

Session 4

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Jn. 11: 33-40

Author:: Festo Kivengere  
Place:: Thousand Oaks, CA  
Date:: February 9, 1981  
Event:: Conejo Valley, Festival of Faith  
Theme:: Love God -- Love Neighbor and Move  
Text:: John 11: 33-40 and John 12 34: 30

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And now let us bow in a word of prayer as we open our hearts to Him  
 before whom we are now, expecting a blessing from Him.

Blessed Lord Jesus we lift our hearts in  
 thanksgiving that you choose to become our friend.  
 A friend of sinners. We thank you that by your Holy  
 Spirit we can know you so intimately and get  
 acquainted with you. An experience in which we  
 become not only alive but we begin to move in the  
 direction of your unchanging love. Bless us this  
 evening in your blessed Name. AMEN!

Greetings to you all in the Name of that wonderful friend you have been  
 singing. Bringing your greetings from Uganda, in particular and in East  
 Africa in general from your christian brothers and sisters. It is a joy  
 to be here in your Festival of Faith. Indeed, the christian faith is a  
 festival, in fact it is a continual festival, because christians are a  
 community of the resurrection. Men and women who have been made alive  
 through the miracle of Him who died and rose again and conquered death  
 and defeated sin and broke the chains and set the captives free. Therefore,  
 the christian church, the christian faith, the singing faith, It is a  
 continual celebration.

Christian  
 faith

(And so my wife and I praise God that we have been given the opportunity to come here in your beautiful valley and to celebrate with you) We have been sharing a bit about the drawing love for God, I love God, I love neighbor is the theme. (It was chosen by those who were praying and thinking as the expression of the need for your valley, because that is what a theme is about. A theme is an expression in words, and these words are put into hearts of God's people, by the Holy Spirit, you see the Holy Spirit is not an ignorant agent, she really knows what goes on in the valley doesn't she? He is there with you, in business, in your little <sup>scuffles</sup> ~~scuffles~~, in your little corners where you get stuck. He is there, so he knows all the little things which stir the heart, the little upsets, the little notes and almost make us run away from each other, he even knows your little denominational battles. And all these things are really in his sight, he is acquainted with and because he is the agent of that kind of tremendous and enlightenment, he is a life giver so he puts some thoughts in the hearts of his people to express the needs, or the need as he sees it, love God love neighbor, and that of course is applicable everywhere,) it is applicable in Uganda, love God and love neighbor, it is applicable in South Africa where I have been preaching recently, a country torn apart with tensions hatreds, torn apart with tensions, hatreds based on nothing except race color of the skin, background, culture, culture, class. Things which should never really have been means by which we fight, but things which should have been means by which we serve one another, the fact that I come <sup>from</sup> Uganda - the color of my skin as a black African should never be, should never be a means by which another brother is kept at a distance. If I use that excuse to keep you at a distance, that is a misuse of a good gift. (And this is what we continually do, we use all the good gifts our father showered upon us to make us the human being he intend us to be, and we misuse them. <sup>(Cleans voice)</sup> And when we misuse them then we make them into

So. Africa

excuses to justify the reason why we keep apart. This whole business of apartness is a disease isn't it? As one leading churchman said in this country, he said, the world, there is room in the world for all the people in it, but there isn't enough room for the fences, which we build to separate us. (That is exactly what we see everywhere, that's why if you come to my continent of Africa, I have just been in the Sudan preaching, you find that big continent has become a huge camp of refugees, literally millions of them running from one country to another from this country to the other, running from their brothers and sisters who want to kill them and so forth. So you see my dear friends, your theme is absolutely poignant, Love God Love neighbor.) Now last night we spent time together on love and become alive, that is what we talked about last night, in other words once you respond to the love of God as it is demonstrated in Jesus Christ for that is the demonstration, if the love of God is concretely demonstrated in Jesus Christ, in human terms, why? For us, to get into that love, otherwise, there was no reason whatsoever why God should become a human being. Except for one reason, that human beings were in bad shape. And that in the order to restore the image we had almost ruined through our misdeeds, God took our situation so seriously that he decided to become like us. Of course that also is another wonderful thing that God in order to lift us who had become non-entities because of our sins, He chose to become a non-entity. He stooped so low that in the end he hit the bottom and at the bottom he picked us at the bottom end. And that's what salvation is about, salvation simply means, the God of eternal perfect hands not sparing those hands but moving (( this is what am going talk about this evening in a short time) instead of sparing those perfect hands of love, of eternal love, of perfection, he actually gave up himself; that is, the language of St. Paul, gave himself up.

