

A Wedding Homily

Dear friends we have assembled here today to witness the uniting in marriage of this man and this woman. Who gives this daughter to be married?

The Importance of Marriage

Marriage is both a civil and a sacred institution. It is the grand social institution of humanity. Its laws and relationships are of momentous importance to the human race. Every state that is wisely governed has good laws protecting and preserving marriage. Mankind has throughout their history recognized the significance of this relationship in maintaining a society that is healthy, happy, prosperous and secure. The disciples of Christ have followed their Savior in developing traditions that honor, encourage and exalt what they regard as “holy matrimony.” In doing so, they have secured for themselves the growth of the Church of Christ. This growth is sure to continue, so long as men and women honor the vows they make in marriage. In those homes built upon the foundation of scriptural marriage the religious education of children is provided, prayers to God are offered unhindered, morality, benevolence and spirituality are advanced, and the development of suitable experience for greater leadership is gained. God has ordained the *home* to be the training ground for the nation and the church.

I have said that the marriage relationship is significant, important, sacred and holy. But what makes it so? Is it only because of the good and usefulness it secures to the nation that we regard marriage so highly? Is our regard for it based solely on the blessings, joys and comforts it gives to those who seek its embrace? While the social reformers and the philosophers of our day may think and say so, your regard for marriage must be higher and holier than that.

The Bible says that marriage is to be “held in honor” (Heb. 13:4), that is esteemed and respected. Our regard for the bonds of matrimony rests entirely in the person of the Almighty God of Heaven because it is He who ordained it (Gen. 2:18-24); it is He who governs it (Matt. 19:6), and it is He who witnesses the oaths taken in it (Mal. 2:14).

Josh and Aulana, you *must* recognize the holiness of the bond and the sacredness of this institution as you pledge *by the laws of God* to be true to each other until death. God tells us that marriage is a solemn and perpetual covenant between *one* man and *one* woman to live together in mutual love throughout life. This covenant endures far beyond the ceremonies and celebrations of today. It endures through the joys and pleasures of a lifetime. Yet, its endurance is greater still, God expects that your commitment today will endure the trials, tribulations, sorrows and hardships that will come to every child of Adam. It is a commitment for which you leave parents, brothers and sisters, and all others for the companionship and intimacy of this one whom you now hold by the right hand.

Ephesians 5:22-33

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even 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 ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth

his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

This beautiful text describes the spiritual unity that exists between Christ and his holy bride, the Church of Christ. In these words from Paul we learn of the unfathomable love of Christ for our sin-cursed race and the pristinest purity which His atoning death has obtained for all of His people. However, this text primarily presents the duties that each of you will bear in your relation to the other as husband or wife. How you treat these duties will not only determine the degree of happiness you enjoy in your marriage, but also the eternal destiny of your souls.

Josh, as a husband Christ expects you to be the head of your wife. This headship is neither a despotic tyranny nor a selfish servitude. Rather, it is a loving guidance that has as its core true love—not the love of physical attraction or the love of fond communion—sacrificial devotion. You are to love Aulana *as Christ loved the Church*. Jesus gave up everything for the Church. He suffered and endured hardship for the Church. He forewent what was in His own interest and pleasure for the Church. Jesus died for the Church. Josh, when you are tested as a husband (and Satan will be certain to test you in this regard many times in the years ahead) you must remember to look back to His example as the *Bridegroom of the Church* and draw strength, encouragement and direction from Him.

Furthermore, as head of your wife Christ expects you to exhibit leadership in your home. While Proverbs 31 indicates that a good wife is one in which a husband can safely trust to manage the home and nurture the children, it does not absolve you of the responsibility to lead and guide your house. Authority resides in the head. Just as Jesus has ultimate authority over the Church, so you will over your wife and children. With authority comes accountability. Josh it will be your duty to see that the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of your family are provided. You will be responsible to see that your house serves Jehovah. You will be responsible to see that your children honor their parents and are obedient. You will be responsible to maintain an adequate resource for their financial needs. Do not think that these duties can be passed on to your wife.

