

Three Weddings!

Overview

Let's have a word of prayer. I'm going to ask Cliff to lead us in prayer. The Lord's blessing upon this place and upon these people. And everyone said Amen. Well, it's 11 o'clock and we just want to, as a congregation from Vineland, Ontario, welcome people who are chiming in, maybe live right now from places like British Columbia, although they're not out of bed yet. But people will be watching this sometime later as well. And we want people who are chiming in right now to know you're in on a very, very special event here at our church in Vineland. So we're going to begin this morning.

If you care to, you can stand, but you're welcome to just remain seated. But we're going to sing a couple of hymns. Great old hymns. I hope you know these. I've had some people say, can we sing some hymns? We're going to right now. The first song we're going to sing is the church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord. This is our good, good friend Doug Fikes. His lovely wife is with us, Carol. And he came from Burlington this morning to play on the organ. So thank you, Doug, for your help today. God bless you.

So we're going to sing the church's one foundation. If you're going to stand now is your chance, but you're welcome to remain seated. (The hymn service continues.)

Ladies and gentlemen please remain standing. A bride and a groom. You're welcome to hum along. This is for you two. You light up my days and you fill my nights with a song. You're welcome. I love you. Never to be alone. Gentlemen hold on to your wife's hand right now. Come on get romantic just for a moment sir.

Tell her Michael. You light up my life. Everyone please be comfortable seated. I wish to share with you out of God's word this morning about three marriages. Three grooms, three brides. Genesis 2, and the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. And that man became a living soul.

Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. And he brought these animals to the man to see what he would name them. And whatever the man called each living creature that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, birds in the sky and all the wild animals. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep.

While he was sleeping God took one of the man's ribs and then she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of the man. The man said this is now bone to my bones flesh of my flesh she shall be called woman for she was taken out of man. So the Lord God crafted the earth, made all

these animals and what I didn't read to you but I'll say it now that every time God crafted, He created something the recorder of that event said that God saw that's good. Everything that God made, everything that he created he always observed now that's good. But Katrina when he finished man he looked at him and said man that's not so good. The Lord concluded it's not good that this man should remain alone.

The Lord knew that this man needed a helpmate, needed somebody suitable for him. So he indicated to the man we've gotta find you a wife and isn't it intriguing. He no sooner comes to that conclusion and communicates that to Adam the next thing God causes all these animals to come through. The elephant comes through Adam says no a giraffe comes through no we don't know how long this parade of animals took had to be some significant time. And at the end of the time I see God coming to Adam and saying well how did it go? And Adam said not well Lord I didn't see anything that I could really get along with. Was it a surprise to God? No. God knew exactly what was going to unfold. He wanted Adam to know. He wanted Adam to say at the end of it all it's not working for me and I hear God saying good that's what I wanted out of you. And then the Lord puts him to sleep why?

God can do anything. God could have scooped up some mud from the same puddle as he crafted Adam from dust, and crafted a woman. Or God could have said Abracadabra. And there she was, but no, God was going to perform surgery. I'm not making this up. The Lord puts the man into a deep sleep. And with the Lord's own hands he tears the man's side open and he violently breaks off a rib. Say pastor, why do you have to make this so graphic? It's important. It's vitally important that we know that the provision of Abraide for Adam was going to cost Adam greatly.

And something to remember is that as long as Adam lived every time he looked down upon his side it was a reminder when he saw a scar. Yes there was a scar because the Word says that when God had finished taking up the rib that the Lord closed it up. God sewed him back together again and I believe there was a scar. So much so that when two little fellows came along and were sitting around a campfire at night I heard one of them saying, Dad, tell us again about how it all began. And Adam in his maybe feeble way would have said, well what I remember is just laying silently on the floor of a beautiful garden. But I really wasn't with it. I needed something else.

And I saw animals passing before me. But then suddenly I sensed a presence around me. Thank God for the presence. Surely there have been times in your life when you've sensed God was near. It's an incredible feeling. It is a feeling. God was there. And he said suddenly he said, there I was face to face with the Creator. And as he came down closer and closer to my face he breathed his breath upon me. And as he did so I went, I breathed in as he breathed out and suddenly I was aware of everything. I was not just a creature like the rest of these animals. Something unique was happening in my life because the Lord had said, let us, who's the us?