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And put his blessed pure hands of love into human mess, the kind of mess you and I would fear to touch for humanity in sin had become untouchable in relationship with that wonderful God in whose image we have been created, and yet He didn't spare his arms, and he came in love and he became so <sup>vulnerable</sup> vulnerable that he put his blessed hands into our mess and thank God he unmessed it. That's what we call forgiveness, what is forgiveness except that God stepped into the arena of our confusion and sin and fear, this business of hating one another, and by coming into the arena, he changed men and women from non-entities and he gave them a special significance, because he whom God loves, can never be a non-entity again. That is what Jesus has done, that is what love has done, so in his love, once you respond to his love you become alive, yes indeed, once dead, left out in the cold but once we responded to those beautiful hands of love, those bleeding hands of the Savior, which demonstrate his bleeding heart, a response to that love makes you live, makes you sensitive, and today, love God, not only love God and live, love God and move is what I want to share tonight, I am going to base on scripture, because you see, life has many qualities or characteristics, but one of the most important common characteristics of life, is that it moves on. You know as opposed to death, death means that the body becomes stagnant, static, immobile, but life is a movement and therefore, love God and move. So tonight, we are going to move, and I want to read to you where it all becomes, you see it is no good talking to you like this, because many times when we talk like this, some people say, well, am I supposed therefore to initiate the movement, you don't, you simply cannot initiate, he who initiated is God, just as he initiated your creation. None of us, voted to be human beings, did you? We just found ourselves as we are. I don't believe that there has ever been a human being who said I will cast my vote to become a human being. We were created out of love so God took the initiative to make us the human being we are thank God.

Have you ever thanked God that you are a gift to yourself? Have you ever looked at, there are some people who hate themselves, that is a terrible sin you know. If you really hate yourself it means you are rejecting the gift that you are, from God to you. And in scripture, he who acts like that is dead <sup>while</sup> he is living, or the live that rejects itself becomes a living, a living death. That is misery, isn't it, death. A dead death is better than a living death, but you know, to die when you are alive, is horrible, and sometimes mark it, when I reject the kind of human being I am it means I am blind about the fact that I am a gift of God to me. That is why Jesus came, he became a human being to restore, so in John, chapter 11, there are these wonderful verses, and remember our topic just on which you can hang your thoughts this evening, love God and move, love is life and life is a movement. And so we read a few words from that remarkable story; when Jesus Christ restored the life of a dead man, by the name of Lazarus, a friend of Jesus, <sup>61</sup>he whom you love, is not well, ultimately he died, 4 days in the grave, utterly helpless. (And we read these wonderful verse, verses. When Jesus, verse thirty-two, Jesus saw Mary, verse 33 of chapter 11, when Jesus saw Mary weeping and he also saw how the people who were with her weeping also, his heart was touched, and he was deeply moved. Mark those words, remember this is God, and he was deeply moved. (where have you buried him, my friend, he asked, come and see Lord. they answered, Jesus wept, then the people who observed, who heard because this was not silent weeping, this was sobbing, sighing loud enough to be heard. And so when those people heard him sobbing, sighing in pain and tears following down, God's cheeks, see how much he loved him, they remarked. See how much he loved him, and I want just to read a few more verses and then I will share. So then we read again (deeper voice) verse 38, again deeply moved, once more, Jesus went to the tomb,) all I want you to see

