

**Scripture Reading – 1 Peter 3:8-12**

<sup>8</sup> Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. <sup>9</sup> Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing. <sup>10</sup> For

“Those who desire life  
and desire to see good days,  
let them keep their tongues from evil  
and their lips from speaking deceit;  
<sup>11</sup> let them turn away from evil and do good;  
let them seek peace and pursue it.  
<sup>12</sup> For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,  
and his ears are open to their prayer.  
But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

## Message

Jordan and Kaylee – you have chosen a delightful passage of Scripture as your wedding text. A passage that holds out for you five qualities that will mark vibrant, flourishing relationships between people who live in community. Five qualities that will mark a vibrant, flourishing marriage. And, dare I say, five qualities that are all-too often absent from marriage relationships today.

Let me hold these out for you to see –

- (1) Unity of spirit. Or – a “shared heart and mind.” The sense here is a deeply-rooted unity between the two of you. We’ve talked about this before – what God desires for your marriage is a deeply-rooted, profound unity between the two of you. That you would be “one” in every way possible.

Most importantly – that your “one-ness” would go all the way down to your hearts and minds – to your spirit. The way you see the world. The faith that shapes you and the deep faith-commitments that shapes your entire outlook on the world. And your place in it.

God desires for you two to be the best of friends. The way CS Lewis describes how a friend is someone different than a companion. A companion is a wonderful gift in life – someone to “do life” together with – share in activities, even joys and sorrows.

But a friend – now that is a tremendously rare and wonderful gift. Listen to how Lewis describes this gift –

“Friendship arises out of mere Companionship when two or more of the companions discover that they have in common some insight or interest or even taste which the others do not share and which, till that moment, each believed to be his own unique treasure (or burden). The typical expression of opening Friendship would be something like, “What? You too? I thought I was the only one.”

... It is when two such persons discover one another, when, whether with immense difficulties and semi-articulate fumbings or with what would seem to us amazing and elliptical speed, they share their vision - it is then that Friendship is born. And instantly they stand together in an immense solitude.”

- (2) Sympathy. That is – an attitude of concern and care for others. A deep care that moves you to attend to the needs, joys, and sorrows of the other. Particularly when the other is in distress or weak.

A word that holds out for you a reminder of the greatest threat to your marriage. Remember what that is? YOU! Your natural inclination to be selfish and self-centred. Will, by far, hands down, be the greatest threat to your marriage.

The call of Christ is to come and die. To die to yourself. Your demands. Your expectations. Your wants. Even – your needs. To die to the relentless temptation to put those things ahead of each other.

The invitation here is to walk with this deep care for each other – a care that would move you to attend to each other’s needs, joys, and sorrows – before you think about your own.

- (3) Love for one another. The word used here is used to describe the love within a family. The special bond that can exist between brothers, between sisters, grandparents and grandkids. A fierce loyal sort of love – the love a mother has for a child – regardless of what the child does, or says. A fierce, loyal bond that doesn’t go away.

This fierce, loyal bond of love is what can hold you both together.

(4) A tender heart. An orientation of tenderness, affection, and compassion toward another person. These are deep-seated things inside someone – rising up from their very inner being.

This is more than mere “kindness.” A tender heart comes from a deep well of compassion. And can be such a healing salve to a hurting soul.

Oh for a marriage in which you two demonstrate tenderness toward each other. A tenderness that comes from your heart and flows freely toward each other. Keeps your heart soft toward each other – not giving in to the harshness or hardness that has a way of settling in and sabotaging a marriage of the joy and delight God intends.

(5) A humble mind. The ability to see things and appreciate things from the perspective of another. An approach to life that places others before and ahead of yourself.

One of the precious gifts you can offer each other is the gift of a humble mind. Seeing things from each other’s perspective – and valuing that perspective above your own. One of the things you will discover over time – if your marriage is like most marriages – is just how radically different you both can approach things. Learn to cherish that. Jordan – learn to seek Kaylee’s perspective on things and delight in it. Kaylee – learn to do the same with Jordan. And your marriage will be delightful as you grow in understanding each other this way.

These qualities will be “tested” by hardship – that’s what verse 9 goes on to talk about. Whether that hardship comes from outside the marriage or inside it (both will be true over time). Pressures in your life circumstances – work, family, sickness – that bring stress and friction to your relationship.

The invitation is – even in the face of hardship – is to live out of these qualities. And in a word – “to bless” each other. To “bless” – to ask God to shower His favour and grace upon others – even those who hurt you. Even – and especially when the one who hurt you is your spouse.

“Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with blessing. It is for this that you were called.” To be a people who bless.

It’s a pretty high bar – how will you live up to it?

Only as you live in communion with the One who this ultimately describes. Each of these 5 qualities give us a wonderful picture of Christ. Sympathy. Fiercely loyal love. A tender heart. A humility. This describes Jesus!

And the invitation to you and to me is to enter a deep-rooted oneness with Christ. It is what Christ desires – to be united with you. We are invited to live in this communion with Christ – Us in Christ and Christ in Us. The Spirit of Christ living within us.

Only in communion with Christ will you find power (through Christ’s Spirit) to live out these qualities he holds out for you today. The power you will desperately need for your relationship to thrive and flourish in these ways – AND the forgiveness and grace to stay the course with each other when you fail (which you will).

We’ve talked about it along the way in these past months – marriage is a battle-field. In which a war is raging in your hearts for your heart’s allegiance (who will you worship? And serve?). Christ calls you to lay down your lives for one another as your life of service to Him. To “bless” one another and embody these qualities will mean a battle against your natural tendency to live for your-self.

One of the most important things you can do in your marriage is cultivate a relationship in which you are regularly being drawn together to a deeper communion with Christ. A Christ who comes and says you today – come and die with me – so that you might have life and see “good days.” That you might inherit a blessing.