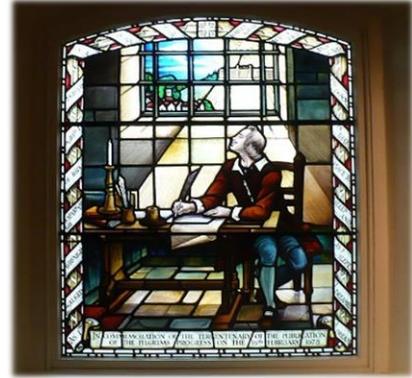


May 30, 2020

## Good afternoon, Everybody.

The sun is out! What a nice change. Pastor Tipton told me last week that we've already had over 40 inches of rain this year, and that the normal for an *entire* year is generally about 60. I researched our average annual rainfall on several weather sites this morning, and they say that its more like 50 inches. Either way, we're only five months into the year, and we've already had at least 2/3 of a whole year's rain. Greenville is *very* green right now.



## A Happy Day

This afternoon, about 2:00, will mark the 44<sup>th</sup> anniversary of one of the happiest days in my life—A *beautiful* west Texas ranch girl walked slowly across 15 feet or so of the hard wood floor of her childhood home, and placed her hand in mine forever. It was a Sunday afternoon and a minister had rushed away from his morning service in the cowboy town thirty miles away in order to perform our ceremony. On the way, his car broke down. Someone in the family, I don't remember who, went to pick him up in time for the wedding. The family barely knew him. I'd never met him. What a kindness that the dear man was willing to squeeze us into his busy day.

The men in the Largent and Lackey families had announced that they'd host a groom's breakfast that morning. But they all showed up early, and by the time I arrived they'd already eaten. They must have been nervous or something.

One of the students from the little Christian school Linda's father had begun on their ranch was playing a prelude on a tiny organ a few minutes before the ceremony. I was supposed to be sure to get the handsome boutonniere made by one of the family. But I couldn't find it. The only flowers for the wedding party still sitting on the table in the kitchen were a startlingly spectacular corsage. I think it was Linda's sister, Ellen, who began to scramble around trying to locate my boutonniere. Together we opened the door out into the living room just a crack, and behold (!), the organist was wearing it. So as far as I can remember,

the wedding was the only time in my life that I've appeared in public wearing an organist's really beautiful corsage.

When Linda's dad walked her forward as the ceremony began, he had a look on his face that unsettled me just a little bit. It had been a five-year anxiety to slowly, gently, persistently nudge the entire family toward acceptance of a Yankee preacher boy. Even Linda had been a little dubious about him from time to time. She could outshoot, outride, and outrope me. I didn't wear boots or own a cowboy hat. I really liked west Texas, but I couldn't seem to grasp the family conviction that Jeff Davis County was pretty much the closest thing on earth to Eden. But finally Linda's mom and dad consented. We had their blessing. Now he was walking her toward me, and his face seemed to be saying, *You wanted her. Are you sure? 'Cause starting right now, she's yours.* For the first time since the first date for a Sunday morning service in Rodeheaver Auditorium all those years before, I panicked a little. How was I going to feed her? What would I do if she got sick sometime? Or needed new boots?

I got past all that real fast. But there must have been some lingering effects, because when we got to the vows I couldn't remember what I'd memorized. So I made something up and sort of limped along. To this day neither of us knows what I promised. But it must have been o.k. Nobody objected.

Linda remembered what she'd memorized and said it word perfectly. But during the ring ceremony when it came time for me to extend my hand, she didn't seem to know right from left. I held out my left hand, she looked down at it, smiled up at me knowingly, pushed it back and reached for my right hand. I think it may be the one time in our marriage that there was an agreeable role reversal and I submitted. But she wasn't really my wife yet, so it was probably alright (smile). Anyway, after the ceremony I unsubmitted and put the ring on my left hand since it was the right hand. I think that counting today, it's been there for 16,071 happy days.



This is the earliest picture that we have of how we looked when we were first getting acquainted. It's from the Fall of 1971 and taken outside Rodeheaver Auditorium during the intermission of an Artist Series. Those were back in the days when the guys bought beautiful corsages for the girls, and they were happy to wear them. I couldn't tell her that I was already hoping to marry her. But I thought that *three* roses might let her know that something was up, and that

since they were yellow she'd know that I was even warming up to Texas.

One of the things that most attracted me to her was that she liked to make beautiful things. The lovely formal that she's wearing in the picture was one that she'd finished for a class just in time for the Artist Series. A year or two later she presented me with the gift of a verse (Micah 6:8) that she'd done in cross stitch and mounted in a walnut frame that she'd made in her dad's shop over one summer while we were apart. It's hung either in my school offices or in my study all these years. I see it every day.



This last picture is one that we took just a month or so ago. We'd gotten away to the mountains for a day, but I'd forgotten the lawn chairs. So we parked the van at an overlook, pulled its two middle seats out, flipped them around, and sat in the

back to eat lunch, read good books, and look out the tailgate. It was her idea (smile). She's always been good at making things and making things work.



Well . . . I've sort of tricked all of you into being an audience today as I give grateful tribute to my faithful, hard working, loving wife. She is truly unspeakably precious to me. One of the best of all her best things is that she loves the Lord enough to obey Him. It's made preaching whatever the Bible says a great joy. I've never feared that my wife would hesitate to follow.

Thank you for reading this today, and for joining with me in wishing my dear wife, a very happy and blessed forty-fourth wedding anniversary!

Both She and I Love and Pray for You,

Pastor Minnick