

One of the best views of Kansas City is from the Liberty Memorial. Dedicated to the memory of World War I, it now provides a backdrop for gatherings of peace, education, and celebration. And, it is often a place where a guy like Parker gets down on one knee and asks a woman like Caroline to marry him. We're here today because Caroline said yes that day.

People see the Memorial from all around the city, and from the Memorial people see the city in all its splendor. The flame atop the tower calls to mind those who lost their lives in an international effort to restore peace. Now the flame shines throughout the region to remind people that peace comes from sacrifice.

The same can be said of love. St. Paul's great hymn about love is basically a checklist on how Christians are supposed to sacrifice for one another. Many engaged couples ask to hear it on their wedding day not just because it so perfectly names the feelings associated with love, but because it summons them to the kind of sacrifice that will make true love endure. Parker and Caroline already understand this dynamic, and they come today to embrace it fully.

They've also chosen for us to hear some sayings of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount. Addressing and recruiting disciples for the first time, Jesus says that they are to be like salt that seasons the world, and like light that shines where all can see. Some of the most prime real estate occupies territory like that. However, Jesus applies the image to speak about the light of a very public city and the light of a very private home. In the case of the city, if you build it on a mountain, you cannot hide it. Its light, like the flame on the Liberty Memorial, will be visible all around.

But Jesus seems especially intent on the light of the home. When you light one, you don't hide it under a basket. You set it proudly on a lampstand so it can do its work. Jesus says, "it gives light to all in the house."

Caroline and Parker, you chose for your wedding day one of the longest nights of the year, a night when we each personally experience the need for light. It is therefore the time of year when we celebrate Christmas, when, into the darkness of the world, came the very light of Christ. He said of himself, "I am the light of the world." And in this gospel, he says to his disciples, "You are the light of the world."

Caroline and Parker, as the coming of Christ gave us the light we need, as the Liberty Memorial's flame causes us to gaze with hope at the lamp of peace, so your home is to become a place where light breaks forth in the darkness. Christ has set the flame of love within your hearts for your own enjoyment, but for something more: He asks you to be light for the world. Your love is to give light to all in the house, and to do it so brightly that it will cause others to gaze with hope at your lamp of love. Your home is to be a place where the lost find welcome, where the needy receive nourishment, and where the visitor will encounter Christ. Your home will then provide one of the best views of the city. If you nurture your commitment to each other and to Christ, then the flame of your love will shine that brightly for all to see.