

# Defining Relationships 1: marital relationships and the kingdom

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- [ 0 : 00 ] May it be that we do hear his dear voice and seek to obey it. We're back in Matthew's Gospel now after quite a break over the Christmas period.
- And if you look at verse 1, you'll see that it makes it clear that we're beginning a new section. It rounds off chapter 18, the chapter of Jesus' teaching. And Jesus begins a journey southwards from Galilee all the way to Jerusalem.
- Indeed, this is the beginning of the journey that will lead Jesus to his death on a cross. And so it's a very significant and momentous move in Matthew's story.
- Let's just recall where we've traveled so far with Matthew. He shows us Jesus beginning his ministry, announcing that his kingdom is at hand.
- And therefore commanding a response of repentance from all the people. And turning to God with all their hearts, just as we were saying to the children. He's proclaimed his kingdom in word and in mighty deed.
- [ 1 : 11 ] He's expounded in the Sermon on the Mount the righteousness of his kingdom. He's taught his followers about the mission of his kingdom. He's explained to them that the kingdom has already begun in his ministry, but that it's not yet consummated.
- And won't be until the very last day, the day of judgment. Remember we saw that in the parables of the kingdom. And most recently in chapter 18 we've seen Jesus gathering about himself the community of the kingdom.
- The church as the place where heaven's authority is witnessed to on the earth even now. A people who are living on earth but for heaven.
- And now we begin to see Jesus pressing home his unique authority over his kingdom. Pressing home that personal allegiance to him is the only way into his kingdom and the only way on in his kingdom.
- You only journey to the kingdom of heaven by journeying with Jesus. And the way to the glory of the kingdom is traveling his road, his way, and no other way.
- [ 2 : 26 ] And that is depicted for us very graphically in Jesus' teaching in these chapters that we now have reached. As the disciples in fact are journeying with Jesus on the road to Jerusalem.
- And a predominant theme, it shouldn't surprise us all the way through these chapters, is coming to Jesus, listening to Jesus, following Jesus. Following Jesus wherever he goes.
- Just look at verse 2, begins the chapter with the crowds following him. Verse 9 and 10, Jesus is calling people to hear and to obey his teaching. Verse 14, we've got children coming to Jesus.
- The rich young man is called to follow Jesus. Verses 27 and 28, Peter talks about the disciples having followed Jesus. In chapter 20, we read about a blind man being healed and following Jesus.

And then in chapter 21, the triumphal entry, we're told that the crowds, the blind, the lame, the children, they all follow Jesus. But where are they following Jesus to?

[ 3 : 35 ] Where is this great journey going to take him? Well, ultimately the answer is clear. It's a journey to the glory of his kingdom. And that's what we see graphically foreshadowed in chapter 21, which is all about the triumphal entry.

The true king of Zion, God's great king, coming into his city to the cries of Hosanna. Save us. The king, the savior king, who has been promised by the prophets, is come and he's come to rule the new world.

That prophecy comes from Zechariah and he goes on to say, this king will rule from sea to sea to the ends of the earth. That is what Jesus said was begun when he announced the coming of his kingdom.

And here, in these chapters, we're being told it in an exceptionally explicit way. Look at verse 28 of chapter 19. Jesus talks about the new world.

Literally, the regeneration. This is the regeneration of the universe. This is the new heavens and the new earth that the prophets long promised. That's where Jesus' journey is taking him.

[ 4 : 49 ] And that's also a predominant theme, therefore, in these chapters. The journey from creation to the recreation, the new creation, the new world.

So, for example, in verse 8, when Jesus is talking about marriage, he takes us right back to the original creation. Before there was sin. Before there was hardness of heart. When marriage was perfect, just as God meant it to be.

And he goes on to talk about the kingdom of heaven and the eternal life and the new world. And he wants to make it clear to his followers that the values and the priorities of that world, the new world, the regenerated world, have broken into this present passing world now.

In the gospel of his kingdom. For kingdom people. So that's where Jesus is going. That's where he's calling his disciples to follow him to. To the new world.

The kingdom of heaven. But how is he going to journey there? Well, we already know that, don't we? See, verse 1 begins this journey to Jerusalem that Jesus has already spoken very clearly about, hasn't he?

