

An address for the wedding of Jason Steward and Lauren Seka
June 21, 2003
Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Collinsville, Illinois

Sounds Good...And It Is

(1 Corinthians 13:13)

Faith, hope and love, these three, but the greatest of these is love. **Sounds good, but** Jason, aren't you an Edwardsville Tiger coach? Love is not what you want to show when you play our Collinsville Kahoks!

Faith, hope and love, these three, but the greatest of these is love. **Sounds good, but** Lauren, you're getting a guy who is like all guys. He doesn't like to talk too much. Guys do sound bites. Guys grunt. And women are just the opposite. Women love to use words, lots of words, to paint a big picture of how they're feeling.

Faith, hope and love, these three, but the greatest of these is love. **Sounds good now at your wedding, but it's going to get tough.** Each of you will go your own way every day to your different jobs. When you tune in to the media you'll see totally unrealistic impressions of marriage and relationships. In addition to those external pressures on your marriage, the fact is that we all have a selfish streak within us. What God has joined together could be put asunder.

Let me ask you a "What if" question. **What if each of you today, at the beginning of your marriage, began the habit of praying daily for your spouse?** I hasten to admit that I haven't always done that in my marriage but I find myself doing it more and more. I suspect that many married couples in the crowd probably are not in the habit of praying every day for each other, but it would be an easy habit for you attending this service to get into. Jason and Lauren, what if each of you privately took time each day to pray to your Father in heaven for your spouse? Might you run out of things to say about your spouse? Perhaps, and then you'll realize that you don't know each other as intimately as you could. It is possible for a husband and wife to live together for many years and not know each other's soul. Isn't that right, you who are attending this service? It is possible to live together and still not know each other's soul. Love in the Bible is a selfless thing. It's not about me but about you. Love in the Bible gets to know the other's soul. Any selfish person can pray for himself or herself. Praying for each other helps develop selfless love.

That love practices faith and hope. Faith is based upon this most important truth: God sent Jesus to earn forgiveness for your sins. Marriage will give you plenty of opportunities to ask for and share forgiveness. God's love in your marriage motivates you to put faith into practice with words of forgiveness. Hope is based upon the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. There will be tough days when you'll need to remember that the Father who raised Jesus will get you through your trying times. So what if each of you privately takes time daily to pray for each other...in the name of Jesus? You will grow in the faith and hope that are hallmarks of God's love in Christian marriage.

The reason why love is the greatest is because **love is forever** because *God is love* (1 John 4:8). **Faith and hope are temporary.** Through faith and hope we grow in the assurance of God's love. You have experienced the love of family. A word of commendation to your parents for the love they have shown you. But those ties of immediate family grow looser and looser as the years go by. So it should be. *A man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife.* But as those past ties lessen, the faith and hope that are in Christ Jesus will increase your love for one another in the God of eternal love.

So the resolution today to pray daily for each other would be a very nice way to grow in love for one another under the blessing of God. Poet Jaroslav Vajda puts in poetry what the heavenly Father says to you today.

*Go, my children, with My blessing,
Never alone
Waking, sleeping, I am with you.
You are My own.
In my love's baptismal river I have made you Mine forever.
Go, my children, with My blessing
– You are My own.*

*In this union I have joined you husband and wife
Now, my children, live together as heirs of life:
Each the other's gladness sharing;
Each the other's burdens bearing,
Now, my children, live together as heirs of life.*

*I the Lord will bless and keep you
and give you peace;
I the Lord will smile upon you
and give you peace:
I the Lord will be your Father, Savior, Comforter and Brother.
Go, my children; I will keep you
and give you peace.*

Faith, hope and love, these three. It sounds so good and it is. It is so good that it will be worth praying about every day in the name of Jesus. Amen.