

As I said at the outset, we gather here for the wedding of Laura and Daniel. This is a culmination of a journey that began many years ago and now you are here on your wedding day. I would just invite you to think back over those years; the time when friendship developed into love; in that love you came to realise that this was the person that you wanted to spend the rest of your life with.

For every couple that journey from first encounter, to love, to commitment, to wedding day is different. The wedding itself is a public declaration of commitment to one another that has existed long before the wedding day itself.

For Laura and Daniel the excitement of courtship has been accompanied by anxiety. In the process your love for each other has grown deeper and stronger.

A great deal of thought has gone into this wedding since we first met up nearly two years ago. There have been the practical arrangements, obtaining the licence, arranging the reception, deciding on what you are going to wear. Alongside all this a great deal of thought has gone into the service here today. There has been the choice of hymns, the choice of lessons. It has been a privilege to accompany you on this part of the journey.

You chose as your first lesson that passage from Ecclesiastes. In this passage the writer takes a very honest look at life in its totality; its highs and its lows, its times of light and its times of darkness. There is a rhythm to the poetic language in which these thoughts are expressed. Each life has its own

particular rhythm. When two people fall in love, they discover a deep seated harmony between the rhythm of their life and the life of the other. In that harmony they discover a shared strength, a shared peace as they face whatever comes their way; in which they work through whatever difficulties or differences they may have.

The other passage they chose is from John's Gospel, that speaks of another wedding at Cana in Galilee. There is a crisis; in the course of the celebrations, which would have involved the whole community, the wine runs out. This would have been more than embarrassing. It would have reflected badly on the hosts, their standing in the community. But Jesus is there and by his actions and by his presence he transforms that whole situation. Daniel, Laura; it is our prayer for you that you may know Christ's presence with you in your marriage. In his presence may your love for each other deepen and grow; together, in his presence and strength, may you go forward in love, upholding and supporting each other. In the words of that prayer that you will say together at the end of this service:

God of tenderness and strength,
you have brought our paths together
and led us to this day;
go with us now as we travel through good times,
through trouble or through change.
Bless our home, our partings and our meetings.
Make us worthy of each other's best,
and tender with each other's dreams,
trusting in your love in Jesus Christ. Amen.

God bless you both, may he grant you every blessing in your marriage and many long and happy years together.