Aulana, your pattern and example as a wife is the Church of Christ. The Church submits to her Lord not in fear but in love. She is overwhelmed by the sacrifice made for her and the blessings bestowed upon her. Therefore, she obeys Christ and calls Him Lord, even as Sarah did Abraham. *You are to obey your husband*. Satan will tempt you as well. There are many voices in our land today that will encourage you to rebel against his authority and pursue your own way. When those times arise, you must remember the joy and reward that you possess as a child of God comes to you only as you submit to Jesus, so the joy and happiness of marriage can only be realized when you will submit to your husband. Encourage, listen, respect and follow him.

Aulana, another attribute of the Church with which you must clothe yourself is purity. The Church that Christ will claim for His own upon His return is “glorious, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” Paul said that he had espoused the Corinthian Church to Christ as a “chaste virgin.” Your fidelity to your husband will contribute much to the success of your marriage. Do not let your head be turned by the fashions of the day and the trends in society so that your beauty is only skin deep. Let Josh find something in you that is an incorruptible ornament, which in the sight of God is of great price. Truly, Josh is just as responsible to be pure, chaste and holy as you; however, your character will do much to draw your husband closer to you, help him overcome the salacious appeal of the world and honor you as the mother of his children and the faithful companion from his youth.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth.

These words of the apostle Paul are essential to the success of your marriage. While no one doubts your love for each other today, those of us who are married know that it is nothing to compare to what it can and should be. There will be a day when passion will wain. There will be times when tenderness will be tried. What will sustain you in those hours? It is love, not the love that is felt or aroused, but love that is learned. Often Jesus said, "Go and learn what this means." Today pledge yourself to learn what these things mean.

Love is patient, that is, forbearing giving time to repent. Love is not envious. Love does not brag or boast. Love is not proud looking down on others. Love is not vulgar or crude. Love does not have to have its own way. Love is slow to anger. Love is not suspicious. Love hates sin, but exalts in righteousness. Love is helpful. Love looks for the good. Love expects the best. Love is durable. Love just won't quit.

Please, love one another.

Matthew 19:4-6

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Finally, I remind both of you of the authority that you bring to this ceremony—that which is from heaven. While I stand before you as a representative of the State of Texas. The State's authority to recognize, encourage and authorize persons to marry is derived from God. It is He alone that joins you together, and He has authorized *no man* to sever the bond He will create today.

When you take your vows in just a moment, know that God Himself will bear witness of your oath. He will this day cut a covenant between each of you and Himself--a covenant that is according to His law and not man's, a covenant that endures to the grave.

The Bible says it is better not to vow a vow, than to vow and not fulfill it. I urge you to proceed no further, if there is in your mind the idea that you can always get a divorce if it doesn't work out. That is not God's way. Today you will swear an oath to each other before God that you will work it out. I know that you know this. My prayer to God is that you will do it.

The Exchange of Vows

To the man: Repeat after me. "I (man's name) take you (woman's name) to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy word; and there to I give you my troth.

To the woman: Repeat after me. "I (woman's name) take you (man's name) to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy word; and there to I give you my troth.

The Exchange of Rings

This ring (or these rings) are of gold to symbolize the sincerity, purity and enduring nature of your love each for the other. They are fashioned in a circle to signify the unending nature of the commitment and promises you make today.

To the man: Place this ring on the third finger of (woman's name)'s hand and repeat after me, "I give this ring to you, in token and pledge, of our constant faith and abiding love. In giving this ring, I take you to be my wife."

To the woman: Place this ring on the third finger of (man's name)'s hand and repeat after me, "I give this ring to you, in token and pledge, of our constant faith and abiding love. In giving this ring, I take you to be my husband."

A Blessing in Prayer

Almighty God, our Father in Heaven, bless now this man and woman whom You have joined together in the joyful union of marriage. Give them grace to live therein according to Your Holy Word; strengthen them in constant fidelity and true affection toward each other; sustain and defend them amid all trials and temptations; help them to pass through this world in faith toward You, in fellowship with Your Church, and in loving service one to the other, that they may enjoy forever sweet communion with You and the rich blessings that come from Your hand to all that keep covenant with You. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all men.

The Proclamation

Inasmuch as these two have consented together in holy matrimony, and have declared the same before God and this company, I pronounce them husband and wife according to the Word of God and the laws of this State. Whosoever God has joined together, let not man put asunder.