

Ephesians 5:20-33

The Wedding of Brittany Richart and Luke Thompson-Kolar in Holy Matrimony
Zion Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Detroit, Michigan
Saturday, the 25th Day of May, 2019 A. ✠ D.

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The Apostle writes “Beloved, give thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...” What the Apostle commends is what we do this day. We give thanks. We give thanks to God, because that’s what saving faith does. We give thanks to God for the manifold Gifts that He daily bestows on us.

And it is ours this day to give Him special thanks and praise that among those manifold Gifts, it pleased the God who made man, the God who made them male and female, the God who took on Flesh and died for us, the God that rose from the dead to conquer sin, death and the devil, we give thanks to Him that it has pleased Him to bring Brittany and Luke together this day, here, in this place, to be joined in Holy Matrimony, an earthly symbol of heavenly truth.

It is here, at this altar, in the very place that the Omnipresent God has promised to make Himself present, that Brittany and Luke will begin a life of what the Apostle describes as “submitting to one another in the fear of God”. And that they will do because they both first submit to Christ. They serve Him as their Lord, because that’s what faith does.

The blessed unity that they have with Christ their Lord, the blessed union they have with God in Christ, the Holy Communion they have with God through Christ’s Body and Blood, will be reflected in their union, and in their submission to one another. That is the Biblical formula for Christian marriage, the only God-pleasing marriage. It is in that way that Brittany and Luke are to be joined this day, for the Lord of the Church joins male and female in no other way.

By His presence at Cana, by His catechesis of His disciples, the Lord blessed marriage. The marriage of Luke and Brittany this day is to be an earthly example of a celestial Mystery. Christ is the true Bridegroom. The Holy Church is the true Bride. As Christ is the Head of the Church, so is the husband the head of the wife. The Church is Christ’s Body, His Body on earth, of which He is Head. So Her greatest blessing is to eat the Body and drink the Blood that makes Her His Body.

This Divine Mystery, this heavenly Gift, is reflected in the unity that Luke and Brittany will have as husband and wife. For a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. As He who eats the Flesh of the Son of Man is One with Him, so will Luke and Brittany be one until death parts them. But that will not be the end of their unity. For they will be one forever, One in Christ, One Holy Church, world without end.

The unity of husband and wife in Holy Matrimony is different, however, than the Unity of the Christian with the Lord. The Unity the Church has with Christ is perfect, because Christ is perfect. It is perfect, because the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity that fills you, is perfect. And because He is perfect, He works perfect Unity.

While the earthly union of husband and wife is a temporal reflection of the heavenly Unity between Christ and His Church, such earthly unions are not perfect, because both husband and

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wife still have their flesh. Luke and Brittany, you still have your flesh. And with that flesh comes the transgression of the first man and woman, which brings with it the daily transgressions of every man and every woman born of human father. Each of you, everyone here today, has committed such transgression. And each of us has been hurt by the transgressions of others.

So you will hear in the vows that Luke and Brittany will exchange: There will be better times, richer times, and times of health. Thanks be to God for these. And while all these are good gifts of God, they can be a snare to the flesh. They can only be truly enjoyed when lived out in reverence, in love for God, in faith, in true thankfulness and in repentance, seeing God as the Good and Gracious Giver of every gift. Everyone here today prays that Luke and Brittany will enjoy such times, blessed times, and many of them.

But the vows you will take, Luke and Brittany, speak also of other times. Human love waxes and wanes. Human faithfulness is fickle. The words of the vows you will make to one another are ancient words, words we receive from our fathers in the faith, who learned a thing or two about life.

So you should know that there will also be worse times, poorer times, times of sickness. These times too you must live out in reverence to God, in love for God, in faith, in true thankfulness and in repentance, one to another, and both to God, trusting that Christ's forgiveness is yours. For although such times may be difficult, God blesses richly through them. And through them your love for one another will grow.

So hearken then to the Word of the Apostle: Luke, love Brittany as Christ loved the Church. Remember what He did for Her – He gave Himself up. He submitted to lies and false accusation. He submitted to wrongful arrest and a sham trial. He did it without complaint. He was mocked and scourged and crucified for Her, for the Holy Church, for you, for Brittany, and for your families, for the children with which God blesses you, for all men of all time.

He endured death and the grave to win forgiveness, reconciliation with God, and eternal life for you and for her. It is in that life, Baptismal life, in the new life that Christ gives to His Church to make Her holy, cleansing her by the Washing with Water through the Word, it is in that life that you will live with Brittany as husband, and if it pleases the Lord of the Church, as father.

And Brittany, in grace, in love, in mercy, the Lord has given you Luke. Harken then to the Word of the Apostle: submit to your husband as to the Lord. For it is in the submission of the Church to Christ that the greatest blessings of God come – His grace, His protection, His provision, His boundless love, His guidance, His deliverance.

In a Divine Mystery, God has made Himself to be of one flesh with you, that you be His Body, and He be your Savior. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound Mystery, but I am talking about Christ and the Church. In the same way also, in Christ, each of you must love one another, and respect one another, submitting to one another in the fear of God.

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Christ Jesus your Lord died for your transgressions. He was raised for your justification. He ascended heaven to open heaven to all those who have saving faith in Him. Luke and Brittany, it is that faith, saving faith, that will sustain you for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish one another, until you see your Lord face to face, in the Marriage Feast of the Lamb and His Kingdom which has no end.

May God bless you as you are joined in Holy Matrimony this day.

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✕ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.