Father, Son, Holy Spirit, they're already there, three in one. Let us make man in our image. And when God breathed into that man, that man became in so many ways very much like God. Intellect, feeling, memory, so much more. That was the first marriage. As God brought this bride

to him and said, what do you think, Adam? He said, perfect. Feeling the scar on his side, he said, she's perfect, sir. She's made from me. She's bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. We hear those words again in the New Testament, bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh.

Only it changes a little bit where the apostle says, we are bone of his bone. Speaking of our relationship today with Jesus, we're now bone of his bones. We are flesh of his flesh. For as the woman in the Garden of Eden proceeded from the wound of the man, so we have proceeded as the next bride. First bride was Eve. We are the bride of Christ today. And he was bruised for our iniquity. Our shame was put upon him. He was despised by all men. He paid the price. When the man's body was opened up, what he had to give at that point was a bone. That was the dowry paid to achieve Eve. With Jesus as he came into the world, the Son of God, long for fellowship.

God longs for fellowship. And the way for him to do so was to create man. Then he sent his son Jesus looking for a bride, who we are today by faith and accepting him. And we were paid for when I was working over in Kenya for so many years. I came to appreciate the wording, the dowry. Young men, you know, go into debt depending on how keen he is on this lady to become his wife. He's liable to pay more than the going price, which was somewhere between 8 and 10 cows. If he really wants a dandy, he might have to pay 20 cows, 30 cows. Someone may go into debt for their whole life to receive this woman. That's called the dowry.

Jesus paid the dowry for us. It cost him everything. As he died on the cross, that was the debt that was paid. And we have come from his side. We are bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh. Everything about the church is unworldly. We're not related to the world in any way, shape, or form. And we do the Lord Jesus Christ a disservice when we try to dress up the church to look like, feel like, sound like, smell like the world. When God created the church, he created her perfectly. Perfect design. Beautiful. Glorious and triumphant. The church makes a mistake when we try to act like the world. We need to be the purity of Jesus. And we go on to another bride and groom today, and that's the people that we are specifically and significantly today, a bride and a groom. I'm inviting this bride and groom, Michael and Katrina.

You know that word Katrina? First time I met her, I said, like a hurricane. I've called her the hurricane several times, and on one occasion she said, you know, Pastor, you are a brat. Yes, I am. We don't welcome hurricanes very often. They're rather devastating. But this one's beautiful. She's a child of Jesus. She's walking with him, and she's the delight of Michael. And I'm so proud of you two people. They've just begun a new journey, a new journey in the Lord Jesus. And that's for them to tell you some other time. I'm just so excited to be just a little tiny part of your life.

Thank you for choosing this to be your church family. Thank you for allowing us to love you and care about you. And so this moment as you come and join me now, bring your bride up and come and join me, won't you? This moment is as much about us as it is about them. Because Michael, as the Lord said, looking at the man, this isn't very good. He needs somebody. He needed a bride because without her, he was incomplete. I'm sure you recognize this today. If you never recognized it before, without Katrina, you would not be complete. You need her. And Katrina, you need this man.

And church, they need us. And behalf of these people, I say to you, we need you. Why do we need you? Why did Adam need Eve so that he wouldn't be focused on himself? He needed somebody to pour his love, to pour his generosity upon. Otherwise, he would just be this arrogant something, rather, that God fashioned. But when God presented Eve, he was no longer focused upon himself. He tossed away his own mirror and now looked upon her, fell deeply in love with her. And from that moment, it was his design to care for her, to love her. He needed her to complete himself. And church, we need them. And you need us. We're family. How's that feel?

I got four A-men's. You could count them, couldn't you? So, there's scriptures that talk about Jesus and his bride. And Jesus, Jesus and his bride, the church, is typical of our relationship, the church, in our own relationships. How Jesus gave himself so that he would have a bride, he suffered the cross. He put it all on the line. The Word of God tells us through the apostles in the writing of the epistles, that we're to look at, study the life, the purpose, the design, the focus, and the uninhibited generosity of Jesus as he ministers to his bride, the church. And how the church is to respond to him and subject herself to him.

There are a lot of people who misunderstand the Bible completely when they read and wives submit to your husbands. So we have these women who say, I don't like the Bible. What do you mean I have to submit to him? We're to submit, wife to the husband as the church submits to Jesus. And why would the church submit to him? Because without him we are nothing. Without him we are bankrupt. Without him we are defenseless. And without him we have no future. So why would the wife subject herself to the husband? She'll be happy to do so if he follows out the admonition of the Lord where it says, husband, love your wife.

