

HAND SHEARS AN ILLUSTRATION OF MARRIAGE 1 Cor 13:1-7

The hand shears mentioned in the reading are a particularly good illustration of marriage. Some years ago a local farmer Sam Chaffey travelled to England and visited Sheffield where they make UTS blade shears. In an age of automation Sam found each blade was still made by hand. Each forged and shaped till it is just right. No two blades are the same, each blade is unique.

Niki and Calvin you are both unique. Your personalities and character have been forged by your lives experiences. You have talents and abilities, likes and dislikes which are unique to you.

All farmers know the value of a good blade. One blade is useful for cutting but two joined together have a far greater potential. Imagine what it would be like shearing a sheep with just one blade? With the bonding of the two blades, together, the real power and potential of the blade shear is realised.

Niki and Calvin, today are declaring their desire to bonded together in marriage. For they believe that in marriage they will be able to work effectively and reach potentials they have yet to dream of.

A pair of shears is bonded together up in the bow by means of rivets. These rivets must be strong and reliable, able to with stand the stress and tension that it will come under as the shears are shearing the sheep and the occasional thump of frustration whilst dagging on a hot nor-west summers day!

Soon Niki and Calvin will make their vows to one another. In which they will declare their wish to be man & wife, they will acknowledge in their marriage there will be good times and difficult times by saying "I want to be with you whatever happens to us, in comfort or in hardship, in health or in sickness, in sorrow or joy. Through it all I will love protect and serve you." To be able to live up to these challenging vows that you are going to make, you will need a very strong rivet.

In Christian marriage the bonding power, the rivet if you like is Christ.

Calvin and Niki if you choose to build your marriage with Him then you will find that rivet, one that can withstand all tests your marriage will face. Give Christ a place in your future life together and He will provide you with the resources that you will need to build a successful marriage.

Such is the love and commitment mentioned in our reading from 1 Cor. 13:1-7. Love based not on what it can get, but instead what it can give. . Recently I read this analogy of the love which Corinthian's 13:1-7 calls for. It is a love which keeps promises despite feeling or performance. It is love that acts - not by feeling, but based on commitment. It holds itself to a vowed standard trusting that feeling, ----- when it is absent, will soon follow.

Such love says "I'm going to act according to my promise. I will give my self sacrificially and unconditionally to this person, and were going to make it work, believing that the romance, the feelings of emotions are the fruit and not the anchor of our love.

One writer said, A person making a marriage vow makes an appointment with themselves at some distant time and place. This love intends to keep that appointment and does it regardless of circumstances. (((PAUSE)))

For those that have ever used the hand shears, you will know that when they are first brought there is much work needed before they can be used, they must have the handle wrappings and the driving strap attached. Then their are the depth guides to be cut back, knockers to be fitted, finally the blades are ground and pulled back until they are just right.

The "setting up" of shears takes much time and effort, and if the shearer is a good one, then one could say it is a life times work, for the shearer is always looking how the blades can be honed and refined to perform better.

Niki and Calvin today you start an incredibly exciting adventure which will last your lifetime, a life time you have chosen to spend together. I wish you all Christ's blessing as you spend that life together, fine tuning your marriage so that over the years your love for one another increases and sharpens. Becoming a thing of beauty. Like the sight of a top shearer using a finely tuned set of blades in one of our high country wool sheds, giving pleasure to the participants and onlookers.