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Lazarus  
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this evening my dear christian friends, I want you to see God being moved, moved, from within, moved not by tears of despair such as we many times weep. These are not tears of despair, because the Lord Jesus knew pain and when he looked at Martha and Mary, and he looked at those who came to comfort the two sisters, what did he see, <sup>Oh</sup> he saw, the frustrating devastating effect <sup>the</sup> death upon human beings, <sup>TV</sup> village is dark, the sisters heart broken, <sup>the</sup> friend Lazarus, completely captivated in the grave, the whole scene is despair, and then he stepped into it in love, but love cannot be unfeeling because, he lives so he moved, and he moved into the situation, and wasn't it beautiful? A weeping sobbing God, do you know Him like that, have you ever realized, God between Martha and Mary sobbing and weeping, sighing, deeply moved. This is the kind of God I need. <sup>Don't</sup> give me another one, this is the one I need when I am tears. (this is whom, the one my wife and I needed when we left our home at night in 1977, 30 minutes before Amin, put his hands on me to murder me and then we walked all the night through the mountains as if we had committed a crime, escaping into a neighboring, a neighboring country who would have comforted us? What company? We needed God, alive, sensitive, moving.) Jesus moved, and because Jesus moved, so later on you find him moving the dead man, from the grave. <sup>He</sup> moved and Lazarus moved in response. Love God and move, you can't love him and remain static, the Lord Jesus could have remained in heaven and loved us there, he was God, he was not limited like us.. But you know love never acts like that, particularly the love demonstrated in Jesus Christ, love is life and life moves, and God is alive, are you alive? Love God but when you love him and you remain static and you remain stagnant and your heart doesn't move then there is something wrong and that is why we want to look at this, the initiator of the movement is he who moved first. And because he moved first, our movement is a response to his (initia...) to his initiative.

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Jesus  
moving

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First he moved towards us, because he moved towards us, he draws us to move to him, and I in John again chapter 12, and when I'm lifted above the earth shall draw all men and women unto myself. So you see, love God and move, is a response to his initiative. But let me tell you this, why am I speaking the way I am speaking because you see, without the dynamite, dynamic love of Jesus Christ, I can't move, I am a paralyzed human being, my little efforts don't get me there, I try, you try to keep the commandments, you break one you break all. And you sit back, miserable, and Christianity has become a religion which produces guilty people, do you know that? (A Sunday after Sunday, churches are choke block with guilty congregations, they come in and the minister reminds them the ten commandments and plus plus and they go back feeling so bad. They come next Sunday to be reminded of the same. (laughter)) no wonder the singing in the church goes down and down and down because people are weighed down by guilt and fear, repeated failures defeats of all kinds and the movements and then in that atmosphere we become paralyzed people, a spiritual paralysis takes over, we become crippled christians, and when christians are paralyzed, they can't attract, they can't attract other people. And so you see love God and move, move where? First, move in the direction of God's love, that's one, move into the direction of God's love. (Now some of you may say, oh perhaps bishop, that is too religious, not at all. That is very human, do you what the Holy Spirit does, he makes people very human, some people think when you are full of the Holy Spirit, you become an angel, in that case you should go home, to heaven, why are you here? Angels really don't fit into the valley, very much, it's its redeemed human beings who remain here doing the ordinary business and let me remind you and God became a human-being, in order to restore humanity to a dehumanized community. Sin twisted us, warped us, diverted our direction, changed us into a wrong direction and so we became, a ~~perverted~~ kind of race. Actions tell you that.

paraly  
Christ

move in  
direction  
of God's love



Murders, broken homes, hatreds, racial tensions, wars, bombs what do they  
tell you? AA ~~planted~~ <sup>planted</sup> race, (you don't need a preacher, you just read your  
newspapers they tell you the stories of perversion everyday, committing  
suicide all the time, which means despair overcoming people, see, so you  
see we are a perverted people and so we need to be returned, the Holy Spirit  
comes so that he can restore us back into the kind of human being God meant  
us to be, Created in his image, we were really human, and diverted from his  
image we became dehumanized, and we need restoration <sup>that's</sup> why Jesus became  
a human being. Good news for bad people, yes indeed, there is hope there.  
The direction therefore is very important, I love God and move, and when you  
move move in his direction. The direction of his love because then you  
become a human being. Then all the things which were restored, I am going  
to talk about that. When you move in that direction, of his love you know  
what happens, things begin to take place, what are these things I am going  
to talk about, for example, immediately you move in that direction you  
become alive to situations, his light warms you up, you become sensitive  
to sin, things which you forgot, the spirit reminds you of them in order  
that the chains may be cut loose and the human being once paralyzed may  
walk and leap and praise, that's Christianity and when it is like that,  
it really is beautiful. (we have seen it, I told the story, this morning  
of a lady in my church, she is only one among hundreds and hundreds of  
people but I shall never forget one day preaching in my cathedral back  
home, and the church was full, about 2500 people on Sunday, and I was  
really preaching and there was good singing and African drums in the  
congregation you know, things beginning to warm up, (laughter) and you  
know, this is an anglican cathedral by the way, and we are quite traditionalists  
in a way. And the <sup>ed</sup> preach was the Bishop, and as I was preaching and sharing,  
the spirit of God began loosening the people, penetrating their paralysis, ...  
breaking the chains which make us less than human, lifting the burden which

