that refuses to let go.

Another Garden: Gethsemane

Until one day, He stepped into the story Himself.

And it's not a coincidence that the story turns again in another garden.

On the night before the cross, Jesus goes into the garden of Gethsemane.
In the first garden, Adam chose his own will.
In this garden, Jesus chooses the Father's.

Where relationship was once broken, He begins the work of restoring it.

The Gardener Returns

And the story doesn't end there.

Because on the morning of the resurrection, there is yet another garden.
Mary stands outside the tomb, weeping. She sees Jesus—but doesn't recognize Him.

And Scripture tells us that she supposed He was the gardener.
At first, it seems like such a small detail. But maybe it isn't.
Because the whole story began in a garden—with humanity walking with God until everything fell apart.

In that first garden, death was unleashed.
And now, in another garden, Jesus stands alive.

The very thing that once broke the story has now been brought under His authority.

Mary doesn't recognize Him at first. But the reader is meant to see something she doesn't.

The Gardener has returned.

The Story Isn't Over

And the story is still moving forward—toward a day when what was broken is fully restored, when what was lost is returned, when God once again dwells with His people.

No more separation.
No more death.
No more brokenness.

Everything made new.

The Bible begins in a garden—and ends with one restored.

Not a Fairytale—Something Better

This is not a fairytale.
Because fairytales avoid the cost.
They skip over the pain.
They move quickly past the breaking.
They soften the weight of what was lost.

But this story goes straight through it—through betrayal, through suffering, through death—and then into life.

And that changes everything.

Living in the Middle of the Story

Because it means the story you are living in right now—as unfinished as it feels, as messy as it looks, as uncertain as it seems—is not without an ending.

The final word has already been written.

What was broken in the garden will be restored. What was lost will be found. What feels incomplete will not stay that way forever.

That longing you feel—for things to be whole, for love to last, for peace to remain—it's not wishful thinking.

It's recognition.

You were made for that ending.

Happily Ever After

And one day, when the story is complete—when everything has been made right and all that was broken has finally been restored—it will not just sound like a fairytale.

It will be better.

Because when our Prince returns...
we will all live happily ever after.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How does understanding sin as a “broken relationship” rather than just “wrong behavior” change the way you view your relationship with God?
2. In what ways do you see the pattern of “God pursuing and people drifting” in your own life or in the world around you?
3. How does knowing the “ending” of the story shape the way you live in the present, especially in difficult or uncertain seasons?