

Today our segment is a testimony. It is the testimony of Martin and Katharina Luther and their marriage.

On the evening of June 13, 1525, in Wittenburg, Katharina von Bora became Katharina Luther, wife of Martin Luther. That evening, the Protestant Reformation bore one of its sweetest—and most underappreciated—fruits: the transformation of marriage and family.

It was a seismic event precisely because it rescued marriage.

Marriage had fallen on hard times during the medieval age, Advice given to Christian men ran along the lines of “Don’t marry; serve God.” The church taught that to serve God you had to live as a priest or a nun, without family.

But when Martin and Katie Luther got married, they declared that Scripture knows no such division. All of life is to be lived in response to the good news of the gospel

**But their marriage** nearly didn’t happen. Luther wasn’t particularly drawn to Katie, and feared he’d soon be a martyr for the Reformation cause, thereby leaving behind a new wife. But “to spite the Pope and the Devil,” Luther wed Katie, entering “marriage as a school of character.”

Katie was a nun, and in order to escape the Catholic Church, she needed to get married. Luther smuggled her out of the convent along with 6 others. He was able to arrange marriages for the 5 others, but not Katie. And so he married her. Luther eventually fell in love with his bride, and they had six children together.

Luther home was one of intensity and frenetic work, balanced by raucous humor and abundant energy. Katharina and Martin were doting parents to their six children.

Childbearing in the 16th century was a frightening enterprise—children died in infancy as often as they lived to adulthood, and delivering mothers suffered terribly and frequently died. Yet Katie gave birth to six children without any extraordinary challenges. She planted and harvested a large garden annually, and tended and even butchered the family’s livestock. And she helped Martin walk the line, matching him quip-for-quip. No doubt Luther wasn’t an easy man to live with, but Katie was more than up to the task.

In the painting of the Luther family speaks volumes about the arrangements at home and beyond:

Katharina is not depicted in the background, sewing or knitting, but is seated front and center in the foreground. And while her maternal qualities are highlighted, with one child on, she appears to be discussing or perhaps even arguing a point with her husband. Katharina is speaking, and Luther is listening. . . . Katharina was not a mere bystander; she was an engaged and devoted partner to Luther and an active participant in the Reformation.

As with all good marriages, the Luthers' was filled with both difficulties and delights. They buried two daughters—Elizabeth at eight months and Magdalena at 13 years old. Katie was often anxiety-ridden thinking the Reformation's enemies might eliminate her husband.

Katie finally bade her love goodbye on February 18, 1546.

After his death Katie struggled to look after the family. There was war and protestants were hunted down. She was on the run for much of this time.

She died 5 years later in a tragic accident where she fell off a cart into icy water.

It is a sad end to their marriage. But we enjoy marriage today, because they brought to light the bible teaching on marriage. The reformation did not just change the church, but transformed society.