70 yrs old  
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crush the heart, and melting lives, in the direction of that eternal unspeakable love of Christ, a lady between 70 and 75 years old, jumped to her feet in the middle of preaching, in front of the congregation arms stretched, she began to dance like a childe and a number of other people came and joined and they began to dance in front of the congregation and in front of the bishop. I stopped preaching for a little bit, which was a very good break, (laughter) and but the joy of the whole thing the atmosphere was released, not by the preacher, but the authority, the author the Holy Spirit, the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, Romans 8: 1 & 2 and as the lady was really rejoicing and singing and others joining in and bursting into spontaneous songs of praise to Him, we rejoiced and then we finished preaching in fact there was no need to preach more, and afterwards I, I what make, what makes me tell the story, afterwards, a young man came to me, and said, "Bishop, I wish I were 70!" now I will tell you why, he became jealous of the liberty of the elderly woman, 70 year old who looked as if she was only 11, jumping about, dancing in the church, tremendous liberty, this teenager felt, you know, to be 70 is much better of course he forgot that if he inherit 70 years he would also inherit a few rheumatism and, but the lady, what a mistake he made, the young man he thought the liberty of that lady was her age, it wasn't, it was Jesus. now But when Jesus penetrated her tired body, she became fresh, she moved, she praised and she was effective in praise, see she even made a teenager jealous, do you?) If when christians begin to move, they become, they make other people hungry and thirsty for real life. <sup>then</sup> In another area which we need to know when we move under this wonderful love, love God and move, then immediately we become open, <sup>you can't move and remain closed</sup> as soon as you move, you become open, as Jesus came to Bethany when he entered that suffering community, did he remain intact, don't you feel that he became open and <sup>vulnerable</sup> ~~divisible~~. <sup>ifr</sup>

You can't love and remain the same or you will become frozen again. So move and in the movement you become open and you can't remain the same, by being open, <sup>life</sup> this becomes exciting and very dangerous too, because you open to all sorts of people. You see, you become <sup>vulnerable</sup> vulnerable, you become, you open to invasion, those who weep penetrate you, <sup>your</sup> your once enemies all line up, once you open your arms the enemies will come, and you don't know what to do, if you close up you become frozen again because those whom you called your enemies are the friends of Jesus. So you see, moving in the direction you see, it is exciting but it is dangerous too. It is not cheap liberty, it is not cheap movement, it is a liberating movement, a fulfilling movement, a releasing movement, a saving movement. And secondly as you move in the direction of God, you know what happens? Not only do you become open, but you cross, you cross over, and that is a dangerous thing isn't it? Immediately you cross over, other people cross over and you begin to meet people you never liked to meet. (let me give you, just give you an example, I read about in the book, in the war, one of these European wars in France, they, there was a war and a soldier was fatally wounded on the front, a French soldier, he was killed in the fighting, then his comrades lifted the dead body of their friend looking for a place to bury him, and they came to a church, and the church had a cemetery where they bury the dead and the soldiers brought this French soldier to the church yard for burial, when they brought the body, the priest came out and he said, excuse me soldiers, will you tell me, whether your friend was baptized a Catholic? Catholic because it happens that the predominant church in France is Catholic church, was your friend baptized Catholic? And the soldiers said we don't know sir! They never really went into that, they wanted only a place to bury the body, and the priest said well I am sorry, if you don't know, I am afraid we only bury people

