

Traditional Wedding Ceremony

Dearly Beloved,

We are gathered here in the presence of God to witness and bless the exchanging of vows that will bind _____ and _____ together in the covenant relationship of marriage. When this ceremony has ended, they will leave as husband and wife having been joined together by the God of heaven.

Of the three institutions ordained of God, the home is the oldest. Since it had its origin with God, it is honorable and is to be held in esteem by all mankind.

We learn from the second and third chapters of Genesis that God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden. All of the animals of the creation were passed in front of him for him to name them. When he was finished, it was evident that for every beast of the field and every fowl of the air there was a mate but Adam was alone. God caused a deep sleep to come upon Adam and from his side God took a rib and created the first woman, Eve. Adam said, *"this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man."* It was then that God stated his intent for man and woman to live as one in the marriage relationship, *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh"* (Gen. 2:23-24).

Jesus honored the institution of marriage by performing His very first miracle at the joyous wedding feast in Cana of Galilee (John 2). The apostle Paul adds that marriage is to be honorable to all (Hebrews 13:4).

The institution of marriage is not a casual one and should not be taken lightly. Since we live in an age where so many people have no respect for it, we need to constantly reassert and reaffirm that God-ordained marriage is for our good and that it should be viewed as holy. So holy is the relationship of marriage that the apostle Paul likened it to the relationship of Christ to his church.

"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify

and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. `For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.` This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband” (Eph. 5:22-33).

_____ and _____, your love for each other should be an Eternal Triangle—God is at the apex and you, as man and woman, are at the base of the triangle. When both of you are joined together with God at the top, then you will never be separated from each other at the bottom.

Your marriage should be the union of two lives—two hearts that beat as one—so welded together that they walk together; they work together; they bear each others burdens and share each others joys. I want to remind you to be friendly, loving and tenderhearted, and forbearing of one another in love. Remember, the vows you are about to take are as binding in adversity as they are in prosperity and that these vows are to be broken only by death.

I want you both to remember the great responsibilities you have: love and submission. These are serious, yet magnificent. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, gave us the perfect example of them.

_____ (Groom), Christ loved the church. He said, *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends”* (John 15:13). Jesus showed the greatest love to the church by the sacrifice of his own life. He shed his precious blood for the church to demonstrate how deep and abiding his love was and to leave us the greatest example of love this world has ever known. _____, follow the example of Christ. Consider _____ your closest friend and love her even to the sacrifice of your wants, desires and your very life. Remember the touching words of Solomon as he spoke of love when he said, *“Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it. If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised.”*

_____ (Bride), Christ gave us the perfect example of submission. Paul wrote, *“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it*

robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:5-8).

_____ (Bride), the Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe, out of love humbled himself and became submissive for our sake. And just as you would obey Jesus, submit with love in your heart to _____ as your husband.

Who gives this woman in marriage?

Vows and Exchanging of Rings

The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore, marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.

Into this holy union _____ and _____ now come to be joined. If any of you can show just cause why they may not lawfully be married, speak now or else forever hold your peace.

I require and charge you both, here in the presence of God, that if either of you know any reason why you may not be united in marriage lawfully, and in accordance with God's word, you do now confess it.

(To the woman)

_____, will you have this man to be your husband; to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

(To the man)

_____, will you have this woman to be your wife; to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

(To the man)

_____, will you take _____'s right hand and repeat after me.

(The man, facing the woman, takes her right hand in his and says:

I, _____, take you _____, to be my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death.

(To the woman)

_____, will you take _____'s right hand and repeat after me.

(They then loose their hands and the woman, still facing the man, takes his right hand in hers and says:

I, _____, take you _____, to be my husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death.

The wedding ring signifies to all the uniting of this man and woman in holy matrimony and symbolizes the never-ending nature of their love.

May I have the rings please?

(To the man)

_____, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you.

(To the woman)

_____, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you.

Prayer

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,

We approach Your magnificent throne in awe of Your majesty, power and love. We recognize You as the source of all that is good in life. We thank You for giving us life and sustaining us each day with Your blessings.

We are thankful that not only have You meet our needs in the physical and spiritual realms but that You also have made provision for our happiness. We rejoice in the fact that You have given us the church to allow us to properly express our love to You and Your Son. We likewise rejoice in that You have given us the institution of marriage so that we can properly express the great love between a man and a woman.

Dear Lord we pray that You will now look down favorably upon _____ and _____ and the union they are forming today. We pray that You will shower Your blessings upon them. May they start this relationship free from sin and with much love. May they always have You and Your Will as a part of it realizing that their commitment is not only to one another but to You and Your Son.

Our Father, bless them with much happiness, strengthen them in times of adversity and keep them always in Your care.

May their love for you and for one another continue to grow and abound.

In the name of Jesus, our blessed Redeemer, we pray,

Amen.

Now that _____ and _____ have given themselves to each other by solemn vows, with the joining of hands and the giving and receiving of a ring in the presence of this company, by the authority of the state of _____ and that of all-mighty God, I pronounce that they are husband and wife. Those whom God has joined together, let no one put asunder.

(To the man)

You may kiss your bride.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am very happy to present Mr. and Mrs. _____.