

## Wedding Sermon

### God's Love Will Keep You Together

#### 1 Corinthians 13:13

(1Co 13:13 ESV) 13 So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

#### Sermon

Sydney, Jeremy, today is a day of celebration. Today is a day of celebration of the love you have for each other. Today your families and friends will join you in this celebration in a very obvious, direct way. There will be hugging and kissing, crying and well-wishing. There will be traditional ceremonies, gifts, photographs, eating and drinking, all in your honor. Later in life, all these people will still be celebrating your love with you in a less obvious and less direct way. Or will they? Oh sure, they'll still be interested in all the things that happen to you in your life together, but will they be celebrating your love?

The answer is no. They will not be celebrating your love. They will be celebrating God's love, which he has given you by his grace through faith in Jesus Christ as your only Savior. This is the love you two as Christians are celebrating today and will be celebrating the remainder of your lives together. With your life of love together as God's redeemed children, you are living God's love, you are sharing God's love, and

WHEN YOU LIVE AND SHARE WITH EACH OTHER

GOD'S GIFT OF PERFECT, FORGIVING LOVE,

THAT LOVE, HIS LOVE, IS WHAT WILL KEEP YOU TOGETHER,

for our God is the God of love and the author of all love.

I.

We read about that love of God in his holy and inspired Scriptures from our text: "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor 13:13).

This text talks of God's love, not your love. That may seem like a strange thing to say at this happy and excited moment, but when this worship service is finished, the very second it's finished, your marriage starts. When your marriage starts, you'll have to rely on God's love, which brought you two together, more than ever before.

If you ever expect your love for each other to grow beyond the newborn state it's in at this minute, you'll have to rely entirely on God's love for you in Jesus Christ, that love found in his Word and

Sacraments. If you expect to love each other when the many problems of life regain your attention—after the euphoria of today, after your honeymoon, after the newness of your relationship has worn off—you'll have to rely entirely on God's love for you in Jesus Christ, found in his Word and Sacraments.

If you expect to love each other when you no longer have a physique like a Greek statue, when you refuse to wear a bathing suit in public, you'll have to rely entirely on God's love for you in Jesus Christ, found in his Word and Sacraments. If you expect to love each other even as the years bring out the less-than-perfect-realities that may not yet be obvious in the person you're marrying, you'll have to rely entirely on God's love for you in Jesus Christ, found in his Word and Sacraments. If you expect to stay together in this world, where many things could easily pull you apart, you must remember that it's God's love that will keep you together.

II.

God's love is the love that sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, true God and true man, into the world, born in Bethlehem, to live a perfect life for us. This love of God is seen clearly at this time of the year as we prepare for Christmas. You see, at Christmas, God came into the world and he became man. God and man were joined together in the person of Jesus, and the two became one. That is the whole meaning of Christmas, God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ, born in a manger in Bethlehem as a human being. God and man were joined together; the two became one, God shares in our humanity and we share in his divinity. Just as God gave Eve to Adam and said, "...a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." Thus God instituted marriage; and this human marriage is but a reflection of the marriage of humanity and divinity in the person of Jesus Christ when he was born as a human on Christmas. Christmas is God, like a groom, coming to claim his bride, the church, and join himself to her. God became man. And because God can never break that bond between man and God; because he can never be unfaithful to us; because no one can ever hate his own flesh, God will never leave or forsake you. He will always be faithful.

Therefore, as marriage is a reflection of God's love and faithfulness to us, so one must never break the bonds of marriage; one must never be unfaithful, for doing so is not just a sin against one's spouse, it is a denial of who God is. That is why a Christmas wedding is certainly appropriate; for Christmas is God's pledge of faithfulness to mankind, just as Sydney and Jeremy will pledge their faithfulness to each other in a few minutes.

God's love is the love that sent Jesus to die for us on the cross of Calvary, and by his death he destroyed the power of all our sin and death and the devil over us. Jesus rose again three days later to proclaim his victory, which gives us forgiveness of all our sins and procures for us eternal salvation in heaven. These blessings are ours through faith in Jesus as our Savior, which the Holy Spirit works in us through God's Word and Sacraments. We have the sure hope of salvation because of the saving faith God gave us in his love in Baptism. God's great love for us in Jesus Christ gives you faith and hope. That's why God's love is greater than faith and hope.

Because Jesus lives in your hearts, Sydney, Jeremy, you, by the power of his love, are able to forgive each other and love each other in Christian love; love that is patient and kind; "love that does not envy

or boast; is not arrogant or rude; does not insist on its own way; is not irritable or resentful, love that bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things; love that never ends.” That is the love of God which seeks to understand, adapt, accept, sacrifice, submit, communicate, share the good and the bad, trust, serve the other, place the other first, be faithful, work together, encourage each other, and build each other up emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Because Christ lives in your hearts by your Baptism, Sydney, Jeremy, you will still have God’s perfect love even if your emotional love wavers and erodes.

You see, your Christian marriage today is a three-way marriage between you two and God, not just you two alone. When the link between you two is weakened, it can and will be strengthened and repaired because of the links you two have with Jesus Christ through his love. Love will keep you together. It will guide your life and enrich your life, but it will be God’s love that does this. This is the love so great that God, “gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (Jn 3:16). This is the saving and caring love you live in each day until your last day. This is your love. This is God’s love.

Amen.