French  
soldier  
buried  
in the  
church  
yard

communicants who belong to this church. So the soldiers were rather puzzled, and so they took the body of their friend, dug a grave outside the fence, outside the cemetery, buried him and they walked away, and the following day, they came to see whether the grave was alright, and they could not find the grave. They looked around they looked around the fence, nothing, no fresh earth such as they had dug could be found anywhere, and as they were puzzled and bewildered, the priest comes, and the priest comes and says, "Excuse me, you know when you left last night, I couldn't sleep, I had refused a place of burial to a French citizen, on the ground that I did not know where he was baptized, and I became, God made me very uncomfortable, so early in the morning after midnight, I had to get up and I moved the fence." (laughter) So your friend's body is inside the fence, no longer outside, the laws of my church had kept him outside the fence, the love God forced me to move the fence and brought him in and bring him in, so you see, you see <sup>what</sup> it is to move, when you move in that direction, you are going to move, certain fences, certain fences of tradition, certain fences of race, certain fences of sex, fences of color, I have just been preaching in South Africa, as I told you and I met some white people and I was preaching to them in Johannesburg. And in Cape Town, sharing the love of Jesus Christ, and challenging them that, when you respond to the love of God, you move, and I said in your case, you may have to move, and remove the fence and move where the blacks are. Why, because you see as you move in the light of God, it is no longer the black you see, you don't see categories and colors and traditions and cultures, you see men and women for whom Christ died. That's a tremendous sight, so you move and in the movement, you become open and imbibing open, you may have to move the fences of your protection and become an open human being, as open as the love of Him who died for you.

Captain  
S.A.

That is beautiful but that is powerful, and the Holy Spirit opens up, that is what, that is why christianity survived. ~~It would have died in the first century;~~ but because it opened up, of course it opened up on calvary, because you know the cross was absolutely exposed, wasn't it. God moved even moved outside the city of Jerusalem, and outside the city, the Savior of the world, hang on the cross, in the open, absolutely exposed for humanity to come. ~~That is love, love God, and move, and then finally,~~ not only do you remove the fences, but let me tell you, as you move, you enter into fresh air, (oh I love, I love to hear a church, the church of Christ in fact as you gathered together, Roman Catholics, Episcopallians, Presbyterians ammmmm Community church, ummmmm Lutherans, whatever, we have seen it in Africa, in fact recently, a team of Bishops went to Switzerland, a Roman Catholic Bishop, ..... and myself, an Anglican, we were invited by christians in the city of Lausanne in Switzerland to preach for ten days mission to the Swiss people, this was the first time, in the city of Lausanne, for a Roman Catholic and Protestant, Catho... Bishop, a Roman Catholic Bishop, a Protestant Bishop preaching together, so for three nights we stood in the great big cathedral of the Reformed Church of Switzerland, and preached. The next three days we were in the church of Notredame, Roman Catholic beautiful Church, preaching together, and the atmosphere was released, and the singing was beautiful, and the christians were responding to him.) You see what you did here is very beautiful, to move from your respective traditions and move meet as you have met here is the beginning of breathing in the fresh air, (and so please take it seriously, don't think this is just an exercise, in ecuminism, it is more than that. It is an exposure, you see, now some of you have seen choirs which you have never seen before, haven't you, absolutely marvellous choirs singing, you have been missing some beautiful things out here, which means) the drawing. &- together, the moving forward means, we are going to enter into a fresh

