



REFLECTIONS

August 4, 2013

But the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13

Bound by Love

Wedding bells rang, anticipation grew, the church filled, and love flooded the air. Words spoken, promises made, a kiss exchanged, and a joy-filled walk up the aisle into the journey of life. Man and wife bound by love formed into a new creation just as God designed life to be.

Love is so powerful. We feel the strength from its presence and suffer in despair when it isn't there. Love is the underpinning for everything we celebrate in life, and perhaps love is never more celebrated than at a wedding. There is never more joy, never warmer hearts, never more smiling faces than when two become one, bound by love. But what is love anyway?

Love is more than warm feelings that flood the air at weddings, or even more than the joy of embracing a newborn child. Paul described some qualities of love to the Corinthians in his first letter to them. *"Love is patient, love is kind,"* he writes. *"It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."* Love is the gift that gives life meaning. It is the greatest of all spiritual gifts.

It's strange that we so often fail to include love as a spiritual gift. It is not among those gifts commonly identified in the reading of scripture. The gifts most identified in the writings of Paul are those that make us different from one another. *"There are different kinds of gifts,"* he writes. There are different kinds of service and different kinds of working. But love embodies us all.

Love is the gift that binds together a husband and wife. Love is the gift that binds us to each other in our lives on earth. Love is the gift that Jesus died for; and love is the gift that joins us as one in the body of Christ just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one, bound by love; for God is love.

One day wedding bells will ring, anticipation will grow, the church will fill, and love will flood the air. Words of promise once spoken will be a promise fulfilled; and there will be a joy-filled walk up the aisle into the eternal journey with Jesus—bound by love just as God designed it to be.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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