

WEDDING WORDS

by
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As a minister of Jesus Christ, it has been my privilege to perform many marriage ceremonies. In recent years, I have had the honor of performing the wedding ceremonies for five of our grandchildren:

June 11, 2005 - Grandson James Lawrence Mellon, Jr. and Eleanor Theresa Murphy
April 18, 2009 - Granddaughter Sarah Christine Vesper and Jeffrey D. Newton
October 1, 2010 - Grandson William Allen Vesper and Alexis Noelle Rosko
July 22, 2011 - Grandson John Henry Vesper III and Claire Elyse DiLullo
July 29, 2011 - Granddaughter Jessica Marie Mellon and Andrew A. Robinson

When it came time for a message or challenge from the minister to the bride and groom, I spoke some very personal words that were quite the same to all of them, but adapted specifically to each couple. As I did so, it was my hope then, as well as now, that others, as well as the couple, would remember them and apply them to their own marriages, present or future.

Here is the message that I gave at the most recent wedding.

"Wedding Words"

CHARGE TO THE BRIDE AND GROOM

Now, the Order of Service indicates that this is the time for the minister to give a "Charge to the Bride and Groom." It is a time for him to share some of his thoughts with those being married.

Let me do that with the hope that you will remember some of what I say, though I know that the odds are against me. Through the years, I have heard various married couples talk about their wedding and almost all have agreed: they don't remember a thing the preacher had to say, except DO YOU? and DO YOU?

And, being that another of your cousins was married just last week, some of the words I say may sound familiar. But, you see, I want each of our grandchildren to get the message, and to get it right; so these words are specifically for the two of you, and I hope that they are meaningful to you.

And by the way, if it appears as though I am repeating myself, please understand, that is the privilege given to old preachers.

First, JESSIE and ANDREW, I am so glad that you decided to get married in the church - the church of Jesus Christ. For it is a testimony of your own personal faith in Christ. Some might have expected you to exchange your vows while flying, 10,000 feet above the ground in your dad's airplane, or even floating to earth in a tandem parachute jump. But thankfully, by your choice, we are gathered here in the Church.

The Church is the House of the Lord.

The Church is the place where we worship God, to pray, to sing and to fellowship with God's people.

The Church is the place where we baptize our children,

The Church is the place where we bid farewell to those passing from this earthly life to the life everlasting.

And the Church is the place where we perform marriage ceremonies.

All of these acts speak of love - the kind of love of which we've already read in God's holy word, the Bible.

Now, as you begin your lives together in this most sacred and holy relationship, I want you to think of three very interesting symbols that are apparent at a time like this.

First, there is the symbol of a CROSS. It is present here in the church - for very obvious reasons. It is the CROSS OF LOVE - GODS' LOVE. As a Christian, you can't look a cross without thinking of Christ and the Love of God. The Bible says that, **GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.**" God's love became evident as he sacrificed His Son Jesus on a cross to forgive us our sins. So, the cross not only symbolizes love, but sacrifice, the proof of love. Such love and sacrifice should be the everyday relationship between the husband and the wife in marriage.

The second symbol is that of a TRIANGLE. As we all know, a triangle has three sides and three angles or corners. Two of those corners represent the husband and the wife. I won't be so arrogant as to say which is on the right and which is on the left. The two of you will have to work that out yourselves. And in the third corner or angle is another person. Just who that third person is will be determined by whether the triangle is SECULAR or SACRED. When it is SECULAR, that is, on the same plane, the human plane, that third person will be one who will try to draw the interest and affection of either the husband or the wife away from the spouse, and the marriage will surely fail. History is replete with such stories.

But when the triangle is SACRED, that is pointed Heaven-ward - like a pyramid - with the husband and wife at the base and God at the top, that marriage is bound to succeed. It is that simple; for as the husband and wife draw closer to God and ascend the sides of that triangle - that pyramid - they simultaneously are drawn closer to each other.

The third symbol is that of a CIRCLE. We see the CIRCLE in the rings that you will give to each other. And rings are extremely important at a time like this. As much time is devoted to the importance of the wedding rings at a wedding as anything else, except, of course, the wedding gown. I dare say, that before either of you left home today that someone said, "DO YOU HAVE THE RING?" "DO YOU HAVE THE RING?"

Some refer to the ring as a CIRCLE OF LOVE. But actually, there is no love apparent in a circle. But there is continuity or continuance in a circle. No matter how small or how large a circle may be, it is unending - and so should marriage be - UNENDING! Marriage is not just for a season, it is for life. It is "as long as we both shall live."

We who are gathered here today at your invitation, hope and pray that you will experience throughout your life-time together all three symbols - THE CROSS OF LOVE AND SACRIFICE, THE SACRED TRIANGLE that places God at the top, and THE CIRCLE OF COMMITMENT that lasts for eternity.

JESSIE and ANDREW, over 61 years ago, my grandfather - also a minister - performed the wedding ceremony for your grandmother and me in another Christian Church similar to this one today. Like everyone else I've talked to, I don't remember a

thing that he said at our wedding on that day. But, more importantly, I'll never forget the plaque on the wall that he had hanging in his home. I saw it every time I visited there. It read,

“CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THIS HOUSE,
HE IS THE UNSEEN GUEST AT EVERY MEAL,
HE IS THE SILENT LISTENER TO EVERY CONVERSATION.”

That made the difference in his life and home, and it will make the difference in every home where Christ is Head. I hope it will be true in the home that you build, beginning today. AMEN!