

Pastor Geoffrey R. Boyle
Renewal of Vows for Doug and Beckey Morse
2 July 2011
Grace Lutheran Church, Wichita
1 John 4:7-12

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

“Beloved, let us love one another” (1 Jn 4:7).

Doug, Beckey—

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

What does it mean to actually love someone else?

I know you’ve had a solid decade trying to figure this out,
and would be quick to admit you’re still learning as you go!

But as you’ve come to know,

love is more than a feeling or emotion.

Even grade-school kids fall in and out of *that* kind of love.

But here, there’s something richer, deeper, more profound.

So 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 the next verse is 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).

Now *that’s* love!

Not just an emotion,

or a feeling,

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 and to forgive your sin,

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 *this*, Doug and Beckey,
is what your marriage now rests on!

Here you are,
renewing your vows,
affirming your love,
and doing it all publicly before the altar of God—*why?*

Because you've learned what it means to "**love one another**" (4:7).
To give yourself up for the other,
to forgive each other,
to nourish and cherish each other,
to honor and respect and keep each other—
even if one of you goes off the deep end,
or finally breaks his back,
you've learned to "**love one another**" (4:7).

And your love for each other is different than when it first began—
you've matured, grown wise,
suffered all sorts of trials and temptations, frustrations and pains, together,
and in all of this, you've come to know love as a great gift from above.

You're loved so richly and deeply that your God and Lord gave His life *for you*, to forgive *you*.

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

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

Let your love for each other grow stronger and deeper each and every day.
Nurture it by hearing again and again of your Savior's love for you.

Having come together as one flesh,
love each other not just with feelings and emotions,
but with a friendship and companionship and unity and faith,
that mirrors Christ's love *for you*!

God is love. And God loves you.

May this anniversary of 10 blessed years of Holy Matrimony,
be renewed, restored, affirmed, and blessed by many more years to come!

Dearly "**beloved**," Doug and Beckey,
"**Love one another**" (4:7).

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