

Lovers in a Dangerous Time
A wedding sermon
for Ericka Stephens and Andrew Rennie
by Brian Walsh

Jeremiah 29

John 15

Bruce Cockburn, "Lovers in a Dangerous Time

One day you're waiting for the sky to fall
the next your dazzled by the beauty of it all

Apocalyptic dread and creational delight
anxiety and joy
it's all crashing down or you are overwhelmed
by the sheer beauty of it all
her beauty
his beauty
sensual beauty
the beauty of gift

That's the way it is for lovers in a dangerous time
that's the way it is when you make love in empire
that's the way it is when you pledge troth
that's the way it is when you get married against the odds

When you're lovers in a dangerous time
sometimes you're made to feel as if your love's a crime
it is criminal to close down your options
in a world of infinite choice
it is criminal to say enough
in a world of insatiability
it is criminal to say I do
in a world of duplicity
it is criminal to tie the knot
in a world with no strings attached
it is criminal to offer yourself in an act of momentous giving
in a world where everything has its price
sometimes you're made to feel as if your love's a crime
criminal activity ... at Trinity Anglican Church
... on Thanksgiving weekend

When you're lovers in a dangerous time
sometimes you're made to feel as if your love's a crime

nothing worth having comes without some kind of fight
got to kick at the darkness till it bleeds daylight
kicking at the darkness
getting married in the dark
marriage as a shining light in the darkness
trothful love as good news in a world of consumer sexuality
how?
how do we kick at the darkness?
how do we live in the midst of empire?
how do we live in Babylon?
how do we live in exile?

Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel to all the exiles ...
thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel to Andrew and Ericka
build houses and live in them
plant gardens and eat what they produce
take each other as husband and wife
have children
multiply in all of your ways and do not decrease

Build houses in a culture of homelessness?
Plant gardens in polluted soil?
Get married?
Have children ... in this world?
Multiply ... in a world of debt?
That's it?
But we want to kick at the darkness!

Building houses
building a life together of hospitality
getting your hands dirty in the soil
sharing a life of faithfulness with each other
with your community
with your neighbourhood
with the poor
raising children of covenant
multiplying virtue, justice, kindness, compassion, forgiveness
... all of this is kicking at the darkness till it bleeds daylight.

Kick at the darkness
seek the welfare of the city
kick at the darkness
seek shalom

kick at the darkness
 spirits open to the thrust of grace
kick at the darkness
 not out of bravado
 not out of triumphalism
 not out of bitterness
kick at the darkness
 rooted in grace
kick at the darkness
 living in the light

Kick at the darkness
 with eyes wide open
kick at the darkness
 because the exile will be long
kick at the darkness
 because the darkness will not have the final word
kick at the darkness
 because the darkness is ubiquitous,
 but it is not sovereign

I have plans for you,
 says the homemaking God
I have plans for your shalom
I have plans for your homecoming
Call ... and I will hear
Seek ... and I will be found
Come ... and I will gather you
Come ... and I will come to you

These fragile bodies of touch and taste
this vibrant skin ... this hair like lace
spirits open to the thrust of grace
never a breath you can afford to waste
when you're lovers in a dangerous time

Lovers in a dangerous time
 need to live somewhere
lovers in a dangerous time
 need to bear fruit in the wilderness

Abide in me as I abide in you
 abide in me and bear much fruit

Abide in me
 be at home in me
 be homemakers under the shelter of my love

Abide in my love
 live in my love

Abide in me
 my words will abide in you
 my word will dwell with you
 as you dwell with each other
 a word-shaped dwelling
 a Christ-shaped dwelling

Abiding in Jesus
 living in empire

Abiding in Jesus
 lovers in a dangerous time

Abiding in Jesus
 open to the thrust of grace

Abiding in Jesus
 bearing rich fruit

Abiding in Jesus
 abiding in joy

Seek the welfare of the city
 seek shalom

Seek the welfare of the city
 love one another

What a friend we have in Jesus
 he laid down his life for us

What a friend she has in Andrew
 he'll lay down his life for her

What a friend he has in Ericka
 she'll lay down her life for him

Seek the welfare of the city

Go and bear fruit
 fruit that will last

Go and bear fruit
 fruit of the gospel

Go and bear fruit
 fruit of the light

Go and bear fruit
fruit that will kick at the darkness
Go and bear fruit
fruitfulness of committed love
Go and bear fruit
fruitful work that seeks shalom
Go and bear fruit
fruit that will satisfy and sustain the weary

Go forth my sister, my brother
go forth from this day
and bear fruit
Go forth and multiply
go forth as lovers in a dangerous time.

And as you go,
abide in Jesus
as you go
abide in his word

And as you go
you do not go alone
we go with you
you see ... we're lovers in a dangerous time too.