

Ecclesiastes 4:12. A cord of three strands is not easily broken.

I am sure that members of the bridal party and everyone here today would agree with me when I say this. Kyle, you are a great guy. Beth, you are such a lovely woman. I mean, isn't that one of the first things that comes to your mind when you think about Beth and Kyle. These are just two really nice people. Parents you have every right to be proud of these two.

Beth and Kyle, you two are strong individuals. You are two hardworking, helpful, kind and dependable people. Each of you is great in your own right, but today we celebrate that God has done something even better. God has brought you two together, and today God joins two wonderful people together and makes them one. Today you are joined together in this blessed institution of marriage through which God makes these two halves whole. He blesses you with a lifelong companion, a friend, a helper, someone to share your days and to make your life full.

Life wasn't quite full before you met, was it? Both of you had gone to school. You had found work. You had established yourselves in life. Yet it was pretty clear that something was missing. There was work, there were friends, there was family, but that one special person to share your life with was missing. And you were aware of that void. After, all it is one of those simple truths of life. Life is better when you have someone to share it with.

Solomon was the wisest man that this world has ever seen and yet often his great wisdom is found in just observing and recognizing simple truths. And so Solomon made note of this simple truth of the human existence: It is good to have someone with whom you can enjoy your life. A man could have everything he wanted in life, but if he has no one to share it with, what's the point really. If we back up a few verses, we see that Solomon paints such a scenario here in the book of Ecclesiastes chapter 4. Solomon writes: ***"There was a man all alone; he had neither son nor brother. There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth. "For whom am I toiling," he asked, "and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?" This too is meaningless— a miserable business! ⁹ Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: ¹⁰ If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! ¹¹ Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? ¹² Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.. – Ecclesiastes 4:8-12a***

You don't have to be the wisest person that has ever lived to recognize this simple truth. Companionship is one of the greatest blessings of life. Two are better than one. Companionship is one of the great blessings that God confirms and pours out upon you in marriage. Kyle, in Beth God has given you someone with whom you can share your life. He has given you a wife to work hard for and then come home to her. Beth, in Kyle God has given you a husband to be that kind and dependable companion that you needed - to cheer you and comfort you. And you have and you will find great joy in being there for him, supporting him. What a blessing to have a faithful spouse, to have that friend to help pick you up when you fall! What a blessing to have a wife, to have a husband that will bring you happiness and joy! What a blessing to have a faithful spouse to go home to and keep you warm at night! These are the blessings that are included in God's gift of marriage. Not only

has God brought into your life a companion and friend, but he has blessed you, Beth, with a good husband. He has blessed you Kyle with a lovely wife.

If one is good, and two is better, having God in your life is even better yet. And that brings us to the passage that you chose for your special day, ***“A cord of three strands is not easily broken.”***

There is strength in numbers. You need each other. You are better with each other, and you are even better yet with God. Your life will be forever tied together and you need God to be a big part of that. And as you approached this day you recognized this need. Your relationship with God is important to both of you and played a large part in getting you to this spot today.

There are quite a few people in our world today who consider faith a non-issue in looking for a future spouse. Many think or even say, “It’s no big deal if my future spouse is a believer or not.” Others view religion as a source of unwanted problems, and then if it does cause conflict it is considered a problem that is not worth dealing with. For you it is not a non-issue. It is something that you have carefully addressed because for you Christ is the bedrock on which your marriage is built. So you two saw that it was important to carefully talk about God and his place in your life. Pretty much from Day 1 of your relationship you have deliberately talked things through and you have made it clear how important God is to you. You have examined the Scriptures. You have sought your Savior’s council. You made premarital Bible Study and counseling in God’s Word a priority even if it meant traveling, and juggling schedules and meeting on weekends early in the morning and sometimes later on at night. You wanted Christ to be the center of your marriage. You wanted to hear and discuss what God’s Word has to say about your life and your life together. We sat together and discussed how God loves you in Christ Jesus and how that truth is central to Scripture, and how that is central to your lives as individuals and will be central to your married life.

Today this worship service purposely does the same. It centers on the gospel, the good news of Jesus, and communicates how that living word affects our lives and specifically your life together. Today we don’t just get to talk about how great Beth and Kyle are and how much you two love each other, but today we are able to talk about how great your God is and how much he loves you and all of us.

Today we get to talk about how Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. God himself came down to save unlovable sinners. In his undeserved love for us he took action and he did what we could not do. He kept the law perfectly in our place and he died as our substitute. He paid the full price for our sin. Our debt is paid in full. In Christ alone we are saved. He has accomplished our salvation. He has taken away our guilt. He gives us the hope and the peace that makes our lives full. He fills our hearts with his love. We love him because he first loved us. We love each other because he has shown us how to love.

This is what your love for each other and your marriage is to be all about. It is not just empty talk that you hear on one day in a church. This is the good news that will strengthen you and guide you and bring you closer together until life’s end. This is the good news that you are to share with each other.

As we had our pre-marriage meetings I found out something about Kyle. Kyle can sure talk. I had no idea that Kyle was such a conversationalist. Some guys just don’t talk much. Some men just can’t sit down with someone they barely know and open up. But it quickly became apparent that Kyle doesn’t have that problem, does he Beth? So my advice to you

today is this: Keep the conversation going. Keep on talking. Keep on communicating your love to each other, and keep on talking to each other about what God has done for you in Christ. Talk to your God in prayer, listen to his voice by reading the Scriptures, and talk to each other about God's love. This is not just something that happens one day a week. But God's Word encourages us to make this a daily activity and a central part of your life. He says to us, ***"Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds... talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."*** Talk about God's Word in the home. Have an active devotional life. Get into God's Word and learn of his love. Read and study God's Word and then talk about it with each other, ask each other questions, ask me questions, get into God's Word and grow together in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wind your life around him and you will grow closer to each other. The tighter you wrap your life around God, the stronger your marriage will be. The more that you recognize the love that God has shown to you in Jesus the stronger your love for each other will be.

Ok quiz time. Agree or disagree. Marriage is a 50/50 proposal. Don't worry you already answered. You already passed. But do you remember that question from our first pre-marriage class? Do remember the answer that we came up with? We answered that marriage is more than a 50/50 proposal. Each of you said that it would be good to work together, but each of you thought to it would be better you if the statement read that both a man and his wife gave 100% into the marriage. And then finally we talked about how the best answer that I have ever heard given for this question is that marriage is a relationship that is 100%, 100%, 100%. Man and wife and God all working to build and strengthen and maintain this relationship. Kyle and Beth and Christ bound together, strengthening and supporting each other. ***A cord of three strands is not easily broken.***

So remember that this relationship is more than just two people working together, but today you become one. And not only will you be there to support and comfort each other with all your heart, but God is right there with you as well and he is giving you his all. He is there for you and with you. God is the friend that you can go to in prayer. He is your refuge in times of trouble. He is the source of your joy and your love. And he will always be there holding out his word to you, forgiving you your sins, filling you with his love and forgiveness in Christ so that you may love and forgive each other. He is there giving you his Spirit and his strength every single day. And that is, that will be, the key to your life together. You are no longer two but you are one in Christ Jesus.

As so today we celebrate that God has brought two great people together. Today we give thanks that you have found someone to share your life with. And today we rejoice that God goes with you as you are united in him. From Day 1 of your relationship to your final day on this earth, may God remain central to your life together. He is there to be that continuing source of love and strength, that core, that center strand that your lives are wound around. He will not only hold your marriage together, but as you become closer to your God, your Savior, he will bring you closer to each other. A cord of three strands will not easily be broken. Amen.