So Michael, if you love her with such deep devotion and you provide for her and you care for her, if she's the apple of your eye and you act that out, she knows that everything that you come to her with is for her benefit. And so she happily subjects herself to you because you have stepped up as the leader and the provider, the protector of this marriage. And it's your joy to submit to the man because he does everything that he knows how to provide for you. So when it says husbands love your wives, that's where it begins. If he loves her, truly loves her, then she, responding to that devotion, will truly love him.

Again, back to the Bible, the word says we love him. Why? Because he first loved us. Jesus started it all with his love on the cross. And therefore we want to respond to him. Therefore we want to develop our relationship with him. That's the true picture of marriage. And when anybody messes up the picture of the bride and the groom, as that's a biblical principle, the bride and the groom, that's a Bible idea. It wasn't some Drunkard's idea when he lost in a casino. This was God's idea, the man and the wife. And when the world tries to change that and mess with us and say, you're a bunch of dinosaurs, you don't know what, that when we have the world telling the church, catch up, buddy, catch up to the real world today, the church has a message back for the world. We're steadfast.

We believe in what the word of God says. And nobody, no government, no policeman, no threats whatsoever is going to change our minds. God made the man, God made the woman, and he made them for each other. Saying, man, or I'm good until five o'clock. None of that is in my

notes. That means I'm going to pay for that. Jesus, the eternal king, seeking for a wife. You know in the book of Revelation, you read about the marriage supper of the lamb. You know when April and I got married, there was a beautiful banquet prepared. Her mom and dad paid for that. A beautiful banquet. It was to celebrate this union. It was to celebrate our love.

When we get to heaven, there's a song. When we all get to heaven. You know that song? It's a great song. When we get there, there's a banquet prepared. We're not going to be little candle lights floating around in heaven. No, you're going to have a, you're going to be a person. You're going to have a body. You'll be known as you are known today, you rascal. And you'll get to eat at the Lord's table. There's a real banquet going on. No, you don't believe that?

When Jesus rose again from the dead, He made bread and fish upon the fire. He ate food in His glorified body. In our glorified bodies, we will enjoy the banquet of heaven. Celebrating the union of Jesus, the groom, and the church, His bride. So much more scripture, I could read, but I'm not going to do that. I'm going to move on. I'm not going to pray a prayer, a pastoral prayer over these two, and then we're going to be blessed with a lovely, lovely musical that says, Bless this house.

So Heavenly Father, this is such a precious moment, such an enjoyable moment. This is a very special benchmark in the life and the journey of Michael and Katrina. I trust they'll never forget this moment as long as they live. And for good reason. Now Lord, as a church, we believe strongly in the word, Bless. God bless you. So my prayer today is over you two people. God will bless you. In the original Greek and the original Hebrew of scripture, we come to understand that Bless means to kneel, to kneel down to where the other person is. To bless one is to not to cast down upon them, but to stoop down and to share and to become one with the other.

So Lord, I pray you will stoop down now, even now and ongoing and hold these two people in your arms. May their life be joyful, beautiful, fruitful in every way. I thank you Lord God for blessing them as a couple. I thank you for blessing them with divine truth. The light has gone on in their hearts and they fall in love with Jesus. I thank you Lord that we as a church are called to bless them and they as a couple are called to bless us. So Lord bless this house, the house of the Lord, and bless their house, the house of Michael at Katrina. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Make it safe by night, by day. Bless these walls so firm and stout, keeping one and troubles at bay. Bless the roof and the chimney top. Let your love flow all about. Bless this house that it may prove every open to joy and truth. Bless this house that we may be fit Lord to dwell with thee. Bless us so that one day we may dwell with dear Jesus with thee. Bless us. Bless us. Thank you. Michael, are you here today in the presence of these witnesses to confirm your love for Katrina? And further Michael, do you promise to continue to honor her, protect her, keep and reserve yourself for her alone as long as you both shall live?

Katrina are you here today in the presence of these loving witnesses to confirm your love of Michael? And further Katrina, do you promise to continue to honor, shield him and keep yourself

for him alone as long as you both shall live? Michael, would you repeat these words? Don't say them to me. Say them to somebody who's longing to hear. You can turn their face if you like.

Both hands, look her in the eye and repeat these words. I, Michael, do hereby confirm I love you. My desire to provide and protect you. No sickness or poverty or any other crisis will stifle my love and devotion for you. My darling Katrina, whoa. The lady will respond, I, Katrina, do hereby confirm my love and my devotion to you. Michael, it is my desire to be the loving special person who will be devoted to you. I will always desire to stand by you as you continue to become all you can be.