[ 6 : 06 ] Twice. In chapter 16, verse 21. In chapter 17, verse 22. And then again, a third time in chapter 20. Just look at chapter 20, verse 18. Jesus has made it abundantly plain that this journey to the new world, this journey to the glory of the eternal kingdom, is a journey that must take him to Jerusalem.

To suffer. To be condemned to death. To die. And then, and only then, to be raised to glory.

So you see, Jesus has already been very clear about his journey to glory. And that is the same journey that he is calling his followers to also.

It's a journey for them too. It's a journey that they're taking to the resurrection glory of the new world. But for them too, it's a journey that takes them through death to this world.

Remember chapter 16, verse 24, after Peter's great confession? If anyone would come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me.

[ 7 : 23 ] It's losing life in this world to find life in the new world. And therefore, whoever would follow Jesus to the glory of the new world, must therefore turn his back on the powers and the authorities, on the riches and the relationships of this world.

That's repentance, as we said to the children. And rather embrace with Jesus the glory of the new world. That's faith. Because you can't have both.

You cannot have resurrection, rebirth, without death. And so you see, when the chips are down, when the choice is pressed home, the question for all would-be followers of Jesus is this.

Which world do you really belong to? I'll put it another way. Where is it that you are really seeking your satisfaction and your fulfillment, your personal salvation?

Where is it? Is it in this passing world? Or is it in the new world? In the kingdom of heaven? That's the question. And the answer to that question, you see, is revealed and exposed by examining our relationships in this world.

[ 8 : 46 ] And looking at what characterizes them and what motivates them. And what's really at the center of them. Because that tells us what is really at the center of our thinking.

Tells us what's really at the center of our personal world. Whether it really is surrender to God's authority, authority of the kingdom of heaven.

Or whether in fact it is actually an assertion of our own autonomy. Our own independence and self-rule. And you see, we can cloak the latter in any amounts of religion and piety and zealous devotion to God's law.

But in fact, all of that may actually be just twisting God's word out of a love for ourself.

And really at heart we may be living a life of self-assertion and self-serving and self-salvation. A life, in other words, of deluded idolatry where our real saviors, our real lords, are the things of this present world.

[ 10 : 01 ] The people and things of this world. And therefore our relationship with them. Not our relationship with the God who made the world. And with the concerns of his new world.

And you see, if that is true, it doesn't matter how religious we are, even how evangelical we are. And how much God may figure in our language, in our opinions, or in our professions.

If that is true, we're not actually worshipping God at all. We're not bowing to his authority and subordinating all of our other relationships in this world to that one great relationship with him.

No, instead we are just asserting our own autonomy, our independence. We're serving the idols of this world because at heart we think that relationships with them will really serve us and save us.

And so it's as stark as that. It's God or it's idols. And the way we think about our relationships in this world tells about our true relationship with the world to come.

[ 11 : 16 ] And whether it is strong and vital or whether it's even there at all. Yes, you see, how we regard our relationships in this world with the things of this world, even with the many good gifts of God in this world, our relationships tell the truth about the reality of our relationship with God.

Whether we really know him and love him and serve him. or whether in fact we don't really know him. And in reality we're just loving and serving ourselves.

Because you see, all such relationships can either be an arena of surrender and submission and worship to God and for God. An arena of joyful obedience and thanksgiving to him and expressing love to God and rejoicing in his grace as the giver of all these good gifts to us.

It can either be that which is true worship or such relationships can be an arena of self-assertion and self-serving and seeking self-satisfaction and fulfillment.

In an attitude of taking and using all these things to serve ourselves and our needs and our wants. An arena not of worship but of idolatry.

[ 12 : 46 ] And the truth about us is defined by our defining relationships. Are all the relationships we have in this present world really defined by the new world the kingdom of heaven and therefore surrendered and subordinated to Jesus the king and the lord of the new world or is the real truth that any relationship we do have with the new world is in fact defined by our relationships with the present world and therefore our concerns for Christ and his kingdom are in fact subordinated and surrendered to the great king and lord of this world the great idol who is myself.

See that's at the heart of the question that Jesus is posing in this chapter and it must be faced and it must be answered by all would-be followers of Jesus because the journey to the new world has only one road and only one relationship can be utterly central and in total control.

and so Jesus confronts the heart of this great question by turning the spotlight on our attitudes to the great relationships that we have in this world and he forces us to think through our attitudes to them.

In the first half of our chapter it's our attitude to the most intimate and intense relationships of all human marriage. In the second half of the chapter it's our attitudes to the very powerful and extensive relationships with material things.

And in between it deals with attitudes in these emotionally laden relationships within the family and especially with children. And in each case Jesus' question is the same.

[ 14 : 49 ] Is our attitude that of this world or of the new world the kingdom of heaven? Which relationship is in control?

Which relationship dictates the terms? Do this world's relationships condition and dictate the nature of our relationship with God?

Or does our relationship with God and our concern for his heavenly kingdom drive and order and condition our relationships in this world?

Which is it? Let's look at how Jesus forces people to face up to what is the real defining relationship in our lives.

First of all by reference to our attitude to marriage and sexual relationships. And this is the part of the chapter really we're going to concentrate on today. In verses 1 to 12 Jesus speaks about marital relationships and the kingdom of heaven.

[ 15 : 51 ] Now there are complexities in this issue of course and there are controversies too. And indeed there are very painful things maybe particularly for some here today.

But our purpose today is not a comprehensive study of the Bible's position on divorce and remarriage. That would require far more time than we have and also the study of many other parts of scripture.

But also in fact it's not Jesus' principal purpose here. He's giving clear teaching on that subject of course he is. But his intention is to use this issue as an example to expose attitudes of heart among his listeners.

Just as he goes on to do the same thing in the second half of the chapter with material relationships. So there's certainly more to say than I can say this morning about this passage. But I do want us to see clearly the bigger picture of what Jesus is talking about here.

The question of what our defining relationships are with this world and its relationships or with Jesus and the relationship to his kingdom.

[ 17 : 01 ] Which is it? And this conversation with the Pharisees is a brutal exposure of the truth for many religious and observant people because it's a question and answer session with people who seem able to deceive others and deceive themselves with their religious zeal and devotion and faithfulness.

But Jesus shows that they can't deceive God. And he exposes their thinking for what it is. It's the thinking of this world.

It's the thinking of rebellion, of self-worship, of autonomy. Not of surrender to the authority of God. Not having a true heart of love for him and his kingdom.

You see, verse 3 says they came to test him. They came to trip him up and cause trouble. The prevailing view on divorce in Jesus' day was that of a liberal rabbinic school, allowing divorce virtually for any and every reason that a man wanted, hence their question.

And no doubt they were hoping that Jesus would make himself unpopular with the crowds by siding with the minority view of more strict rabbis, who would only allow divorce in a very few cases.

[ 18 : 20 ] It may be that they were hoping that Herod would hear this, and that he would do to Jesus just what he'd done to John when John confronted Herod about his adultery. But you see, for Jesus, obedience to God is never just a matter of either lax or libertarian views, or even of legalistic or narrow views.

No, always Jesus takes us right back to the first principles, right back to the purpose of God in all of his commands for man.

So in verses 4 to 6, he takes us right back to the beginning, to Genesis 1 and 2. He wants us to see what marriage is made for. What does it mean? What is this creation of God, this gift of God, all about?

And Jesus tells us with great authority that God's purpose for marital relations has not changed. Marriage and sexual union is God's great gift to man.

It is for the blessing of humanity, but ultimately, Genesis teaches us it's for the glory of God, because it's together in this one flesh union that the image of God is displayed in the world.

[ 19 : 35 ] God has created marriage for human beings, so that humans may reflect God's glory in the world, so that human beings may share God's creative glory with the world.

That's the teaching of Genesis. So the question can never be reduced to the level that they ask. What kind of divorce procedure is right and wrong?

No, Jesus undermines totally the very concept of divorce. Verse 6, what God has joined together, let not man separate. divorce as a very entity in God's eyes is evil.

It's an utter reversal of the will and the purpose of God for humanity. It's a destructive rebellion that flies in the face of God's plan and purpose for the world.

And that's why again and again throughout the scriptures, God says, I hate divorce. And we should hate it too, shouldn't we?

[ 20 : 46 ] For all the harm, for all the misery, the agony it causes to so many lives, to so many families. Not even to begin to calculate the blight that it has in our society.

Eating away at the very fabric of society life as we know it. Paper yesterday was just saying that divorce is at an all-time high, even though marriage is at an all-time low in our country.

I hate divorce, says the creator of marriage. And I hate divorce, says the wounded and half-destroyed victim of divorce.

Isn't that right? I hate divorce, says the child, torn apart by a broken parental relationship.

But divorce does exist in our world. And God knows it, even though he hates it. And the Pharisees' next question, you see, verse 7 tries to trip Jesus up again.

[ 22 : 01 ] What about Moses? He seemed to command divorce. How do you explain that, Jesus? And Jesus turns the table on them once again, and only exposes the truth even more starkly in verse 8.

There's no contradiction between the law of Moses and what Moses wrote from God in Genesis. The explanation is what happened after Genesis 1 and 2.

The explanation is Genesis 3. The explanation is the sin and rebellion of man against God. It's because of your hardness of heart, he says.

Your unbelief. That's what that word means all the way through the gospel. That's why there was divorce at all, but it was not part of the world God created or intended.

No, this is an evil, this is a curse, this is something you have created for yourselves because you've rejected God and worshipped yourselves as the God of your own world.

[ 23 : 01 ] That's why. So instead of seeing marriage and sexual union as a gift from God for his glory, to be fruitful and productive for him, you have turned it into a vehicle for self-seeking, for self-satisfaction.

God made marriage and sex as a means to an end, to bless the world and to glorify and serve God, but you've made it into an end in itself. You've made it into something to worship as an all-consuming God.

And isn't that the world we live in today? Sex is our God because self is our God. Sin has totally reversed God's purpose for marriage and sex because sin has totally reversed man's view of his own purpose.

no longer is man's chief end to glorify God, but rather to glorify and satisfy himself. God is expelled to the periphery of our world and we sit on the throne in the center of our world.

Isn't that right? And of course, when that is the attitude at the heart of a marriage relationship, all the results are all around us, plain to see.

[ 24 : 27 ] yes, says Jesus, it's your world's ways and your hard hearts that causes all this. That's why Moses' law was needed, for the protection of the most vulnerable party.

In those days, always the woman. And in our own day, still virtually always the woman. woman. He's talking about Deuteronomy 24, which provides for a woman who has been rejected by her husband so that she won't be exploited and passed back and forward like a piece of chattel between hard-hearted and heartless men.

It's to prevent sex slavery. Yes, that thing which is still such a grotesque feature of our so-called developed world today. It's because God knows your sinful heart, says Jesus, that he provided all this.

But that is not God's plan for marriage and it never has been. No, divorce must not be.

It cannot be without sin. Man must not destroy God's creation. So verse 9 is very clear.

[ 25 : 46 ] unless the marriage bond is already broken and destroyed by the intrusion of sexual immorality into the marriage, where divorce does not then break the marriage bond but simply bears witness to an already severed marriage.

Unless that is the case, divorce and remarriage is adultery, says Jesus. Jesus. And that is a dagger at the heart of any law-abiding Pharisee concerned to keep every commandment.

But you see, the Pharisees are as back to front and perverse in their view of God's law as they are in their grasp of God's purpose for marriage. Their whole focus is on divorce and its procedures so as to justify their own selfishness and their own sinful hearts.

Jesus' whole focus by contrast is on marriage and its permanence as an expression of the faithfulness and the grace of God.

Jesus says marriage and sex are all about serving and worshipping God because you love God. But man says marriage and sex is all about serving and satisfying myself because I love me.

[ 27 : 05 ] So they bent and twisted God's law so they could please themselves and yet justify themselves and feel good about themselves. And of course nothing's changed right down to the present day in the world and of course in the professing church.

Let's bend and twist and reinterpret God's word so we can do as we please with marriage and sexual relationships and justify ourselves too. But you see Jesus just exposes all of that.

It is not God's command. It's your hard hearts. It's your sin. You don't love God. You love yourself.

The defining relationship in your lives is love of this world and love of yourselves. Not love for God and relationship with him and his kingdom.

It's pretty stark isn't it? It's no wonder that in verse 10 the disciples seem a bit shell-shocked. Well if that's really the way it is it seems impossible. It must be better never to get involved in marriage at all.

[ 28 : 21 ] But no says Jesus. No, no, no. It's just a matter of which is the defining relationship. Who and what shapes your thinking and acting about marriage?

