
Love Rooted in Jesus Christ is the Greatest Force on This Earth!

**A sermon by the Rev. Canon Salmoon Bashir
at the wedding of Sparling Wilson and Habib Zalzal**

In the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen!

So here you both are! After years of knowing each other, finally, you are here walking down this aisle. It is beautiful. You both look beautiful. It is beautiful when two people fall in love, and they love so much that they take a chance and are willing to walk with each other for the rest of their lives.

Love rooted in Jesus Christ is beautiful. Love rooted in Jesus Christ is the greatest force on this earth!

I remember both of you telling me the beautiful stories of how you fell in love with each other. The classic first meeting where a glass broke and I think Sparling might have just been testing Habib to see if he was a real surgeon and Habib had to use his professional skills on his very first meeting with you, Sparling. When two people love each other with that kind of care, God in heaven rejoices.

Today, Sparling and Habib, take a look at all of these people. Just turn around for a moment, see all of these friends and family members gathered here, celebrating the story of your love. Soak up all the love in this room.

Sparling and Habib, your marriage is not just a private agreement between the two of you; it is a living, breathing example to the world of how God loves us. A love that forgives, pursues, and never gives up. And the best part is, God does not expect you to do this alone; He equips you for this beautiful calling through the very gifts you already share. He gives you joy and kindness to carry you through the hard moments, and a good sense of humor so you can always laugh together. He anchors you with patience when life gets overwhelming, He fills your marriage with beauty and a curiosity to keep discovering new things about each other every single day.

I know that after this ceremony, you will have many wonderful things to do—celebrating, dancing, having fun, and perhaps enjoying a few adult beverages. But Sparling and Habib, if you remember only one thing from today's homily, remember this: love rooted in mutual respect, joy, and care, love rooted in Jesus Christ will withstand fire, storms, and seasons of trial.

Because as we all know, love is beautiful, but it takes real work from both people to love each other equally—not just on the good days, but on the days when life gets harder. My wife always says “love is not how you feel about someone. It is how to treat someone despite how you feel about them.”

The center of this love is God, who was, is, and will be present in your lives as you start your marriage this day in the presence of God and together with all of us. Love rooted in Jesus Christ is resilient and can withstand trials and fiery storms. That love is patient and kind. It does not boast, it is not proud, and it never gives up. This is not just a pretty poem for a wedding day. It is exactly how God loves us.

In the Gospel of John, we read about Jesus attending a wedding in Cana. It is no coincidence that Jesus's very first public miracle took place at a wedding, blessing the union of a man and a woman. He did not just show up to observe; He brought joy, He saved the celebration, and He turned ordinary water into extraordinary wine.

Like Jesus who came to that wedding in Cana, may He always be present in your marriage. May He fill your

relationship with a holy curiosity, a lifelong desire to truly know, discover, and marvel at one another as God reveals His grace through each of you. We pray that He is there in your happiest times, and especially on those days when the wine runs completely out, and life gets a bit heavy.

All of us today pray for you, Habib and Sparling, that your love may grow and get stronger, rooted in the love of Jesus Christ. And I pray that in the busiest and most difficult moments of your lives, you will still find time to go to coffee shops, maintain that sense of fun, and preferably without breaking any more glasses, nurture this relationship and connection day after day.

Look around you once again and know that this whole community of people is rooting for you, praying for you, and celebrating your love. This day, we pray that the God of love grants you compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, a spirit of forgiveness, and a tender heart. May the seed of love that God has planted in your hearts years ago grow and flourish in the years and decades to come.

Love rooted in Jesus Christ is the greatest force on this earth! May God always bless your love! Amen!