



Johannes Broxtermann: Wedding celebration

Wedding celebration
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There is a popular belief that marriages are made in heaven. Nevertheless: They must be lived on earth - under earthly conditions, with serious time pressure, amidst screaming children or constant ringing of the telephone!

That is the reality our marriages have to deal with, and after a while many falter and get into trouble, since the bride and groom expect to live a perfect heavenly life - a rather high expectation - in the midst of earthly reality. Marriage is not a perfect world. It cannot be nor does it need to be. Marriage is not paradise on earth. It is not the destination, it is a journey for you, the path leading to a destination. A journey, constant travelling, no more and no less.

At this wedding day, you start the journey. This day unites many people who love you or are very good friends - people from, at least, two different countries. Your marriage is not a "splendid isolation", not a lone island floating in the ocean, but will be lived in many lively currents which will surround and carry and accompany and enrich your life.

You stressed in our preparation talk that you have discovered during the nine years of your relationship a lot of common attributes: hard working, ambitious, a special creativity (important for a creative director!), a desire to explore the world, - but also - in this mobile world - a strong sense for your families. You share the same values and the same moral understanding of life, for example of charity. And - not unimportant: You share the same sense of humour - British humour....

Now you are both engaged in a Christian liturgy - the Christian understanding of marriage. I have read out the Gospel of the risen Christ who meets two disciples on their way to their home village, EMMAUS. For me it is interesting to consider the activity-words which relate to the disciples. These words are: walking and stopping, telling and seeing, arriving and recognizing, burning, going out and sharing, and talking. I think these words indicate important traits of the marriage - and of Christian life. Let us see.

Walking

The disciples are on the road, on their way to their home village (like Josina, now!) - Similarly, marriage is a journey, an open process. The destination, the goal: Full trust in one another, full understanding to another. That may be at times a secure stride, fast, rhythmic running, at other times - often - laborious stumbling: one step forward, two steps back. But the Gospel says: there is somebody who walks by your side, someone who has said: "Wherever two or perhaps three of you come together in my name, in my spirit, in my love, I will be in their midst."

Stopping

The disciples stood still. Yes, that is good: occasionally to stop and hold still: so that the soul can catch up with everything we have done and experienced in our daily



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lives. Not always just “action”, but also much reflection, - and growing from it: gratitude. Often to say thank you to the other beloved person – and to God.

Talking

The two men were talking with each other, and then with the unknown stranger to discuss their depression. Yes, it is good not to bury everything deep in one’s own heart. Frequently to acknowledge and recognize one another and to find kind words for each other. It is so important to express them loudly, not to keep the other person guessing. Also, an argument can clear the air, and often bears in it the germ of the delight in reconciliation.

Seeing

To deal carefully with one’s own blindness or blind spots, one’s inability to see the truth in order to be able to look in the same direction, together. “To look in the same direction”: not just every night in front of the television set! Rather, to focus on the goals of life, on the future which wants to be shaped, not just accepted as it is – to look at many little Dudsons who may spring from this marriage.

Arriving

The two disciples arrived in the evening -

Yes, the ability to arrive, to be completely happy, in tune with one’s identity – and yet, very close to one’s partner.

Recognizing

The eyes of the disciples were opened, and they recognized the stranger. - Not just to see the outside and surface of things, not just to function from day to day but to sense the unspeakable mystery behind things and in love (“Everything is more than it appears to be”) - and thereby to find God - in the other person, in you, and through the other person.

Burning

“Did not our hearts burn”, asked the disciples in the Gospel. And even when in the course of the years the fire is reduced to just smouldering embers: may there always remain sufficient sparks for the fire to be rekindled!

Going out and sharing

It is at the conclusion of the Gospel. The disciples do not want to keep their wonderful experience to themselves. They are running back to Jerusalem in the night - 7 miles, 12 kilometres! Their new experience is not a matter of an egocentric self-realization - a marriage must not turn into “Dual Egoism”! Sharing prevents this. Sharing helps to be united with the others.

Talking

Communication. Communion of the important things you have experienced in life and to share that which is essential to your life with your own children - but also with many other people - in London and hopefully with us in Ludenscheid.

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Josina and Grant, marriage is a wonderful part of life! We are not “programmed” to live in this way - we can do so in complete freedom. May God give you in this celebration of faith, in all good and all bad experiences of life, the necessary courage and the ability to find joy in your united life!

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