

Holy Matrimony
Del Lena Dolen ~ Joseph Daniel Scott
July 16th, 2022

Marriage makes us stronger. There is something mystical about marriage, about the union of man and woman in the sight of God. There is something otherworldly, something intangible yet real, something profound and musical and majestic about two becoming one flesh. Marriage makes us stronger. It isn't simply psychological or economics or emotionally based – it is more far-reaching than those things could ever be. Men and women were created for each other. That means something. A man and a woman might have a relationship, an intimate one, and remain unmarried. Something vital is lost in that instance; the strength that comes from marriage is sacrificed for a vain idea, a misguided notion of love or commitment or independence.

I'm pretty sure that no one has ever accused either Del or Joseph of being weak. Beautifully composed, self-assured, confident in who they are and what they believe, these two are a credit to their generation. This marriage is a portrait of devotion and it is sweet in our eyes, a moment of exquisite joy and those who love them luxuriate in the happiness that is theirs. But make no mistake, this day they become stronger; noticeably stronger; blessedly stronger.

It is not good for the man to be alone. God had seemingly created all that He was gonna. The man was made in His image and he was perfect. Yes, Adam was strong, handsome, brave, and smart but the best thing about Adam is that he was holy. God paraded all the animals in front of Adam to see what the man would name them and it was clear, there was no suitable helper found for the man. So, God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. God opened up a place in Adam's side and extracted the material to craft that last thing that He made on that magnificent 6th day. What did God create? The sublime Eve; she was radiant, strong, brave and intelligent but the best thing about her was that she was holy. The man woke from his sleep and feasted his eyes on her and he knew. At last! This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. Adam was stronger. Eve made Adam stronger. Adam embraced Eve as his own and Eve was at home, in paradise.

And sin wrecked the place. The devil came with his lies, his corruption, and his hate. Eve reached out her hand and she took some of the fruit. Adam too sank his teeth into that which God had told him that he must not eat. Sin casts a long shadow. What was good and holy was radically changed. We live in that soup. If y'all were to give our culture a grade on marriage, what grade would you give it? How do you think that we're doing in 2022? Are we becoming wiser? Are we more devoted to one another? Husband to wife – wife to husband? At 59 I am growing a bit more cynical. Do you know what the corrective is when my attitude grows sour? The Gospel of Jesus Christ and a wedding like this. This ceremony itself is rich, lovely, significant but it is the bride and the groom that personify what is good.

Let me explain. It is my custom to ask the bridal couple what they see in each other, what distinguishes the fish that is Del Lena from all the other young lasses in the sea. What sets apart Joseph Daniel from all the other beefcake on the shelf of humanity. It was a homework assignment and they were to respond via email as to why this woman, why this man. What I received were A+ answers. What I received swelled my sour heart with joy – for them, to be sure, but also for humanity. I was reminded what love truly is. Joseph spoke of a selfless

woman who is always looking to the needs of others. She goes the extra mile to see to that those around her are supported, encouraged, and that she has rubbed off on him. Joseph sees a future with a woman whose character will bless him and their children. He knows that he is stronger in her company. He is bold to step out into this world knowing who it is that stands with him. Her beauty, inside and out, grips his heart and inspires him to realize his potential as a man. It was a wonderful insight into exactly who Del is and what a delightful effect she has had on this man.

Del spoke of Joe's character as if it were a reflection of Christ. Kind-hearted, patient, and providing a sense of profound security is just the beginning. Del humbly mentioned that when she is not feeling 100% on top of the world that Joe doesn't treat her as any thing other than the most valued treasure that he has ever encountered. Del is stronger in Joe's company. Sure of herself, confident in his commitment and presence and fidelity, Del is free to be the woman that God has created her to be. Love is alive. The dynamic and vibrant reality of genuine love is alive in Del and Joseph.

Love didn't originate with them, or with any of us. Love is a divine reality. God is love. Marriage is based on something that stands above us all, but comes plowing into sinners' lives, our lives. Even when we were broken, when there was nothing loveable or inspiring about humanity, God sent His Son. He came in search of a bride. But there was no holy bone of His bones, no pure flesh of His flesh. God has always had a plan. That plan informed how He created Adam and Eve. What is God's plan? To offer up His Son on the Holy Cross. God the Father caused His Son to fall into a deep sleep, the sleep of death on the cross. And a soldier came with a lance and opened up a place in His side and out poured blood and water. God's blood washes us from sin and prepares us to be united to Him, made one flesh. God's blood makes us holy, restores us to paradise. His love is the dynamic that is very much alive in these two beautiful people. Christ and His bride, the church, are on full display this day as Joseph Daniel and Del Lena stand together in this holy house. They are strong, together, for God's love is alive in them.

You will need to be strong. This world isn't getting easier to live in for Christians. Insanity is very much on the world's menu and more and more folks are ordering it. One of the many things that you two share is a sense of humor; good. You will need it. Del, Joseph says that you have a strong backbone; good. Both of you will need it. Not just for yourselves; for others. Joy is alive in this holy house by virtue of your marriage. God will use you to bless those in your sphere of influence. Love and humor and a set of godly principles that do not change – you are both a reflection of what is very much needed in this late day. You are strong. On the holy cross our Lord looked like the epitome of weakness. Pierced and suffering, He is the epitome of strength, the epitome of love, the epitome of life. He triumphed over sin and death. It is His love that makes us strong. All of that divine beauty is in you. Believe it. Rejoice in it. Celebrate it in each other. Love is very much alive in you. You are stronger this day than you have ever been.