James

Visit in  
Catholic  
Bishop  
to Swiss

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air of God's love, and Christians need to enter there, to <sup>live</sup> ~~live~~ our stuffy traditions, ~~sometimes, they get very stuffy in, oh yes, we get used to them~~ we grow there, we become little children, we are baptized there, it is beautiful but sometimes instead of those wonderful traditions becoming means by which we move forward, they become ropes which tie our legs <sup>spiritually</sup> ~~literally~~. And instead of being means by which we meet each other and we embrace one another, they become means by which we separate from one another, and keep each other apart. That of course is misuse of good things, and now as I conclude, our little talk, ~~The Savior moved, because to love God it means to move, to move into the open air; to move into the direction of His love; to move and remove the fences which traditions and laws and cultures have built round us, to move and meet our enemy, I don't know anything more important, let me must tell you one little experience before I close. I don't know anything more liberating than when the Spirit of God opens you up and feels your inner man your inner person with the love of God, and immediately you move, and as you move you meet people you never met before, particularly people you don't like to meet.~~ <sup>(One day when the Lord Jesus forgave me, and brought me back into his liberating atmosphere, thus very many years back. A young school master in Uganda, you know what happened, immediately the same Holy Spirit who started his beautiful work off setting me free, said to me, "But you still have got chains of hate in your heart, there is a relative whom you have hated for a long time, you would better go and ask him for forgiveness be reconciled to him, open the gates." I had never done that, Christian as I supposed I was, I had never known that, I sung on top of hatred, prayed on top of hatred, being a good Anglican I confessed my sins every Sunday and stuck with them, unfortunately, instead of leaving them at the feet of the Savior and walk free, I repeated them and they were there. Now he came, the Holy Spirit, and he opened me up and he did a beautiful operation.</sup>

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Then he sent me to meet my friend, I went reluctantly to this man, who was five miles away and I walked to him, with a lot of fear by the way, don't imagine that when the spirit of God tells you to do something, you don't feel fear, you are still human, so I walked with a kind of trembling anxiety, but I was in the moving in the direction not of fighting, but in that direction of reconciliation, have you ever moved like that? There are many christians in America who have never crossed the road to go to Mr. Brown to sort out a few things... We sing in the church, we never cross the roads, is that love? Anywhere I went, and this man was not a christian to make it difficult, and he used to drink a lot and get tough I knew him, he was much older than I was, and I got to his home anyway and he was at home and so I sent for him and he came and he looked at me and he could hardly greet me. He knew I really hated him. And I said, "I have come", and he said, "Yes", and I said, "I have come to ask you to forgive me. because I have hated you," he said, "Yes, I knew you hated me," "Well" I said, "You only knew a little bit," (laughter) "And I have come to tell you, that the whole thing is now finished, you only knew, the the tip of an iceberg, it was deeper than what you knew, but God has come, he has found me, he has released me from hatred, I am no longer a prisoner of that, I came to ask you to forgive me, you are my friend," and he looked at me for a while, and then he opened his arms, tears flowing down his cheeks and he embraced me, he was not a christian, and we stood there and as I looked at him, it was like Jacob meeting Esau in the Bible your know, old Jacob meeting Esau a ra.... from whom he had run. And as I looked at the face of this unchristian man I thought, I could see the face of God in him. And he loved me and we sat and he said he was going to make a feast for me and later he became a christian, not that day, but later he became a christian,) however what I was sharing with you is to move in the direction of God, to meet people you don't like, shake their hands, give them some

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temperature, and receive some temperature from them. Loose the paralysis which is killing the christian church, which is strangling your life and tonight, as I speak, do you feel deep in your inner soul a whisper by the Holy Spirit, move in the direction of God's love, move and open, move and remove the fences some of you have got fences to move. You want to tell the Holy Spirit tonight, I am going to move, I am willing to move, take my hand, and then you put your little hand into the wounded hand of the Savior by faith, in confidence, he loved me that much, he can never let me down. You stretch your faith like a hand, you put it in his bleeding hand, and then you will let him take you. Step by step into the liberty which he alone can give. When this valley will experience a revival, what is revival and that? That's renewal, that's renewal, that's fullness that's life, healing one another. ( So those of you who are aware, made aware by the promptings of the Holy Spirit, because usually when somebody is sharing as I am sharing, there are little voices inside saying, "You need to remove that fence, you have kept another person in the cold." Or sometimes it may, the voice may say, you have been outside this wonderful love, you are still spiritually paralyzed, come in, loose your paralysis, leave it here and move home walking and jumping and praising God like the lame man in Jerusalem, healed by Peter and John, and some of you who want to loose your paralysis tonight, loose the sins which burden you, leave your walls of separation here and estrangement which break homes and make husbands become strangers to their wives and wives strangers to their husbands. If I had time to tell you the beauty of living together in that presence, my wife and I learning the lessons of moving in .....

\*\*ended abruptly\*\*