

"Husband and Wife Magnifying the Lord!" - Psalm 34:3

26 December Anno Domini 1999
The Wedding of William Conrad and Dorothy Wright
The Minor Festival of St. Stephen, Martyr

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Emmett, Idaho
Pastor Michael L. McCoy

Dear Redeemed in Christ,

Grace, mercy and peace to you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Dear Dorothy and Bill,

May the Lord be magnified in your life, Bill, as a man, and in your life, Dorothy, as a woman, and in your life together as husband and wife.

What a wonderful season of the church year Christmas is for a man and a woman to appear in the House of the Lord to be married! What an appropriate day for a wedding - the day following the Festival of the Nativity of Our Lord and also the Minor Festival of St. Stephen the Martyr. On the one hand, the betrothed have journeyed to Bethlehem and behold the Christ Child. There is the husband, Joseph who magnified the Lord by believing the Word concerning the unborn Child and who had the privilege of announcing the Name of this Baby of Bethlehem, the Name of Jesus (Matthew 1:21). There is the virgin Mother and the wife of Joseph, placing the Baby Jesus in a manger - Mary who confessed, *My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour (Luke 1:46-47)*. On the other hand, there is Stephen, whose commitment to the truth, whose good confession in the presence of the enemies of God, and whose eyes beheld Jesus, the Son of Man standing at the Right Hand of God. In his life and in his death, Stephen magnified the Lord.

The sermon text for your wedding day sermon was written about 3,000 years ago by the Holy Spirit using the hand of King David. The entire psalm is one of thanks and praise to the Lord God for salvation and deliverance. As a fruit of faith and as the giving of thanks for his deliverance, David declares, *I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the Lord (Psalm 34:1-2)*. Then the king extends an invitation and that invitation is the basis for your wedding sermon. Please listen to Psalm 34:3 under the theme ...

... Husband and Wife Magnifying the Lord

O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together!

Thus far the Word of the Lord our God.

There are three parts to this sermon. First, that we understand what magnifying the Lord means. Second, that we hear about how one magnifies the Lord. And third, there is the invitation.

1. What Does This Mean?

In understanding what magnifying the Lord means, we have to go no further than the text itself. One of the beautiful aspects of Hebrew poetry in general, and this verse in particular, is that the definition is given within. So, in the verse, *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together!*, the meaning of the first part, *O magnify the Lord with me*, is told to us in the second part, *let us exalt His Name together!* If you want to magnify the Lord together, you do that by exalting His Name together.

Since both of you, Bill and Dorothy, are confirmed members of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, we are able to teach and confess this truth of God using the familiar form of catechetical questioning. Let's see how we do.

What is the first part of Psalm 34:3? Answer: *O magnify the Lord with me.*

What does this mean? Answer: The Lord, indeed, is magnified without our prayer or good works, but we ask that He may be magnified among us also.

How is this done? Answer: When His Name is exalted.

What does this mean? Answer: His Name, indeed, is exalted without our prayer or good deeds, but we ask that it may be exalted among us also.

How is this done? Answer: When the Lord is magnified.

2. How is this Done?

Now you might be thinking that is rather circular and that some examples would be helpful. Indeed, this is most certainly true.

The Lord is magnified and His Name is exalted when the water is connected with God's Word, specifically God's Name - in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and applied to the individual. Dorothy and Bill, both of you were baptized into Christ when you were infants. On those separate occasions - on each of those days - God's Name was exalted and the Lord was magnified.

The Lord is magnified and His Name is exalted when the individual Christian lives in his or her Baptism. The Apostle declared it, *Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? (Romans 6:3) I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me (Galatians 2:20).* Jesus gave Himself on the cross for each one of you. He died for the sins of everyone, including each one here this day. He rose again on Easter morning to give you life that extends beyond the grave. Each of you, Dorothy and Bill, have lived your individual lives in God's baptismal grace, and in doing so, God's Name is exalted and the Lord is magnified.

The Lord is magnified and His Name is exalted when the individual Christian confesses his or her sin and hears the personal forgiveness announced in the absolution. An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call His Name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:20-21). Each of you, Dorothy and Bill, have heard the soul-cleansing Word of God's complete and total forgiveness. In having had this Word applied to you week after week, God's Name is exalted and the Lord is magnified.

The Lord is magnified and His Name is exalted when the Christian believes the words of Jesus, *This is My Body given for you; This is My Blood shed for you*, and dines at the Table of the Lord. Each of you, Dorothy and Bill, have partaken of the Meal that forgives sins and strengthens faith. In humbly bowing and receiving Christ in the Lord's Supper, God's Name is exalted and the Lord is magnified.

3. The Invitation

In Psalm 34, David is inviting. Because of the deliverance he had received from God and because of the salvation that became his, David extends an invitation to those who heard his words then and there, and those who have heard God's Word here and now. *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together!*

Within the last year, another invitation was extended. Bill invited Dorothy to come to church with him and join him in holy wedlock. *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together!* Dorothy accepted Bill's invitation and together they plan on being husband and wife magnifying the Lord together, that is, exalting His Name together, that is, living in their Baptism, continually hearing God's forgiving Word, and communing often at the Lord's Supper.

But another invitation was extended. Dorothy and Bill invited you to be here this afternoon. Part of the invitation was for you - loved ones, members of the families, members of the Family of Our Redeemer - for you to be present as joyful witnesses to the promises and vows that they will make. But there is also reason for their desire to have you here. Think of it this way. When you received their invitation, this also was contained within it from them: "We want you, dear family and friends, to hear God's Word concerning His love for you, ... a love so great that it was conceived of from eternity, born in Bethlehem, executed on the cross, guaranteed on Easter morning, and assured in Christ's Ascension." Indeed, both Dorothy and Bill together, and each one of them individually, is saying to you, *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together!*

May the Lord be magnified in your life, Bill, as a man, and in your life, Dorothy, as a woman, and in your life together as ...

... *Husband and Wife Magnifying the Lord!* Amen.