

Living in the Promise

The uniting of Bob & Sarah Zemple - June 25, 2011

by Pastor Jim Rademaker

"... and they lived happily ever after!" That's how all good fairytales end. But in the *real* world, it's not always that easy. On this wonderful fairytale day for the two of you, the first reading you've selected tells the true story of what marriage is often like. "*Dancing in a minefield and sailing in a storm*" If that's really what it's like, how will your marriage keep from being blown up or toppled on the high seas?

One answer comes from Tim, "The Toolman" Taylor. Tim's advice to you Bob is that every morning you wake up, just turn to Sarah and say "Honey, it's all my fault", (whatever it is, it's my fault) and things will go much smoother. Not the worst advice to a husband ... if it were only that easy.

As the days and years go by, you'll discover wonderful things about one another. Things you will enjoy and cherish. But you will also discover others things, things that aren't so wonderful. And these things you discover might make you wonder, "Whatever happened to that man I married, the one I fell in love with? What happened to the woman I married? I thought once we got married we were going to live happily ever after."

Musician Andrew Peterson, author of *Dancing In The Minefields* recalls, "In December of 2009 my wife and I celebrated fifteen years of marriage. A few days later, we got in a silly argument and I wrote this song after she went to bed." (*Andrew Peterson*)

"I do" are the two most famous last words. The beginning of the end. But to lose your life for another I've heard, is a good place to begin. 'Cause the only way to find your life. Is to lay your own life down.

Bob, fulfillment in your marriage comes as you become a better husband rather than demanding a "better" wife. Sarah, becoming a better wife rather than demanding a better husband. It's not about changing the other person (good luck with that one), but about allowing God to change you ... to show you your own faults and sins and your own need of a Savior.

Bob, you're role is to be a little Christ to your bride. To love her, serve her, give up your life for her. And in your role as husband, you will be humbled. You will come up short. You will fail miserably at times. And Christ will be there for you. Forgiving you. Loving you. Bringing you to your knees and to the Cross. Where you will find forgiveness and mercy and where you will learn to love in a whole new way.

Sarah, when you say "I DO" your life will officially be over. And that's a good thing, because your new life will be just beginning. You and Bob will go dancing in the minefields, sailing in the storm - of your own sinfulness. And it will be harder than you dreamed. But that's what the Promise is for. That's what the Cross is for.

I can't promise you that from this day forward you'll have a fairytale marriage. But I can promise you that you are looking at a gift from God. Your great teacher. God will use your spouse as a mirror, reflecting your inner nature that's shouting "ME, ME, ME! What do I get out of this!" In the mirror of the other, you will not always like what you see, and in a new way, you'll see why Jesus went to the Cross for you.

Dancing in a minefield and sailing in a storm. How will you're marriage keep from being blown up or toppled on the high seas? That's what the Promise is for.

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And the only way to lay it down is to remember the One who laid down His life for you. Giving up your life to the One who gave His life for you. And serving one another as you have been served.

In the days and years ahead, thank God for the gift of one another and how He is working through the other to bring you to the Cross, where you will live "happily ever after!"

He promised not to leave us. And His promises are true. So in the face of all this chaos, baby, I can dance with you.