We're going to sing a beautiful song as we prepare to serve them communion. We're going to sing a couple of verses of At the Cross, At the Cross, where I first saw the light, which he's joined with me in singing.(song continues)

When I was a little fellow, I was very excited to take communion. I was very unlearned, young, silly. I loved it when it was communion Sunday. I looked upon it as a mid-service snack. The day came when I took a little more seriously what it meant, but unfortunately the day also came when it was just a ritual. I said, eat the crack, drink the juice, say amen, but I submit to you that the acceptance of communion, the eating of the bread and the drinking of the cup, is highly celebrated. It's a ritual, but there's nothing wrong with ritual. It's a beautiful deep habit. Jesus said, when you eat this bread and drink this cup, remember me. Remember me. He's begging us, don't forget what it cost me.

He, the groom is speaking to his bride, don't forget how much I love you. Eat this bread, drink this cup. It's a celebration of our acceptance of him. It's a celebration of first of all his acceptance of us. How pathetic I was when he rescued me, what he saw in me, I'll never understand. His love is divine, it's deep and it's special. And this bread speaks of the broken body of Jesus. That's what it took to salvage our souls. So as you eat the bread, just now, we are confirming Jesus. You are my Lord, you're my Savior. We're confirming, Lord, I want to be sure, my name is reserved in heaven.

There's a book in heaven. The Book of Revelation says, there's a book. And in that book are the names of all who claim Jesus. How do we claim Jesus? If you confess with your mouth and believe with your heart that Jesus died and rose again from the dead, you shall be saved. There's a record in heaven of your confirmation. And you know what? When you eat this bread and drink this cup right now, Michael Katrina, it's being recorded in heaven. This moment is being recorded. I invite you now to partake of the bread even now.

Thank you, Jesus. Broken body. Shed blood. Your mercy declared that we do not receive what we deserve. That's mercy and grace receiving that which we do not deserve. Mercy, we don't receive what we do deserve. Grace, a gift. Not because of merit, because of your divine love, your devotion to us. In the presence of Jehovah, God Almighty, He's the prince of peace. In the presence of our King, sing it with me one more time, okay? In the presence of Jehovah, God Almighty, He's the prince of peace. In the presence of the King, we do not believe that as they

take this cup and drink it, this cup and they drink it, this isn't Welch's grape juice, it's another brand. And that's all it is. It's grape juice, honey. And it's not going to change.

What's important in this moment, Michael and Katrina, is that you're acknowledging, as though this was his blood, you are acknowledging, without the shedding of his blood, I'm still in my sin. So it's not going to change anything except you're saying, Jesus, thank you. In the presence of Jehovah, God Almighty, Prince of Peace, troubles and age, our hearts are mended in the presence of the King. I've seen this done a few times at weddings and I think it's so elegant. It's really sweetening.

Michael, let's just say this is your life. Would you take that candle? Katrina, let's say that this is your life. So what we're about to do is take two lives and turn them in. Now you know what needs to happen, Michael. In order for this light to have significance, that one's got to go. Katrina, it's got to go. This is the moment that audiences always love when the minister says, Michael, you may smooch your bride. We have a very talented fellow who's going to sing a song to Michael and Katrina. This song he sings to you. He's now to be among you at the calling of your heart.

This to show this is true but the door is acting on his part. The union of your spirits here has caused him to remain. Where ever two or more of you are gathered in his name. There is love. There is love. Well a man shall leave his mother and a woman leave her home. They shall travel on to where the two shall be as one. As it was in the beginning, it is now unto the end. A woman draws her life from them and gives it back again. And there is love. Yes, there is love.

Well then what's to be the reason for becoming man and why? Is it love that brings you here? All of that brings you life. For if loving is the answer, then who's the giving force? Do you believe in something that you've never seen before? And there is love. Oh there is love. Oh the marriage of your spirits here has caused him to remain. Forever two or more of you are gathered in his name. There is love. There is love.

Beautifully rendered. What is going to happen in the next moment is the bride and groom will go out into the lobby. What is the wedding ceremony without a receiving line? Please don't bunch up. Don't be long because there is a stream of people waiting to get out. They are getting impatient. So we won't take long and I want to be the first to congratulate this couple. Proud of you Michael. Ladies and gentlemen Michael and Katrina, let's give it up for them. Have a wonderful week folks. God bless you. God take care of you. Amen and amen.