

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 22) – October 6, 2024

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh.

What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

- Mark 10:7-9 -

Jesus is quoting the Scripture, specifically Genesis 2:24. This is God’s design for the human family from the very beginning. It continues to be God’s design for the human family. The world in its fallen nature may deem other relationships as equivalent to that of marriage. That does not change God’s loving purpose for the lifelong union of one man to one woman. From the beginning, God designed man and woman in such a wondrous way that we would experience a glimpse of the miracle that is the creation of life. And should the union of man and woman not result in children, that does not make one’s marriage a failure or any less beautiful.

I’ve been blessed to officiate at the weddings of couples young and not as young. I’ve seen couples in their best days and yes, in their most difficult of circumstances. One of the most beautiful things I’ve seen is the loving care given to a husband by his wife and vice versa as they approach their final years, months, and days. I’ve seen the love of a wife who came daily to visit her husband in the Alzheimer’s Unit long after he became bed ridden and could only mumble incoherently. That didn’t stop her from sitting with him, singing to him, and telling him Bible stories. Likewise, is the man who cared for his wife day after day at home when all she knew of this man was that he was kind and nice.

When a man and woman make a promise before God, no one on that wedding day knows the joys and struggles that will come. What we do know is that couples will face temptations that, if followed, will lead to the destruction of the marriage. The voice of the tempter is a powerful voice who seeks to place doubt in our minds that God’s intent is different from what is stated in Scripture.

The beauty of a life-long union of man and woman who are blessed with 50, 60, or 70 plus years as husband and wife is their witness to the world. Such a witness includes grace, mercy, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you, patience or what some translations of the Bible call long-suffering that together husband and wife endure the trials and struggles together. In these small ways, we see God’s faithfulness to us.