

Pastor Geoffrey R. Boyle  
Wedding for Ryan and Miranda Lanier  
19 June 2011  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Wichita  
1 John 4:7-12

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit*

Dear Ryan and Miranda,  
the reading you chose for today from 1 John begins,  
“**Beloved, let us love one another**” (1 Jn 4:7).

And while that sounds like an awfully nice thing to do—  
what in the world does it mean?  
What does it mean to love someone?

One of the things we talked about, preparing for this marriage,  
is that love is much richer than we first think.

It’s more than a feeling or emotion or a level of dating.  
Even middle-school kids,  
but especially high-schoolers, fall in and out of love.

We don’t know what else to call that intense emotion.  
We call it love because we know love is strong—  
it’s deep and very far-reaching.

Love is what a father has towards his children.  
Love is shared within a family.  
Love even binds friends together with a bond of loyalty and companionship and care.

But again, what *is* love?  
Where’s it come from?  
What’s it mean to love someone?

Let’s hear again this reading from 1 John:  
“**Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God**” (4:7).

And in the next verse, it’s even more pointed,  
“**God is love**” (4:8).

And then, so were completely clear on what love is,  
what love looks like,  
and how love works, St. John says,  
“**In this the love of God was made manifest among us,  
that God sent His only Son into the world,  
so that we might live through Him**” (4:9).

*That’s love!*

Not just an emotion,  
 or the sort of thing you fall in or out of as you please—  
     Love is God sending His Son, Jesus Christ,  
     to die in your place,  
         so that you would live free and forgiven through Him.

*That's love—*  
     **“Not that we've loved God, but that He loved us”** (4:10).

And so, Miranda and Ryan,  
     **“love one another”** (4:7):  
         Give yourself up for the other,  
         forgive each other,  
         nourish and cherish each other,  
         honor and respect and keep each other—  
             even if one of you goes off the deep end,  
             or loses his job,  
             or really messes up—  
                 **“Love one another”** (4:7).

For this love is a great gift from above.

You are loved so richly and deeply that your God and Lord gave His life for you.

And God's love isn't some fleeting emotion,  
     and He doesn't fall in and out of love—  
         He very simply, and yet mysteriously, *is* love!

And **“if God so loved us, then we also ought to love one another”** (4:11).

And you do.  
 You really do love each other—  
     not just with feelings and emotions,  
     but with a friendship and companionship that's clear to everyone here!

But today you make a promise that you'll always love each other.

And while I hope and pray you're always *in* love with each other—  
     sharing that passion and emotion with each other—  
     that's not the sort of love you'll say, *“I will”* to.

Your *“I will”* is a promise to love the way God loves—  
     to love with self-giving, forgiveness, humility, and respect,  
     to give yourself up entirely for the other.

It's an *“I will”* that you'll never forget.

And while you might need reminders here and there along the way,  
this promise to love each other is rooted in and flows from God's promise first to you.

God is love.

And God loves you.

So, "**beloved,**" Ryan and Miranda,  
"**Love one another**" (4:7).

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit*