

# Wedding Sieneke & Francois

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**Bible Text:** Psalm 36:5

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## **Bethel Free Reformed Church**

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[music]

Please rise.

[music]

Who gives this woman to this man?

Let us remain standing for the singing of *Great is Thy Faithfulness* which is found printed on the back of your program.

[music]

Be seated.

Let us pray together.

*Our most gracious, holy Father in heaven, what a privilege it is for us today on this joyful occasion to be here to witness Francois and Sieneke being given to one another in holy marriage. There are so many reasons for thanksgiving, both of them knowing what it is like to lose a spouse, knowing the lonely days and nights, the pains and the griefs and now to be provided again thy kind fatherly hand with a spouse, a companion to go through life and we thank thee even as they are united in marriage for also all the comforts and spiritual blessings and mercies that were given to them when they were still single and alone. For every comfort that was given when discouraged, for every companionship from thee when they were lonely and weary, for answered prayers as they both had asked for another spouse and now we see that prayer answered and fulfilled and we want to acknowledge the God who hears and answers prayers for all these great mercies. We rejoice together with the whole family circle, the children and the grandchildren, many of whom can be here, some wanting to be here and unable to attend for health reasons, especially we think of Mrs. {?}, Stiena, Francois's first wife's mother who is sick and who otherwise would have been here today. We think of the children and*

*grandchildren who on the one hand rejoice {?}. Dad and mom are given again as spouse and who also perhaps sometimes still struggle with grief or with other tensions, Lord. Grant each one of us today here, whoever we are, whatever our spiritual condition and need, a rich day of spiritual blessing and profit. We thank thee for being the God who has declared, "It is not good for a man to be alone. I will create and bring him a help fit for him." And we see that and we pray that this ceremony may be fragrant with the gospel and Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ to our comfort and profit, to our cleaning and purification from our sins and to our finding all our joy in thee, the God from whom all our blessings and these blessings flow. For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.*

I would now like to make use of the form for marriage and I have adapted a few lines in there that don't apply to you as an older couple, but the beautiful biblical principles certainly do.

We are gathered here as this congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ with family and friends to witness the marriage of Francois Andreas {?} and {?} Dykstra. It is good that the marriage of believers take place in such a gathering so that God's blessing may be asked to rest upon it. God the Lord reveals to us in his Word that he has created man and woman and destined them for each other, giving to them the institution of marriage as a gift and a responsibility and promising his blessing upon it. God our Father, who created heaven and earth and all that is in them, created man after his own image, male and female created he them. He also said, "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a help meet for him. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh." And God blessed them and God said unto them, "Be fruitful and multiply."

This excellent gift of God has been blemished by man's fall into sin. But God, who is great in mercy, has been willing to restore the unity of marriage and to reconfirm His blessing. For this reason our Lord Jesus Christ honored marriage as an institution given by His Father through His presence and miracles at the marriage at Cana. He condemned the breaking of the marriage bond when He said, "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder".

In the apostolic teaching of the New Testament, marriage is recognized as a gift of God, sanctified through the Word of God and through prayer. The apostle calls the unity in marriage a great mystery which he relates to the unity between Christ and the church. For these reasons, the married state ought not to be lightly or thoughtlessly entered upon, but with reverence and thankfulness and in the fear of the Lord.

In this way sharing all of life may be a matter of joy in which husband and wife receive, love, faithfulness, assistance and dedication from each other. Although by reason of sin also married people experience much trouble and affliction, they, nevertheless, according to the promises of God, may be assured of the grace and help of the Lord. And that you, in your marriage, may live according to the commandments of God and out of His promises, you ought to know for what reason God has instituted marriage.

In the first place, its purpose is that husband and wife, joined together in true love, may belong to each other in joy and may faithfully help and assist each other in all things which belong to temporal and eternal life.

In the second place, through marriage the human race and also the Church of the Lord are built. Therefore you are to be examples to the adult children and grandchildren that God has given you with the knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

Further, let every man live with his wife and let every woman live with her husband in accordance with the will of God and with a clear conscience so that your bodies, as temples of the Holy Spirit, be not defiled.

Next, you are to hear from the Word of God how you are to behave towards each other in the married state. The man, who has been put by God to be the head of the wife, shall love his wife as Christ loves His Church. He will lead and comfort her, serve and protect her even as Christ is the comfort and assistance to His Church.

The wife shall be subject to her husband even as the Church is subject to Christ. She shall love and serve her husband, follow him, take her place in the family circle together with him and display the adornments of the meek and quiet spirit.

According to the commandment of God, you shall both do your work with faithfulness and dedication. You shall also understand that your family is part of a larger community and that you have a calling with respect to church and society. Walk in the fear of the Lord. Remember that you are heirs of the grace of life. Be forgiving and live together in wisdom that your prayers be not hindered.

And now as you make your vows, I would like to request that you face each other join hands.

Francoise Andreas {}, do you declare here before God and His Church that you take {} Dykstra as your lawful wife and do you promise that you will never forsake her in good nor in evil days, in riches nor in poverty, in health nor in sickness, till death do you part; that you will lovingly lead and serve her as a faithful and pious husband is bound to do to his lawful wife and that you will live with her in a holy manner, keeping faith and truth to her in all things according to the holy gospel?

{} Dykstra do you declare here before God and His Church that you take Francois Andreas {} as your lawful husband and do you promise that you will never forsake him in good nor in evil days, in riches nor in poverty, in health nor in sickness, till death do you part; that you will follow and serve him in love, as a pious and faithful wife is bound to do to her lawful husband; that you will live with him in a holy manner, keeping faith and truth to him in all things according to the holy gospel.

Be assured that the Lord your God has called you together and joined you together by His grace to this holy bond of marriage.

The Father of all mercies fill you with His grace, bind you in true love and faithfulness and grant you his blessing. Amen.

Now I would like to ask for the rings.

{?} do you give this ring to Sieneke as a symbol of your constant faithfulness and enduring love?

Sieneke, do you give this ring to France as a symbol of your constant faithfulness and enduring love?

In accordance with laws of the province of Alberta and the institutions of the Church of Jesus Christ, I pronounce you husband and wife.

However, considering that we have no good of ourselves and that all good gifts come from above, from the Father of lights, you are asked to kneel while we are singing before the face of the Lord so that the congregation may pray with and for you.

And let's sing together Psalter 255. The Psalter is the blue songbook in the pew in front of you, stanzas one and three and then during the singing the couple will kneel for prayer.

[music]

Let's pray.

*Merciful God and Father, who has brought this bridegroom and bride together and united them through the bonds of marriage, we thank Thee for the blessing given to this couple that they may go through life together under Thy care. Grant them this grace that, through the love of Christ they may more and more grow towards each other, bound together in the unity of the true faith. Grant them the strength of Thy Holy Spirit, enabling them, as husband and wife, to live together in their family according to Thy holy will. Grant them thy guidance, favor and help that they may take their place in the family circle according to the demands of thy covenant, in the instruction, and the bonds of the love of Christ. Sanctify the tie that binds them, to their blessing, to the edifying of the Church, as a witness to others and to the glory of Thy holy Name. Bless also the proclamation of thy Word to our hearts through the power of the Holy Spirit. Hear us, Father of all mercy, for the sake of Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, our Lord, in whose name we conclude our prayers: Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name; Thy Kingdom come Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our debts, even as we forgive our debtors; And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

Please rise.

It is customary to give a young couple starting out their own wedding Bible to read at the table. You have many Bibles each of you and instead of giving you a Bible as a church you simply requested that something be said about the riches of the Word of God and I had chose some verses from Psalm 31. Both of you can speak of the Lord's comfort to you when you were overwhelmed and all the things, many things, both of you, the Lord has brought you through. And I read a few verses from Psalm 31 because that captures the things that you have gone through as well.

“I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities.”<sup>1</sup>

And the knowing there is the knowing of God, of companionship and fellowship. You have also had days like this.

“Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly. For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing.”<sup>2</sup>

You have had those days, too, haven't you?

“But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand.”<sup>3</sup>

Blessed be the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city. For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee. O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.<sup>4</sup>

That is only a hint of all the riches that God has given you through his holy Word. Be much in the Word together. Read it and sing it, pray it and encourage and admonish one another with it.

I would now like to ask for the witnesses to come forward and so we can sign the registry and the license.

[music]

Let us stand and join together again in singing Psalm 306.

[music]

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 31:7.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 31:9-10.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 31:14-15.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 31:21-24.

Well, the first thing the married couple wish to do is worship the Lord and we are here with them to worship the Lord and listen to his Word together. Let us hear, first... well let us first give our expression of dependence upon the Lord and hear his promise to us as we worship together.

Our help, we acknowledge is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth and who in Christ Jesus remains an overflowing fountain of good. Amen.

Beloved congregation, grace, mercy and peace be to you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ in the communion of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We want to read together two Scripture passages, first from Psalm 57 and then from Psalm 36. So let us read those passages together, Psalm 57 and Psalm 36.

Hear the Word of the Lord. Psalm 57.

To the chief Musician, Altaschith, Michtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave.

Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast. I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me. He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah.

God shall send forth his mercy and his truth. My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth. They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah.

My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations. For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.<sup>5</sup>

And then we go to Psalm 36 from which the text, the wedding text is also taken.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD.

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<sup>5</sup> Psalm 57:1-11.

The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes. For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful. The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good. He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil.

Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast. How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light. O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart. Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me. There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.<sup>6</sup>

The text for the service is verse five of Psalm 36.

“Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.”<sup>7</sup>

Dear congregation, family, friends and especially beloved Francois and Sieneke, your anticipated marriage has just now taken place. The two of you together here as husband and wife are... is part of quite a story. Exactly eight months ago, France, you were here with family and congregation with the funeral of your late wife {?}. She passed away triumphantly in the Lord by God's grace after a lengthy battle with cancer throughout which you were steadfastly at her side. Yes, what companions you were in life, not only in regards to the here and now, but especially in regards to the Lord. You had a bond of love as husband and wife blessed from heaven above. But both you and Stiena knew her days were numbered with her sickness. How much you talked in the last months together.

Among other things as you also shared with me and others, Stiena so prayed for you, France, that God would provide you in due course another woman, a Christian woman to be your wife. And now here you stand in marriage with Sieneke Dykstra, a woman you never knew at all eight months ago, especially for the family it went all rather quickly. And it is somewhat difficult for some, no doubt. And yet the story is quite amazing.

Sieneke, you are widow of more than seven years already with your late husband killed suddenly in a car accident. You have taken on the work of caring for a special needs person, Yvonne... Is Yvonne here today? She is not here, ok? And the world became increasingly demanding for you. However, you saw it partly as a calling and you also

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<sup>6</sup> Psalm 36:1-12.

<sup>7</sup> Psalm 36:5.

needed the income to live. You had wondered if the Lord would ever provide you a husband again. But as the years went by, you were convincing yourself it wouldn't happen. Though you did pray for and long that God would give you a godly man for a husband. And then suddenly through the communication means available today you and Francois met and came into contact and met. Almost right away it clicked and I don't need to say anymore.

As congregation and pastor of Calvary Free Reformed Church, we saw the relationship growing and developing as initially you often came and worshipped with us with you, Sieneke, still living in Calgary and Francois coming up many a time to visit you. And just as the relationship was beginning to blossom and the family was becoming somewhat accustomed to it and accepting it, then you had those weeks of not feeling well, Sieneke. It was a testing of your relationship. But through it all you both grew together and even became more committed to each other and you both looked to the Lord more in all your needs. Over and over what came across from each and both of you was that you saw yourselves in the hands of the Lord and you were entrusting all your ways to him. And the refrain in our conversation with you even during your whole time of acquaintance together up to this moment the repeated refrain from both of you really was: Great is God's faithfulness. Yes, you experienced so much God's merciful loving kindness to you in bringing you two together, though you each have gone through difficult times in life. Yet God hath not forsaken you.

You wanted your wedding day now, then, also to be a testimony to the praise of the Lord and as a motto to the family and to friends and congregations and the watching world. Great is thy Lord and greatly to be praised. Great is his faithfulness. And this explains also the wedding text for his your wedding service today. We chose it together, didn't we? In view of all of our talks and in view of God's gracious and good ways with you, Psalm 36 verse five.

Here David, as servant of the Lord—something, by the way, said of him only in this psalm and Psalm 18—he testifies about God.

“Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.”<sup>8</sup>

If we are confessing Christians in truth, should we not all be servants of the Lord, giving this same testimony in our lives whether married or single, widow or widower, younger or older?

“Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.”<sup>9</sup>

Here the inspired psalmist is saying, isn't he, “Thy mercy to us and to me is so measureless and thy faithfulness is beyond all description and boundaries.” And David didn't only mean this in regards... in a general way, but he so experienced the Lord in his gracious and faithful dealings with him. In other words, this is a hearty confession of

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<sup>8</sup> Psalm 36:5.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

faith from David and it is something he would have covenant Israel and the whole world to realize.

“Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.”<sup>10</sup>

If I am right, dear Francois and Sieneke, with all your mixed emotions, isn't your heart this day bursting with this same conviction and confession of faith? So much so that you desire this day not to be about you two, really, but about the Lord who in his grace and mercy has not forgotten you. No, but most gracious and great has been God's faithfulness to you. Therefore let him be praised and pointed to also this wedding day.

We read in Psalm 57 verse 10, one of the texts we looked up, a text something like Psalm 36 verse five.

I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations. For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.<sup>11</sup>

We also read Lamentations three, remember, 21 through 23 where the weeping prophet Jeremiah in time of great need testified:

This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.<sup>12</sup>

Oh how important and crucial, really, for each one of us here today in this special happy service to learn with David of God's amazing mercy and his infinite faithfulness as revealed in Scripture, the Word written and as ultimately shown in the Savior, the Word made flesh.

So let's look closer at Psalm 36 verse five having as our theme great is thy faithfulness and seeing that theme under for main points in light of the psalm. We will see it in view of the context, negative context, then in view of the positive contrast, then in view of the earnest cry and then in view of the endless comfort that this psalm speaks about.

When David says:

“Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.”<sup>13</sup>

Notice, first, the context of him saying this. What is the context? The first four verses of this psalm give us a description of sinful mankind defiantly and vehemently rebelling against God and wickedly opposing God and his Word and his will for our lives. As one

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Psalm 57:9-10.

<sup>12</sup> Lamentations 3:21-23.

<sup>13</sup> Psalm 36:5.

commentator described it, “The opening verses of the psalm give us, quote, the portrait of the dedicated sinner.” Yes, of the person who has consciously and callously and carelessly abandoned himself or herself in the way of sin and evil. It is really the description of fallen man in Adam. In other words, this portrait of the dedicated sinner is your and my picture, too, left to ourselves. The natural man has no terror for God, no terror of God and defies God and flatters himself that it won’t be any problem to ignore God, to go our own way.

The natural man, thus, devises evil and lives in self centered deceitful ways before God and others and hardens himself in rebellion and revolt against the Lord, living by the lust of the flesh. And as the ungodly world and as the ways of Satan. And how it makes life miserable and dangerous and this world is a loveless, violent, comfortless place.

We read in Genesis six verse five after the fall with Adam and Eve in the Garden and some generations afterwards:

“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”<sup>14</sup>

I asked you here, everyone here, who dares to say this is not our world today, a world full of violence and rebellion and chaos and so much turmoil, so much misery because of sin? Just look at the news every day and you know we live in a wicked, immoral, ungodly, idolatrous world. Really you could say, can’t you, that the opening four verses of Psalm 36, describing fallen man steeped in sin and rebellion, is a description of all of us, you and me, too, in our natural condition when not born again.

David himself in his day he experienced so much evil from King Saul, from Absalom his son, from Doeg the Edomite and many others. But David found out himself, too, didn’t he, painfully so that he by nature, too, was so capable of sin and of treachery and evil, how much he sinned in his life.

So in Psalm 130 we read:

“If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?”<sup>15</sup>

Why, you see, it is this context of so much sin and evil and rebellion against the Lord as David observes that in the world around him and among the covenant people of Israel and even, yes, in his own heart by nature that causes David so to marvel at God’s mercy and loving kindness still, his faithfulness in spite of man’s sin and rebellion, where we get so much wickedness and evil.

David is saying here in Psalm 36 verse five, “Behold yet the grace of God and his long suffering kindness in not wiping out this wicked world once for all and destroying all rebellious sinners immediately.” {?} the Lord in faithfulness and patience continues to

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<sup>14</sup> Genesis 6:5.

<sup>15</sup> Psalm 130:3.

work out his redemptive plans as promised from the day of Man's fall. God chose and proved judgment is a strange work. And he purely delights in mercy.

So the Lord worked on and works on in spite of man's sin and rebellion. He works on in accomplishing his gospel plans and proclaiming the way of grace and truth and calling sinners to repent and believe before it is forever too late.

You see, this is what makes David testify here. There is an exclamation mark, as it were.

“Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.”<sup>16</sup>

It is the dark reality of so much sin and evil in this world and yet God withholds in his wrath and speaking still in overtures of grace that moves David so to testify.

Can't you, too, dear Francois and Sieneke, each of you in your lives tell of God in amazing grace, not dealing with you according to your sins and sinfulness, but reaching out to you in his mercy and love, showing you your sinful self and graciously calling you and drawing you to himself as only Savior God for us.

You both have shared with me and I know with each other how God did not leave you to yourself, but brought you to himself under his gospel work, blessed by the Holy Spirit to your hearts and lives in spite of the fact that none of us ever deserves a single blessing from the Lord, because of our sins and sinfulness. Yet in his mercy and grace see how many are his blessings we receive and that you receive.

Is there any among us here who has still never stood amazed at the astounding mercy of God and his amazing faithfulness in the light of all the repeated wicked, doubtless rebellious ways of mankind by nature, in general not only, also of you yourself personally? Just the fact that God has never again sent a world wide flood since Noah's day, but has preserved this earth and provided for it thankfully giving the four seasons year after year and will do so till the final day. That should make us all stop, humble ourselves before the Lord for his mercy, literally, his loving kindness and his faithfulness still.

Why now do France and Sieneke want us to glory in God's mercy and faithfulness on this their wedding day? Because they see also for themselves in spite of themselves as sinners by nature, God's astonishment and astounding goodness, his goodness to them not only in sparing them and bringing them now together as husband and wife, but much more even. Yes, much more especially in God following through in his gospel plans for sinners and reaching out to sinners with his gospel call to flee from the wrath to come and to be reconciled to God and find life, yes, abundant life and eternal life in and with the Lord.

And this brings us to the second point which explains why David so jubilantly testifies in the text you chose.

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<sup>16</sup> Psalm 36:5.

“Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.”<sup>17</sup>

David says this not just in view of the evil context of this sinful world, but notice in verses six through nine it is also in view of the exceeding positive contrast of God’s goodness.

As one commentator expressed, “Psalm 36 is a psalm of powerful contrasts.” Therefore notice, on the one hand, we are given this grim glimpse of human wickedness at its most malevolent, but on the other hand we are shown divine goodness in its measureless, many sided fullness. Notice how David when he begins to speak of God’s loving kindness and faithfulness being so great and glorious. He can’t stop there. He speaks also of God’s righteousness being like great mountains so vast and unmovable. And he speaks of God’s judgments meaning God’s way and God’s Word and will being unsearchable, reaching to the depths and concerning the whole created universe, every creature also made by him, man and beast.

In other words, dear congregation and dear Francois and Sieneke, what David is saying is that God’s loving kindness and faithfulness is so superb. It far outweighs and outshines all the evil of us and the wickedness of mankind. That is to say God has provided perfect, a perfect, all sufficient remedy for us as sinful, wicked people, a remedy that proves and shows his infinite justice and holiness not only, but also his infinite mercy and loving kindness and truthfulness and wisdom and power, indeed all of his attributes. And in the light of all Scripture what is his ultimate remedy that God has ordained and accomplished in the fullness of time, showing his infinite loving kindness and his glorious faithfulness.

Francois and Sieneke, you know, don’t you, the one escape from all sin and evil within us and around us and before us and behind us is that the Lord Jesus Christ, the once crucified and now risen and exalted Savior of sinners and with him God in infinite mercy and faithfulness came down to us in our need. Do you know what he did? In Christ he poured out his wrath upon sin, upon his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, as sin bearer who as the just for the unjust paid the righteous full punishment for sin even as he offered up to God a perfect sinless life on behalf of sinners.

So you see, in Christ the Savior and repenting of sin and believing on him there is plenteous redemption, rich and free for as many as come to him. This is the gospel truth as Romans five also says.

“But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”<sup>18</sup>

In this we see God’s splendid loving kindness and faithfulness in that through Christ trusting and following him there is a remedy for all our misery.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Romans 5:20.

John Calvin wrote, quote, “Christ is much more powerful to save than Adam was to destroy.” Yes, that is a precious gospel truth. This was {?}:

“Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.”<sup>19</sup>

In the Old Testament times of David with the tabernacle and temple sacrifices and the rituals, many foreshadowings were given of the coming Lamb of God, the Messiah who would come to take away the sin of the world. And David himself was living as one whom God would work through, who was preparing for coming of his Son to this earth, the great Son of David. And Jesus came to seek and to save sinners.

We read in 1 Timothy one verse 15.

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”<sup>20</sup>

Psalm 36 verse five, your chosen wedding text for this special day tells of the amazing grace and goodness of God ultimately in sending his own dear Son to be saved. And with the Lord and in and through Jesus Christ comes to take care of our greatest of needs in our eternal needs and making full provision of complete salvation through his shed blood and once for all sacrifice on the cross. Oh, how shall he not with him freely give us all things, exclaimed Paul in Romans eight. And this same, I say, and as much as David understood these thing in Old Testament times already, this same explains his testimony in Psalm 36. Also his further testimony where he jointly states:

How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.<sup>21</sup>

Now you see, dear family and friends of France and Sieneke on both sides, it is this gospel that I was asked to make sure to preach on this wedding service. And just explain the text chosen for this wedding service, I may preach this precious gospel. And the gospel invitation and command to all is to come to the Savior for deliverance from all your sin and guilt and to find salvation abundant and sure in and through Christ.

This is the only gospel for sinners.

“...for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Psalm 36:5.

<sup>20</sup> 1 Timothy 1:15.

<sup>21</sup> Psalm 36:7-9.

<sup>22</sup> Acts 4:12.

It is yet the day of grace. Christ has come to give his life a ransom for many. And the Bible teaches he is coming again for the final judgment. Who knows how soon?

So the call of the gospel is to come to Christ while he yet offers pardon and peace. Will any here refuse to come to the Savior?

The joy of France and Sienneke, yes even more than getting married today is being found in Christ and looking to him for fullness of salvation and everlasting righteousness with God and eternal life.

Francois, God has blessed you in other ways, hasn't he? As a businessman he has prospered you. But as you yourself will admit, you are thankful for that, but the blessings of God in Christ, those are the ones that really count.

And, you know, this is what brings everlasting joy and peace beyond description all through life's journey and beyond, that we are in Christ. And the former spouse of both France and of Sienneke, Stiena and Peter, they knew this only comfort in life and death, too. And so they triumphed in life and even in death and through to eternity by God's grace having no other refuge but the Lord as revealed in his Word and in Christ the Savior.

What gives so much promise of their future now, too, for you, Francois and Sienneke, is this common hope and trust in the Lord. By God's grace in your lives. God's loving kindness and faithfulness are unending in relationship with Christ as Savior. You can so trust the Lord to bless you and make you a blessing together and in your families and in the church and in your business and community and world that you live in and God is your refuge and strength.

It doesn't mean that no hard times will come ever. Mostly they do. But when you may have, by God's grace, this refuge strong and sure belonging to Christ and even in hardest of times you have a real refuge that will not disappoint. Through Christ the captain of salvation who has gone on before us and who gives us his promise never to leave us nor forsake us.

Dear sons and daughters of Sienneke and Francois, eight of you, four on each side, and I am told 24 grandchildren, 13 on the side of Francois, 11 on the side of Sienneke. When your loved ones visit you, this dear vital couple, they visit you in the future or you visit with them, no doubt you will hear about the Lord and them and about God's amazing, gracious faithfulness. Don't rush it along. But hear it. Come to know it for yourself. It is what the Bible teaches us as all important and most precious beyond words. Nor do people come to experience it and learn to treasure it above all other treasures. Dear congregation and everyone here this afternoon, let me ask. Do you glory in God's faithfulness, too?

From Psalm 36 let us notice else explains David so exalting God's covenant mercy and faithfulness and reliability. It is not just over against the evil negative context of so much sin, nor only in view of exceeding positive contrast of God's goodness, but, thirdly, too, notice the earnest cry expressed in this psalm.

What I mean here is in this psalm we find David sincerely praying to God not to leave him, not to leave him to himself in this wicked world and from his wicked self, but to protect him from evil around him and within him. We find him so praying in verses 10 through 12. These verses show as one put it, quote, "The psalmist finds himself stationed yet in the disputed ground between human wickedness, verses one to four, and divine grace verses five to nine. So he turns to urgent prayer."

David knows, you see, he needs God and his grace and mercy and faithful keeping every step of the way or he will be overcome with evil. And {?} in misery and doom.

And my point here is: It is in the way of crying to God for his mercy and for his faithfulness that we come to know and experience and enjoy him.

If you will know God for who he is in his faithfulness and loving kindness, you need to call upon him. Jesus said once, "You have not because you ask not. Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver you. You shall glorify me," Psalm 50 verse 50.

It is as we cry to the Lord that we come to know his loving kindness. There is only one whom the Lord would not hear when he cried and that was the Lord Jesus Christ. He was that forsaken on the cross, that we might not be forsaken when calling upon him in our needs.

So we learn here, too, from this psalm the Christian life is all about initially and again and again looking to the Lord and calling upon him for his loving kindness and his faithfulness in all our needs and cares. And isn't that why in Christian homes, as was mentioned by pastor {?} Bible reading and prayer are not uncommon, but regular. Is it regular in your place? And diligent attendance at Church on a weekly basis if at all possible is a habit, godly habit, common practice. Yes, also very much for married couples.

May God bless you richly, dear Francois and Sieneke in ever looking to the Lord in all your needs and in calling upon him time and again as you two go on together now as husband and wife. May your wedding guests also be a real encouragement and comfort to you both as you go on from here, not knowing the future. Trust in God to lead you and to keep you in his grace and love and to so bless also your marriage bond of love.

"O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee."<sup>23</sup>

We pray that for you now. How wonderful when you pray for each other as husband and wife.

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<sup>23</sup> Psalm 36:10.

And here I will mention a poem which I like to give in every wedding sermon, because it is so true. Listen.

Marriage takes three to be complete;  
It's not enough for two to meet.  
They must be united in love by love's Creator, God above.  
Then their love will be firm and strong;  
Able to last when things go wrong.  
Because they've felt God's love and know  
He's always there. He will never go.  
It is when you have both loved Him in kind  
with all the heart and soul and mind;  
Then in love you will find a way  
to love each other every day.  
A marriage that follows God's plan  
takes more than just a woman and a man.  
It needs a oneness that can be  
Only from Christ. Yes, marriage takes three.

Indeed, even so may God deal bountifully with you together, dear Francois and Sieneke ever looking to the Lord and the faithful, merciful God in Christ Jesus. And, dear extended family of this couple, also, especially you loved ones who were here eight months ago for the funeral of beloved Stiena, with the sorrow of that loss still understandably, cannot there also be much joy with the blessing now, seeing it as a providence of God's grace which so focuses Francois and Sieneke and we with them now here on the goodness and mercy and faithfulness of the Lord.

How important that all of us in all the needs of life in body and soul, in personal life and family life and married life, single life that you and I, each one, call out to the Lord, pleading his mercy and grace and his faithfulness according to his promises and worth.

The Bible says:

“O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.”<sup>24</sup>

Maybe even some one will come to the Savior for a first time today seeing God's goodness and mercy in Christ Jesus as found in his Word and {?} from the lives of this married couple before us here today.

The Bible rule is:

“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Psalm 34:8.

<sup>25</sup> Isaiah 55:6.

Yes, still for this last reason, too, yet as Psalm 36 brings out. David's cry and testimony of faith in verse five is also on account of the endless comfort which may be ours when belonging to the Lord.

David speaks in this psalm about the certain end of people and he speaks about how the certain end of all who refuse to repent and believe will be not good. But he also speaks about how wonderful will be the confidence of those and the end of those who fear and love the Lord. God's mercy and faithfulness as revealed in Scripture and ultimately in the Savior Jesus Christ is so great. But those who refuse to acknowledge him will remain in their sins and perish for it, justly so. But others who trust by God's grace in the Savior with no difference in themselves by nature are saved by grace and we have an eternal future with the Lord.

What reasons to pay attention to the gospel word and what a blessing when couples marry in the Lord, having each faith in the Lord and wanting to live to his praise and glory together, seeking to be a positive influence for good to his grace.

May God so bless you and make you a blessing, dear Francois and Sieneke.

I know even in this short time that you were in Calgary you were a blessing by God's grace. And who knows how the Lord will yet use you two together in his service in your families and church here and the community and world we live in.

Like today on this your wedding day so may it continue and increasingly be the case that you pray and magnify the Lord, exalting him like David.

“Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.”<sup>26</sup>

I dare say when that may be your daily testimony also now as husband and wife, you yourselves will be much blessed and a great blessing, too, to others without a doubt.

May God bless you in ever leaning on his faithfulness and seeking always to show forth his faithfulness in all your ways as I know is also your expressed desire as was David's, too. And with you we say, “To God be all the glory.”

For great, indeed, is his faithfulness, great beyond words through Jesus Christ he Savior of sinners in whom alone we find fullness of salvation and fullness of life and eternal life by grace alone through faith alone in him alone. Hallelujah. Amen.

Let us sing {?} amen, Psalm 398 as you have it in the song book in your pews. Psalter 398.

[music]

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<sup>26</sup> Psalm 36:5.

*Gracious God, we acknowledge together what a beautiful way to begin married life under the Word of God, being pointed to the faithfulness of God, and the loving kindness of the Lord in and through Christ, having that set before us as how we may be led and guided in life.*

*Lord, we do so bless Francois and Sieneke that they may know thy good hand upon them from this day on together as husband and wife, that they may again and again continue to experience thy undeserved mercies and thy loving kindness and that they may say with David, "Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds." And that that may be the testimony of their life and that we may see that and rejoice with them in that, Lord, that we all may be like that, servants of the Lord, magnifying the grace and goodness of the Lord as revealed in his Word as they {?} most ultimately in Christ Jesus the Savior of sinners and his saving work on behalf of sinners.*

*Now we pray bless the families involved today in this special day as was mentioned before. It is a day of some mixed emotions and we pray for strength and for help in also dealing with that all and that special blessing, especially in the Christian life of having sorrow and yet joy, having grief and yet gladness and, Lord, we may {?} with Francois and Sieneke and we rejoice with them this day in your goodness to them. We pray bless them thither. Be with the family and the children and grandchildren as they hear more from their loved ones here, this vital couple in the time ahead. Help, Lord, the faith that is expressed by Francois and Sieneke may also become the faith of each one personally. For we know that is what is required unto salvation, each one of us come to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Lord, be with us further this day now, too, we pray bless the further celebrations together and we pray that thou will receive all the honor and the praise. We give thanks for all that could come here for this special time. We pray for those who could not come. We think especially again of Mrs. {?} senior, Lord, grant her healing also in her frailty and old age. Be with others in special need. Be with those how have all kinds of questions and sorrows in their life. Oh Lord, help them to call upon thee and to know and experience as well the loving kindness of God and his faithfulness going to all the promises in your Word.*

*Lord, forgive all that which was sinful even in our most holy moments, even in worship we are not without sin and we need the Savior. So we pray look upon us in him, the great Savior who is the heavenly bridegroom of his people who are his bride awaiting the final glorious wedding day in eternity.*

*Lord, may not one of us be absent in that day. Oh, hear our prayer. Receive our praise and bless us further. We ask it not because we deserve it, but for Jesus' sake alone. Amen.*

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be and remain with you all in and through Christ. Amen.*

[music]

It is now my great privilege to present to you Mr. and Mrs. Francois and Sienneke {?}.

Go ahead.

[music]