

## Lord of the Wedding Rings

David and Alicia Kennedy have been married just over seven months. Most of you remember this young couple. They visited us a couple of months before their marriage, wondering if God in His providence would lead them to work with us the summer before David's last year of college. Well, they went another route, but through the months that have followed we have kept in touch. We were saddened to hear that last week they lost almost everything in an apartment fire there in Oklahoma City.

I talked to David to get the details and there is one outstanding moment through the fire that reminds us how important marriage should be to all of us and how important it is to God. As the fire was ransacking their few belongings, David and Alicia were sitting in the Fire Chief's truck, when Alicia looked down at her hand and remembered! Her wedding set needed to be sized down, and she had temporarily placed her set in a glass on top of their refrigerator. Immediately the chief radioed his men to look for the ring, but to no avail. Then the men began, bucket full by bucket full, to bring down the ashes of what used to be their kitchen to the front lawn. Right in the middle of the snow and ice storm, nine of Oklahoma City's best went to their knees and began to sift through the ashes and burning embers for Alicia's wedding set. And although it was like looking for the proverbial needle in the hay stack, to the glory of God, they found it! The picture of those precious firemen on their knees looking for the wedding ring brings some sobering thoughts to my mind:

### **1. Marriage is about who we have, not what we have.**

Do you remember O. Henry's beautiful short story, entitled *The Gift of the Magi*? Della wanted to get her young husband something special for Christmas and the one dollar and eighty-seven cents would not suffice. She wanted to get him a platinum watch chain for the family heirloom pocket watch that had been passed down through the generations from his father and grandfather before him. So she went to a buyer of hair and sold her knee-length beautiful brown hair for twenty dollars and purchased the platinum chain. Meanwhile, Jim took his heirloom watch and hocked it to get what he knew she would cherish - a set of gorgeous turtle shell hair combs for her glorious hair. So here are two young lovers - no watch for the platinum watch chain and no hair for the tortoise shell combs. But they had something so much more than money could buy; they had each other and the love symbolized by the gifts that O. Henry pointed out were the true gifts of the magi.

Let all the things we have perish; love conquers all. *"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal"* (II Corinthians 4:18). *"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away... And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity"* (I Corinthians 13:8, 13).

### **2. A marriage advances on its knees.**

My heart is warmed as I visualize those dear firemen on their knees to find the humble symbols of love and marriage, the wife's wedding rings. Sometimes the trials of life seem almost too much to bear. But this is the time to pray, to seek God for deliverance and the way to follow: *"For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah. I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye"* (Psalm 32:6-8).

### **3. Fire possesses the ability to purify a marriage.**

When the fireman found the rings, all they needed was a little cleaning up; the fire did not harm the jewel or precious metal. As a matter of fact, we see that fire has the ability to purify gold: *"The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts"* (Proverbs 17:3). Jesus

spoke of "...gold tried in the fire..." (Revelation 3:18).

Let me encourage any marriage that is being tried: hold steady and just let the fire, no matter how hot, to purify your motives, your decisions, and all actions. The Bible speaks of "...silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Psalm 12:6). It is usually after the seventh period of heating the silver that the dross is finally cooked off and the true essence of silver is now so clear that the silversmith can see his reflection in the silver. It is at this point the fire is cut and the jewelry is made from the purified silver. By the same token, it is usually after the fires of trial and the Master sees His reflection in the now purified marriage that He is ready to use the couple for His glory. A great marriage is tempered by the fire and made pure over the long term.

#### **4. A marriage will flourish with miracles.**

*"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge"* (Hebrews 13:4). During the late 1800s in America, Dr. Russell Conwell was pastor of Grace Baptist Church and founder of Temple College in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He gave his speech, *Acres of Diamonds* six thousand times and a book by the same title is still in print telling the story of a man who gave up all he had to find diamonds abroad, only to discover, after much loss, there were diamonds in his own clay back home. Many never realize the acres of diamonds in the clay of their own marriage! In earnest pleading our Lord tells the husband to stay faithful to the wife God has given to him by these poignant words, *"Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well"* (Proverbs 5:15). It is from our own well the gold is found!

C. S. Lewis pointed out in his book entitled, *Miracles* that God lives in the realm of the supernatural. Lewis very naturally made the segue that when we live, communicate, and operate within the atmosphere of God, that the miracles which are normal to His environment will likewise become our environment also. Honorable marriage is so much the atmosphere of God that He likened Christ and His Bride to a marriage relationship. When we, in our marriage, honor God and attempt to glorify Him in this realm, then we are moving into the doubly blessed life of God's atmosphere. It is here where miracles abound; it is here where God will move heaven and earth on our behalf. So, when we come to nine firemen on their knees looking for the miraculous preservation of a wedding ring set, is it any wonder that there was a miracle in the ice and snow storm? Do you need a miracle in your marriage? Why not today, experiment by getting on your knees and finding out that God can raise gold out of the ashes. After all, He is the Lord of rings and most especially what those rings represent!

- Pastor Pope -

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