

Wes Huhman & Rachael Risinger

When I first met with Rachael and Wes last summer, it was clear how well they fit each other in perspectives, experience, and beliefs. Wes shared some of the challenges he faced at work when new ownership had come into place. Rachael described herself to me as a Type A personality, a well-organized woman and someone who doesn't like surprises. But she got plenty of surprises over the past couple of years. She moved to Kansas City, where she knew no one. She found a guy on an app without knowing very much about him. And when that relationship blossomed to the point where Wes was ready to propose, even though other people knew the day, place and time he selected, he totally surprised her at an Orchid Symposium at Powell Gardens. Rachael, I'm like you—I don't much like surprises, but I have to admit that sometimes a surprise is just great. We learn what was no surprise to God.

Wes and Rachael, one reason you've been able to manage challenges and surprises is not just your organizational ability, but another trait you hold in common. You share faith in Christ and want your married life to begin with a wedding in a church that holds the values you honor and that you hope to share, God-willing, with future children.

Near the end of St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians, he gives that early Christian community some advice. Paul is responding to things he's heard about them, and apparently what he heard was not too flattering. They all felt united to Christ, but they didn't much feel united with one another. Paul gave them a list of virtues to wear as if they were clothes. He writes, "Put on... heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do." Then, as if describing a winter coat, Paul writes, "over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection." Even today we Christians don't always feel much united with one another; we know we should be. Sadly, it's nothing new; even the Colossians dealt with this. We need to love better than we do, so it helps to have examples.

The Catholic Church recommends this passage from Colossians as one option for weddings, and it resonated so much with Wes and Rachael that they wanted us to hear it today. In newlyweds, we can see these virtues in place. If we want to be more gentle, patient and forgiving, one thing to do is look at a couple like these two to see that it is humanly possible (and Risinger-ly possible). We can live peaceably with one another when we let love lead the way.

Whether you are a Type A personality dealing with surprises or a faithful employee navigating changes in the administration, you can hold yourself together if, to use St. Paul's analogy, you put on the right clothes, or as he says a little later in this passage, if you "let the peace of Christ control your hearts."

Rachael and Wes, we're grateful to you for showing us that love is real and for inspiring us to share it with others. We pray for you that you will let the peace of Christ ever control your hearts so that you may continue to enjoy the blessings of love all the days of your life.