

# *A Traditional Wedding Ceremony*<sup>1</sup>

## THE PROCESSIONAL

### THE WELCOME

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the presence of this company, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony, which is commended by the apostle Paul to be honorable among all men; and, therefore, is not by any to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, and in the fear of God. Into this holy estate, these two persons come now to be joined. If any man can show just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else, hereafter, forever hold his peace.

### THE CHARGE

\_\_\_\_\_ (Groom), wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony: Wilt thou love her, comfort her, and keep her, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as you both shall live?

*Groom responds:* "I will."

\_\_\_\_\_ (Bride), wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony: Wilt thou love him, comfort him, and keep him, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as you both shall live?

*Bride responds:* "I will."

### THE GIVING OF THE BRIDE

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

*Father responds:* "I do," "We do," or, "Her mother and I do." (*The father is then seated.*)

### THE STATEMENT OF MARRIAGE

\_\_\_\_\_ (Groom) and \_\_\_\_\_ (Bride), as part of your marriage ceremony, you have chosen to use what has been known as "the traditional wedding vows." They can be traced back to the 1300s in England, yet they have remained, perhaps, the most loved and best known of all ceremonies. In these moments, before you take your vows, let's go further back than the 1300s. Let's travel back in time to the first wedding and look at that original match. We will seek the answer to the question some people ask, "Why do people get married?" God answers that for us in his Word.

As we examine the creation events in the first chapter of Genesis, we discover the triune God saying, "Let us make man in our own image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:26-27). God created male and female and joined them together as a demonstration of himself. When a

<sup>1</sup> Jim Henry, adaptation of, *A Classic Wedding*, *The Two Shall Become One: A Wedding Manual* (Nashville, TN.: Broadman & Holman, 2000), pp. 48-53.

couple is united in the oneness of marriage, God is glorified, and the divine image of the heavenly Father is reflected on earth.

The creation account tells us more about the importance of the union of man and woman. We know that marriage is important because it was God's plan for the elevation of a new kind of creation, one that was superior to all else God had created. God told man to rule over his magnificent creation: "Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Gen. 1:28).

As we examine the second chapter of Genesis, we find that God made marriage as the completion of his supreme creature, man. Adam lived in a perfect environment and had a fascinating creation to observe, but still something was missing. God, ever sensitive to his creature's needs, said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (Gen. 2:18). Was God successful? The first recorded words of Adam were: "This is now bone of my bones" (Gen. 2:23a). The Living Bible paraphrases his words as, "This is it!" Adam finally knew the satisfaction of being complete.

Another reason we marry may be discovered in Genesis. We read that God made marriage for the reproduction of a godly heritage. "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number'" (Gen. 1:28). God children are a gift from God. "Children are a gift from the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward" (s. 127:3, NASB). Marriage, simply defined, is the contemplation of the love of God in and through the form of other human beings—the spouse and the child.<sup>2</sup>

Believing that you understand something of the reason for marriage as God has revealed it, are you ready now to confirm your commitment to God and to each other in Christian marriage?

*Couple responds; "We are."*

#### THE VOWS

\_\_\_\_\_ (Groom) and \_\_\_\_\_ (Bride), join hands and repeat after me:

*Groom:* "I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Groom), take thee, \_\_\_\_\_ (Bride), to be my wedded 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, to cherish, till death do us part; according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto, I plight (or pledge) thee my troth."

*Bride:* "I, \_\_\_\_\_ (bride), take thee, \_\_\_\_\_ (Groom), to be my wedded 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, to cherish, and obey till death do us part; according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto, I plight (or pledge) thee my troth."

#### THE EXCHANGE OF RINGS

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<sup>2</sup> Mike Mason, *The Mystery of Marriage* (Portland, OR; Multnomah Press, 1985), 30.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Groom), is there a ring?  
*Groom responds:* “Yes.”

*(The minister takes the ring from the best man or ring bearer and places it in the groom’s hand. The groom will then place the ring on the third finger of the bride’s left hand. The groom, still holding the ring in place, repeats the following vow.)*

\_\_\_\_\_ (Groom), repeat after me: “With this ring I thee wed, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

\_\_\_\_\_ (Bride), is there a ring?  
*Bride responds:* “Yes.”

*(The minister takes the ring from the maid or matron of honor and places it in the bride’s hand. The bride will then place the ring on the third finger of the groom’s left hand. The bride, still holding the ring in place, repeats the following vow.)*

\_\_\_\_\_ (Bride), repeat after me: “With this ring I thee wed, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

#### THE LORD’S PRAYER

Congregation, please join us in praying our Lord’s Prayer: “Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever” (Matt. 6:9-13, modified KJV).

*(Minister continues praying):* O Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting life, send your blessing upon these, your servants, \_\_\_\_\_ (Groom) and \_\_\_\_\_ (bride), whom we bless in thy name. May they live faithfully together as husband and wife, and keep the solemn vows made between them, which are symbolized by the rings given and received. May this couple ever remain in Perfect love and peace together, and live according to thy laws through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

\*INSERT COVENANT MARRIAGE VOWS.

#### THE PRONOUNCEMENT

Forasmuch as \_\_\_\_\_ (Groom) and \_\_\_\_\_ (Bride) have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and, hereto, have given and pledged their troth, each to the other, and have declared the same by giving and receiving a ring, and by joining hands, I pronounce that they are husband and wife. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

#### THE BENEDICTION

\_\_\_\_\_ (Groom) and \_\_\_\_\_ (Bride), “The LORD bless you, and keep you; The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace” (Num. 6:24-26 NASB). Amen.

#### THE PRESENTATION

\_\_\_\_\_ (Groom), you may kiss your Bride. I am pleased to announce for the first time, “This is Mr. and Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_.” What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

#### THE RECESSIONAL

### *Traditional Wedding Ceremony* *Covenant Marriage Vows Insert*

#### MINISTER TO GROOM:

Believing that marriage is a covenant/ intended by God/ to be a lifelong fruitful relationship/ between a man and a woman,/ I (STATE YOUR NAME)/ vow to God,/ to you (STATE YOUR BRIDE’S NAME),/ to our family and our community/ to remain steadfast/ in my selfless and unconditional love for you./ I will always seek reconciliation/ in times of trial./ I will remain sexually pure/ in my relationship to you/ in mind and body./ And, I will seek ways/ for us to purposefully grow/ both personally and spiritually/ in our covenant marriage relationship.

#### MINISTER TO BRIDE:

Believing that marriage is a covenant/ intended by God/ to be a lifelong fruitful relationship/ between a man and a woman,/ I (STATE YOUR NAME)/ vow to God,/ to you (STATE YOUR GROOM’S NAME),/ to our family and our community/ to remain steadfast/ in my selfless and unconditional love for you./ I will always seek reconciliation/ in times of trial./ I will remain sexually pure/ in my relationship to you/ in mind and body./ And, I will seek ways/ for us to purposefully grow/ both personally and spiritually/ in our covenant marriage relationship.

#### MINISTER TO CONGREGATION:

As God has joined this couple together in His Covenant of Marriage through this Community of Faith, will you encourage and support them in their usefulness in God's kingdom? Will you stand by them in sickness and in health, in adversity and prosperity, and be true and loyal to God in support of this covenant relationship, so long as they both shall live? If so answer, “We will.”

Since they have entered into this covenant before God and this Family, by the authority of God, the affirmation of this Community of Faith, and the laws of this state, I declare that \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are husband and wife. I now introduce you to Mr. and Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_.