

# Celebrating God's Blessing Relationships

## John 2:1-11

How wonderful to have Jesus as guest at your wedding! How even more wonderful to have Jesus present in your marriage. Today we are celebrating the many weddings that have taken place here at St Paul's; and many other weddings which may have taken place elsewhere, in school chapels, other church buildings, gardens or reception centres, but which were part of the ministry of St Paul's.

It's a wonderful thing that the church speaks blessings into marriage. God desires to bless and enrich all human relationships with his grace and life-giving presence. How aware are you of God's presence and blessing on your marriage or other significant relationships? Though there are times we perhaps don't allow him much room in our relationships (just as there was no room for him in Bethlehem); consider how Jesus enters hearts and commits himself to all baptised children of God. In them he is present in their lives and in their relationships.

Today God's gracious blessing was given to them. Will they take him with them in their relationship tomorrow? Following their wedding day, some couples abandon the church and miss out on the streams of living water found there. Many have remained active in worship and fellowship in the community of St Paul's. Some have seen children baptised, confirmed and even married here with children of their own. What a blessing!



Whilst some remain single, others in relationship choose not to marry. Life and careers cause many to move away finding homes in other churches, settling elsewhere in Australia or in places around the globe. As we move to Riversdale Rd, we journey with God from this place and we carry the legacy of past learnings and shared fellowship. We continue in the blessing of our marriages and special relationships, as family and as friends and fellow members. We move with confidence in the future, and with some nostalgia for the past, but most of all with joy and thanksgiving for being the bride of Christ, who gave himself completely that we might be presented blameless and without fault before God our Father.

A beginning with God's blessing is always a good beginning. We make promises to each other God makes promises to us as individuals, as couples, as family as gathered, and as redeemed people. Jesus promises to give light to homes where he is invited and named as Lord, where people live as children of the light, loving one another as he has first loved us. Our love, without him, cannot be the perfect love God requires of us. But thankfully God is always more able to love and forgive than we are. He is always faithful to his promises. Praise God! His love is unconditional. His promises are sure!

A mysterious union happens when two are joined in marriage. A mystery not unlike that of the incarnation where God put on Flesh. And Jesus remains present in the mysterious union of our baptism where we put on Christ and his presence informs our living and all our relationships with his love.

Being married at St Paul's or elsewhere doesn't guarantee an enduring marriage. God has not promised sun without rain, joy without sorrow, peace without pain. Yes, Christian marriages are not immune from tragedy or struggle. But there's a poem that says:



But God has promised strength for the day,  
rest for the labour,  
light for the way,  
grace for the trials,  
help from above,  
unfailing sympathy, undying love.

It is in the ongoing blessing of God, and his words of life that Christian marriage is informed, transformed and enriched to last. God's grace creates in our relationships a willingness to love and to forgive each other, not to simply endure... but to thrive and bring him glory.

God seeks to bless all human relationships. He desires that we live life to the full, dwelling in harmony with each other. The Holy Spirit leads Christians to bear witness to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the way they live, honouring their vows to each other. Also, in how they treat others, serving with mutual respect and faithful love. Holding back judgement on others; giving grace, and seeking understanding with humility.



When the wine ran out it, nearly stopped the celebration. At Cana, Jesus showed his compassion and his power, turning water into a most abundant supply of the very best wine. Without demanding any praise, conformity or payment, He simply blessed the celebration that day. Life in the days and years ahead lay with the couple to work and



make their relationship work. Having Jesus present that day was God's blessing. We are more blessed!

Relationships, and at times marriage in particular, can be hard yakka. Good healthy relationships need healthy input from both sides. But we often fail. Running out of wine is one thing, but what if we were to run out of love and enjoyment in our relationships? God desires our relationships be full of life, lasting and life giving.

There are many resources for marriages. Within families, there is wisdom and insight from experience. In society, there are written resources, professional counselling and so on... but ministers of the word point to God, who blesses human relationships and desires to heal and bind up the broken hearted. God, who strengthens families and communities with faith, hope and love. You may think it is too late for your relationship, and in reality some relationships cannot be restored; but he remains the God who can bring life to the dead, and he can heal your heart, strengthen your faith in him, and bring new unexpected blessings now and in the future.

Out of the broken past, a new future can be fashioned by his gracious presence. Out of the ashes, new life can bloom again when the Lord of life and love is near. The resilience of the Australian bush inspires us, but even greater is the inspiration and power of God's love. If we ever find it hard or impossible to love, even if we fail in our relationships, God doesn't stop loving us. His perfect love seeks to renew, and to empower us to grow in His love.



We thank God for blessing marriages and being present in our relationships. With Christ Jesus, the best is always ahead of us. Marriage vows are 'til death do us part, but God's eternal love enables us to live and love into eternity. Invite Jesus to enrich your marriage, any relationship, and seek his healing and grace. Embrace his forgiveness and peace over past failure to love as he loves. The best wine, the best years may yet be ahead of us. They *are* ahead of us. Amen.