

SECTION 31

Special Occasions

A Word about Special Occasions

I. Types of special occasions you will address

- Weddings
- Funerals
- Banquets (Valentine's Day, Leadership, Sunday School, Stewardship, Youth)
- Conferences
- Community (Clubs, Baccalaureate, Community Events)
- Revivals
- Bible Conferences

II. Principles to follow on special occasions

- A. Exposition is always appropriate.
- B. Attention to the audience you will address is never more important.
- C. Brevity will seldom get you in trouble.
- D. The power of a good story or illustration will never be more important.
- E. Principled exposition (biblical/topical) is sometimes a wise strategy to follow.
- F. Application oriented, of the strongest measure, is usually crucial.
- G. Humor, if appropriate to the occasion, can be an extremely valuable tool.
- H. Share and show the relevance of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

III. Weddings

Outline for Wedding Ceremony

Wedding Ceremony for _____

Lighting of Candles

Seating of Mothers/Grandmothers

Opening Song

Processional

Opening Words

Prayer
Giving of the Bride
Exchange of Vows
Song
Exchange of Rings and Commitments
Prayer Song of Commitment
Lighting of Unity Candle
Pronouncement
Kissing of the Bride
Recessional

Opening Words:

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the presence of God and in the fellowship of this Christian community to join together this man and this woman in Christian marriage. Christian marriage is a covenant of faith and trust between a man and a woman, established within their shared commitment in the covenant of faith found in Jesus Christ. Therefore, it requires of both man and woman openness of life and thought, freedom from doubt and suspicion, and commitment, to speak the truth in love as they grow up into Christ who is to be the head of their home. Therefore, this covenant is not to be entered into lightly, but reverently, discreetly, and soberly in the fear of God.

Reading of Ephesians 5:22-33 (brief comments)

Prayer

Reading of Philippians 2:1-5 (brief comments)

Giving of the Bride

Exchange of Commitment:

_____, will you have _____ to be your wedded wife, to live together in the covenant of faith, hope and love according to the intention of God for your lives together in Jesus Christ? Will you listen to her inmost thoughts, be considerate and tender in your care of her, stand by her faithfully in sickness and in health, and, preferring her above all others, accept full responsibility for her every necessity as long as you both shall live?

_____, will you have _____ to be your wedded husband, to live together in the covenant of faith, hope and love according to the intention of God for your lives together in Jesus Christ? Will you listen to his inmost thoughts, be considerate and tender in your care of him, stand by him faithfully in sickness and in health, and preferring him above all others, accept full responsibility for his every necessity as long as you both shall live?

Song (optional)

Expression of the Vows and the Ring:

Reading of 1 Corinthians 13 (brief comments)

_____, do you possess a token of your love and affection to give to your bride, a seal of this holy covenant? (He answers, "I do.")

What is it? (He answers, "A ring.")

In all ages and among all peoples, the ring has been a symbol of that which is measureless: and thus, in this holy hour, a symbol of your measureless and boundless devotion. It is a circle; it has neither beginning nor ending; so down to old age and to death and forever you are to keep this vow without violation, and the sign and the seal thereof will be this ring. As a ceaseless reminder of this sacred committal, place this ring on the wedding finger of your bride and repeat after me:

"I, _____, take thee, _____, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for richer, for poorer, for better, for worse, to protect, to cleave unto thee, and to thee only, as long as we both shall live. With this ring I thee wed, with my love I thee embrace, all my worldly goods with thee I share, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, blessed forevermore. Amen."

_____, do you possess a token of your love and affection to give to your husband, a seal of this holy covenant? (She answers, “A ring.”)

Invested with the same significance as the ring you have just received, a circle of precious gold, indicating the longevity of your love and the pricelessness of your devotion, place this ring on the wedding finger of your husband and repeat after me:

“I, _____, take thee, _____, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for richer, for poorer, for better, for worse, to obey, to cleave unto thee, and to thee only, as long as we both shall live. With this ring I thee wed, with all the love of my heart I thee embrace, in the name of the blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Pre-Marital Wedding Covenant

The decision to marry is the second most important decision one will ever make in a lifetime. The first is the decision whether or not you will personally commit your life to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Keeping this in mind, we commit to God, our minister, and each other to:

1. Seek God's will for our lives personally and together by following biblical principles for Christian living and marriage.
2. Not engage in pre-marital sex.
3. Be sure to do everything possible to build a Christian marriage and home. This means that both of us have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and that we desire growth for that relationship over the entire course of our lives by being obedient to his Word.
4. Read and listen to all pre-marital material provided by our minister.
5. Be active in a Bible-believing church beginning now and during our marriage.
6. Buy and read *His Needs, Her Needs* by Willard Harley, *The Act of Marriage* by Tim LaHaye, and *God on Sex* by Danny Akin.
7. Total openness and honesty with our minister and with each other both now and after our wedding.
8. Postpone or cancel the marriage if, at any time between now and the wedding, either one of us comes to believe this marriage is not right.
9. Never allow the word "divorce" to enter the realm of our relationship. We are in this together for the duration of our lives. Divorce is not an option for us!
10. Seek competent Christian counsel should we encounter any difficulty in our marriage.

With the above commitments made, we believe God will be honored, and the prospects for a meaningful and happy marriage enhanced. With God's help, we will seek to honor God with our lives and marriage all the days of our lives.

IV. Funerals

A. Outlines for Funerals

- “Precious Promises of a Great God” (Romans 8:28-39)
 1. We have the promise of His power (8:28)
 2. We have the promise of His purpose (8:29-30)
 3. We have the promise of His provisions (8:31-34)
 4. We have the promise of His presence (8:35-39)

- “The Grace of God for When I Hurt” (Romans 8:28-39)
 1. God assures us (8:28)
 2. God changes us (8:29-30)
 3. God supports us (8:31-33)
 4. God hears us (8:34-also 8:26-27)
 5. God loves us (8:35-39)

- “The New Things of Heaven” (Revelation 21:1-8)
For the child of God who dies there is a:
 1. New Creation (21:1-curse reversed; creation restored; creature redeemed)
 2. New City (21:2-a people/a place)
 3. New Commitment (21:3)
 4. New Condition (21:4)
 5. New Confidence (21:5)
 6. New Covenant (21:6-7)

B. Two excellent devotional poems (the one by Overton is outstanding)

- *He Maketh No Mistake*
My Father's way may twist and turn,
My heart may throb and ache,
But in my soul I'm glad I know,
He maketh no mistake.

My cherished plans may go astray,
My hopes may fade away,
But still I'll trust my Lord to lead
For He doth know the way.

Tho' night be dark and it may seem
That day will never break;
I'll pin my faith, my all in Him,
He maketh no mistake.

There's so much now I cannot see,
My eyesight's far too dim;
But come what may, I'll simply trust
And leave it all to Him.

For by and by the mist will lift
And plain it all He'll make.
Through all the way, tho' dark to me,
He made not one mistake.

-- A. M. Overton

- *"God Saw"*
God saw you getting tired
A cure was not to be,

So He put His arms around you
And whispered, "Come with Me."

With tearful eyes we watched you suffer
And saw you fade away,

Although we loved you dearly
We could not ask you to stay.

A golden heart stopped beating
Hard working hands to rest,
God soothed our heart and proved to us
He always does what's best.