

Caleb Sutton and Katherine Trupp

Caleb and Katy had their first date outdoors on a pleasant evening watching the sunset. They are getting married during the first week of winter. On the day they got engaged, they had to deal with a blizzard in Colorado. Their wedding day by God's providence is taking place between two winter storms in Kansas City. They've known each other since high school, a time when many friendships are intense but ultimately fleeting, yet they still enjoy each other's company every day. They invited their family and friends to work this wedding into the midst of their plans for Christmas this year, then they uninvited many of them because of the pandemic. They are still deliriously happy today, and the only reason is love.

Christmas is a magnificent time of year for a wedding because Christmas itself celebrates love. People sacrifice their time and resources to draw up a list of names, match them with the right gift, shop, and spend. We do this for one another out of love. In a more profound way, this is the story of the first Christmas Day. God took a long time to prepare just the right gift for his people, and gave the world a child who would grow up to live in love, teach how to love, and die out of love.

St. Paul's beautiful hymn to love, then, is a guide for all of us in living as Christians. Paul reminds us how we should be treating one another. Speaking well of one another isn't enough. Paul says, "If I speak in human or angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong." Saying nice things about the future is not enough. Paul says, "If I have the gift of prophecy..., but do not have love, I am nothing." Even donating to charities isn't enough. Paul says, "If I give away everything I own, ...but do not have love, I gain nothing." Love is the foundation of the Christian life. When people fall in love, they learn its value. Love makes sacrifice easy. You want to sacrifice for the person you love.

The origins of love are completely mysterious. We deduce that it comes from God because God is love. Indeed, when Jesus spoke about marriage to his disciples, he said God was responsible. God joins two people together, and what God joins "no human being must separate." One proof of love is its longevity. When you have it, you never want to let it go. You feel committed to it forever. True love requires eternity.

In the Book of Tobit, on their wedding night, Tobiah and Sarah prayed that God would protect them from all evil. They assured God that they married "not because of lust, but for a noble purpose." They wanted to live to a happy old age, not for their own enjoyment, but so that they might fulfill what God asked of them.

Caleb and Katy, you could not predict the events that would lead to this day, and we cannot predict what God will be asking of you. But we believe that God has given you the primary tool you will need to embrace the future: the gift of love. God showed his love for you already on the first Christmas Day. Today as you declare your commitment, God gives you his: His love will guide you all the days of your life.