Jesus' focus you see is not just on how God created things from the beginning but also on how things are being recreated for his kingdom. That's why in verse 12 he says what matters is living for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.

That's why in verse 28 he says it's the new world that he's leading us to. And if that is the defining relationship in your life then all the other relationships you have in this world will take their proper shape.

Marriage, says Jesus, is for the kingdom. It's for God's glory. It's not just the surrender of independence to your spouse for the sake of a relationship with them.

Although of course it must be if any marriage is to work. First of all it's a surrender of independence of both partners in a marriage to God for the sake of your relationship to him.

[ 29 : 38 ] That's the defining relationship of every other relationship. relationship. So marriage and sexual relationships is not about me and my satisfaction.

It's not the assertion of my autonomy. Rather it's a submission to God's authority. To God's authority and direction about everything to do with marriage and sexuality and its purpose.

It's something I submit to out of love and service to him. It's not the worship of idols that promise satisfaction and fulfillment in this world.

It's the worship of the true God who alone can truly satisfy with the joy and blessing of the new world. That's what it's about. Now do you see how that changes everything?

Get the defining relationship right and live in joyful relationship to Christ and to his kingdom. And then a truly happy and fulfilling and satisfying view of all the relationships of marriage and sex in this world isn't just possible but it's profitable.

[ 30 : 53 ] It's wonderful for the glory of God and for the blessing of his people and for the enriching of the whole community, our society. humanity. Because that's what God's purpose for marriage is all about.

Now it's true, Jesus says in verse 11, that not everyone can receive or accept this saying. In other words, this exalted view of the sanctity of marriage.

No, he says only those to whom it is given. Well, who's that? Well, it's Christian believers of course. It's the same words as used in Matthew 13, 11 when Jesus says, to you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.

There are exceptions, as he'll say in verse 12, but what Jesus is saying is that his followers, Christian disciples to whom God has given the gift of marriage, have received from him a blessing that's not to be despised, and they've received from him a responsibility that's not to be avoided.

We, he says, are to surrender our marriage relationships in all their aspects to God. We are to allow the relationship we have with Christ and his kingdom to be the defining relationship that shapes our married life and our sex life.

[ 32 : 22 ] We are to submit in every way to God's authority and to God's direction as an expression of our love and our devotion to him. In other words, we are to worship God in our marriages.

Now won't that change our attitudes to times of friction and struggle and strife within a marriage? Wouldn't that change my attitude when I feel that I'm not getting what I want out of this marriage, in whatever way that might be?

When I want to assert myself and my needs and my feelings? But you see, it's not about me and my satisfaction and my self-assertion and my autonomy.

It's not even just about my spouse and her fulfillment. It's about God. It's about his glory. It's about his kingdom.

Do you see? If you're a follower of Jesus and you're on the way with him to the new world and God has given you the gift of marriage, then if you believe and trust in Jesus, you'll believe and trust in your marriage.

[ 33 : 43 ] Because you can receive this saying. It is given to you just as the kingdom has been given to you. And of course it calls for faith.

And faith means surrendering your autonomy, your way, and giving glad acceptance to God's authority. Faith means a continual turning away from your hardness of heart.

And following Jesus along the road of self-surrender. Turning away from all your worldly ideas. All for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. But friends, there's great encouragement, isn't there?

It may seem impossible to us as it seemed to the disciples. It may seem to somebody here today very impossible that their marriage could even be saved, let alone glorify God.

As impossible as a camel going through the eye of a needle perhaps. And of course, left to ourselves, man and woman, it is impossible, isn't it?

[ 35 : 01 ] But Jesus says, with God, all things are possible. It's just a matter of what is the defining relationship in your whole thinking about marriage.

And we need to think about that very, very seriously. But of course, not all are married. And some Christians will remain unmarried for a long time and perhaps never marry.

And I don't want to finish this morning without saying something about what Jesus touches on here in verse 12. This teaching, says Jesus, about marriage is not for all.

It's not even for every Christian. For, he says in verse 12, there are exceptions. Jesus is saying that strong and lifelong fruitful marriage is the normal pattern for his kingdom people here on earth.

He is saying that, but he's saying it's not for all. Some are not able to bear this responsibility because it's not a gift God has given them. There are those, he says, who for various reasons are what he calls here eunuchs.

