

Wedding Homily: Katharine Hope Hale and Samuel Joseph Stephens
Northminster Presbyterian Church: 19 August 2006

Reading of the texts: Genesis 2¹⁸⁻²⁴; First John 4⁷⁻¹²

Samuel and Katharine: I hate to say it, but you have gotten a lot of bad advice. In this Britney Spears, “Desperate Housewives”, “Rumor Has It” world in which we live, love is thought of as a zesty emotion that exists to make an individual happy: It comes; it goes; it is vigorous and passionate, but then it burns out and leaves the individual a bit on the heartbroken end. Even the venerable David Wilcox has an early song that says love relationships that run their course and leave the participants cold is as “common as the rain”. Apparently, this world in which we live thinks of love like it thinks of a tasty cheesecake, a well-crafted beer, or a Johnny Depp movie: You are glad when it comes along; you enjoy it while you can; and when it runs its course, you move on—hoping that the next one isn’t too far in the distance.

What an anemic view! What a feeble shadow of the truth. Thankfully, that is not the voice that has called us here with you this afternoon. The voice that has called you here is the voice that says, “It’s not good to be alone.” It is the voice that worded the universe into existence. God sets to work crafting and honing and perfecting his creation and the pinnacle of that vast and universal creative work is one man and one woman. All of creation, with its splendor and beauty and complexity is summed up in this marital love for another, this marital covenant. Samuel and Katharine, this marriage God is creating in you is as firm as the granite mountains he forged; as powerful as the seas he filled; as sure as the skies he hung. What stronger foundation is there than that?

Creation itself is your foundation. The cross of Christ is your goal. The voice that tells us of God’s covenant-creating in Genesis is the same voice that gives us the

definition of love in First John. Love isn't a fleeting emotion, no, but neither is it concerned with being right or having everything equal or getting our way. Love is God sending his Son into the world that sinners might be saved. Or, to put it another way, love is less concerned with being right and more concerned with being reconciled. The world's idea of love is what makes me feel good. God's creation of love is serving the other person (even if that person is being a bit stubborn! 🙄). When wife and husband love each other by serving each other, everything becomes an act of worship. Make everything you do an act of worship.

As you both enter into the covenant together, take frequent looks back to that Genesis moment that is the foundation of your marriage. Take frequent looks ahead to the cross of Christ which guides your marriage. And may everything you do and say to each other be an act of worship to the God who brought you together and will deliver you one day to the kingdom of heaven. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.