

27 Sunday B 2018
October 7
Frazee/Callaway

Can you remember a time when you clung to something? When I lived in Crookston I wanted to install a fan in the second story bathroom ceiling. I chose the best spot in the ceiling. Then I checked out the attic. I planned the run for the duct work from the ceiling to an exterior wall, Then I needed to scope out the wall from the exterior. Without much thought I set up the ladder and climbed onto the roof and crawled to the place where the would-be vent could be installed. Then I froze.

I did not think about safety and I was really scared. I clung to the eaves of the house as I maneuvered myself off that roof. That was incredibly foolish and dangerous.

When it came time to do the work, I gave myself something to hang on to. I threw a safety rope from one side of the house onto the roof and down the other side. I anchored it to the bumper of my truck. Clinging to that rope made it possible for me to do the work and not die.

The books of Genesis and Revelation are the bookends of the bible. Genesis begins with God's plan for marriage and Revelation presents the great wedding feast. God not only has a plan for marriage, but God wants marriage to be the image of His love and faithfulness for us and for the Church in the world.

On your wedding day, you hoped and planned for the best; for health and good times. You intended to be a light of God's love for the world to see. With every hope and dream held firmly, you understood that marriage is for all times, even sickness and bad times.

On the day you offered your consent to marriage, God knew your struggles. God offered a safety line even before the first argument. Who is the safety line? To whom do you cling in marriage? *That is a why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one flesh.* The safety line, believe it or not, is you for your spouse you your spouse for you.

You are the safety rope of your marriage. To what are you anchored? A 1996 F 150 is good enough for home repair, but it is a horrible anchor for marriage. This rope can be anchored to only one thing: it must be the cross of Jesus Christ.

Marriage is to be pleasurable and an exciting adventure. It is to be for your good! It will also overlap with scenes from the life of Jesus—the agony on the garden, betrayal and suffering. The marriage vows remind us of this reality, that on this side of heaven we will suffer the effects of sin. Yet it is in the heart of Jesus for spouses to remain faithful in bad times and sickness. The only place to go with suffering is the cross of Jesus Christ.

You are the safety rope for your spouse. You have to cling to Jesus when you invite your spouse to cling to you. Any other anchor will leave you terrified, paralyzed and stranded.

Moses permitted divorce because peoples' hearts were hard. A hard heart lacks patience; it is jealous; it is mean spirited and arrogant; it is self-centered and rude; it looks out for number one; it is quick-tempered, and it remembers every offense and brings them up at every occasion; it lies and rejoices in finding a fault.

A hard heart is not a safety line but a razor—it cuts the hands that want to cling to it. A hard heart is anchored to a rusty truck. It is only a matter of time for the whole thing to disintegrate into nothing.

You cannot run from suffering. Cling to Jesus and cling to your spouse who clings to Jesus. The agony will subside only by the victory of the cross.