[ 36 : 12 ] Of course, in Jesus' day, singleness as we know it was not really known at all. Virtually everybody was married unless there was something totally preventing it.



It's very likely, therefore, that Jesus himself was abused because he was celibate and called a eunuch, which was always regarded as a term of abuse. Whereas, of course, today we live in an increasingly single society.

Largely, in fact, because of the disregard for marriage and the destruction of marriage as an institution. Of course, that means that singleness for us doesn't bear anything like the stigma that it once did.

But, of course, many single Christians, precisely because they do cherish God's word and honor and value marriage, many single Christians do find the whole area of singleness very hard.

And sometimes it is a very painful struggle to come to terms with. And so, I want to say to you, if that is your situation this morning, that the Lord Jesus Christ has words of great encouragement here for you.

[ 37 : 25 ] While Jesus is certainly not saying that celibacy is a higher ideal than marriage, he is saying that not all are called to marriage. And therefore, not all can accept this way of life.

In verse 12, he says that it may be that some people from their earliest life have just not been fitted out for a marriage relationship. Whether it's because of some physical thing, or issues to do with personality, or whatever it may be, including, I think, some who have extreme and unconquerable homosexual desires.

Others, Jesus says, may have been made unable for normal married life just by the experience of life itself. Some have been made eunuchs by men.

Perhaps it's been damaging experiences. Maybe it's been some illness or something else. Maybe it's just been the passage of time.

And the passage of time can make it impossible for somebody to be married. We all know the expression, a confirmed bachelor. But whatever it may be, if this is so, if God has not given you the marriage that you've longed for, you are not to think that he is being punitive, that he is denying you your heart's desire.

[ 39 : 06 ] Jesus says he may be being protective because he loves you and because he knows you and because he will not give you a burden that you are not fitted to bear.

And what you need to see is that if that is so, God has made you that way for the sake of his kingdom. And that better a joyful and a happy single life lived for God and his kingdom and joyful entry into his new world where all will be in a loving and lasting and wonderful relationship with Christ himself forever in the fulfillment of what marriage all points to, better that by far than a disastrous marriage in this life.

relationship or a relationship that might drag you away from the kingdom of Jesus forever. You see, you also, just like those who are married, you also need to live with that as your defining relationship.

Living for the sake of Christ and his kingdom. Rejoicing in the gift of marriage that God has given to others and in the gift of singleness that God has given to you.

And that's true whether that may be for a time or whether it may be for all of your life. But one last thing. There are also some, says Jesus, at the end of verse 12, for whom the choice has had to be a choice that they make of singleness and celibacy deliberately for the sake of the kingdom.

[ 41 : 05 ] Some have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom. And sometimes that has been a very, very hard and painful choice.

A desperately agonizing choice, a costly choice. Maybe having to give up a relationship of love with someone who otherwise would have made a marriage partner.

Perhaps because they are not a believer and follower of the Lord Jesus. Or perhaps because they're not a believer who really shared their passion and love for Christ was just on a very different spiritual wavelength altogether.

Maybe just because the Lord Jesus Christ has called you to a ministry or a mission field that just means that the marriage relationship that you could otherwise have had just can't be.

maybe just because you've known that you've had to choose between that relationship and your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

[ 42 : 29 ] If that's somebody here this morning, I want you to go away this morning with verse 29 ringing in your ears and burned into your hearts.

because that is a promise of the Lord Jesus Christ the King of glory the ruler of the world that is without end and it's his promise to you and it's his promise to all who will make the defining relationship of their earthly life the glory of his name.

Do you see it? Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands anyone who has left any deep and precious relationship for my name's sake will receive a hundred fold and will inherit eternal life.

there will never be loss for those whose love for Jesus defines every other relationship in this life.

Never. Ever. Amen. Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[ 44 : 04 ] Amen. Amen. Our Lord and Savior your love for us is so deep and wide so wonderful and it is eternal and we rejoice that we have found in you the love and the fulfillment of our lives now and of all eternity.

Help us we pray when it is hard for us to subordinate other loves and cares many of them good and wholesome and lovely in themselves.

Help us when it is hard but help us we pray to see and to know and to understand and to desire the love divine that excels all other things the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ the possession of his kingdom and the life that shall never end.

Help us and heal us for we ask it in Jesus name. Amen.