

May
God
Bless
Your
Marriage

Wedding Sermon
for
Laura Renee Kosiara
and
Jerold William Stein

Ephesians 4:1-6

Live a Life Worthy of the Calling You Have Received

2 p.m., Saturday, November 14, 2015

*Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
1010 33rd St., Bay City, MI*

TEXT: Ephesians 4:1-6

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. NIV84

THEME: Live a Life Worthy of the Calling You Have Received

Dear Laura and Jere,

Today marriage is under attack from every side. The U.S. Supreme Court has changed what marriage is. Some people want nothing to do with marriage but still want to enjoy its benefits without commitment. Like car insurance, divorce is “no-fault” and common. Dr. Phil and others make a good living offering advice to troubled couples. So, why in the world are you here today?

Because as Christians, you know that marriage is God’s creation and his gracious, loving gift to us human beings, no matter how badly we human beings abuse it. So, as you come before the Lord’s altar today, it is fitting for you to hear not what human beings have to say about marriage, but what God has to say. And because God loves you more than you love each other or even yourselves, you can be sure that what he tells you is right and true. If you follow what he says, your marriage will be blessed beyond measure.

First of all, note that you did not bring yourselves to faith. You were **“called”** by God’s grace. The Holy Spirit has given you a new life as children of God—a new life with grand possibilities. And Paul says to you today, **“I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.”**

Next, Paul lists four qualities that your heavenly Father expects of you as his children who are married to each other. He says, **“Be completely humble and gentle.”** When we realize our own unworthiness before God because of our stubborn disobedience and sin, that humbles us. Don’t be quick to find fault with each other, because God can find so much more fault with you than you can find with your spouse. Yet God has forgiven you, so forgive each other and don’t be puffed up with pride when your spouse makes a mistake that you did not. Be gentle with your spouse as God has been gentle with you, lovingly correcting and encouraging. Bring those qualities to your marriage.

The next two qualities involve irritations and aggravations from each other. Now I know you can’t imagine irritations and aggravations popping up between the two of you, although maybe you can, since you just planned a wedding together. If they haven’t shown up yet, they will. So Paul urges, **“Be patient, bearing with one another in love.”** The key to having patience and putting up with each other is love. The Greek word used here is agape (αγαπη), that one-way, self-sacrificing love that doesn’t look for anything in return. That is the love that we have received so freely and richly from our Savior-God.

Our loving God wants to be a part of your marriage and your everyday lives. As God brings you together today, he stresses the oneness that you have with him and with each other. You are one with him because Jesus lived a perfect life in your place, and suffered and died and rose again to pay for your sins. You are one with God! And, as Christians, you are one with each other in your faith. Listen again to how many times Paul uses that word “one.” **“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all.”** As believers, you have that beautiful oneness.

Finally, Paul uses three prepositions to highlight our gracious God’s activity among us. God, our heavenly Father, **“is over all and through all and in all.”** With his almighty power, our heavenly Father looks after and watches **over** you. With his matchless grace, he works **through** his fellow believers in your life to accomplish his saving purpose. And God is so close to you that he even dwells **in** you. Jesus promised this when he instituted Holy Communion, saying, **“If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him” (John 14:23).**

A marvelous unity or oneness binds you to each other, to your local congregation, to the worldwide holy Christian Church, and most of all, to our Savior-God. What should you do as a result of that unity and oneness? Let this be the motto of your marriage: **“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”**

—Pastor Richard D. Starr