

# Marriage Ceremony

## OVERVIEW OF CEREMONY:

1. PROCESSIONAL
2. INTRODUCTION
3. WHO GIVES AWAY THE BRIDE
4. WELCOME
5. EXHORTATION TO BRIDE AND GROOM
6. GOSPEL MESSAGE
7. MARRIAGE VOWS
8. EXCHANGE OF RINGS
9. LIGHTING OF THE UNITY CANDLE
10. PRONOUNCEMENT OF MAN AND WIFE
11. COMMUNION
12. YOU MAY KISS THE BRIDE
13. PRESENTATION
14. RECESSIONAL

## WEDDING PARTY:

Lighting of candles on the altar  
Seating of the parents  
Seating of the grandparents  
Groom and groomsmen come to the platform

## PROCESSIONAL: THE WEDDING MARCH

The bride walks forward with the bride:

## YOU MAY BE SEATED

## INTRODUCTION:

(BRIDE'S NAME) and (GROOM'S NAME), that beautiful moment that you have been planning, thinking about, praying about, anticipating for so long. That moment has finally arrived. The moment when the two of you are standing side by side before the Lord, taking vows of love and faithfulness, being joined together before God as husband and wife.

Marriage is ordained by God, it is a very special relationship in which two persons enter into the deepest, most intimate, and the most abiding relationship that man can experience on the human level. The relationship of husband and wife. God said, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." Gen. 2:24

## GROOM SCRIPTURAL INSTRUCTION:

You see (GROOM'S NAME) in the beginning when God first created man, God recognized that man by himself could never be complete. It was God who said "it's not good that man should live alone"... So God created woman, that through her there might be completeness, and love, and companionship, and beauty... And God brought her to Adam, and she became his wife. So God not only ordained marriage, He actually planned the first wedding... as He presided over the whole occasion.

## SPEAKING TO BOTH THE BRIDE AND GROOM:

(BRIDE'S NAME) and (GROOM'S NAME), we believe that God has planned that the two of you should be standing here before Him this afternoon. And He presides over this whole occasion as you, (BRIDE'S NAME) becomes (GROOM'S NAME) wife.

## GROOM DECLARATION OF INTENTION:

(GROOM'S NAME) will you have (BRIDE'S NAME) to be your lawfully wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love her, and forsaking all others, keep only unto (BRIDE'S NAME) so long as you both shall live?

**SPEAK TO THE BRIDE:**

(BRIDE'S NAME) will you have (GROOM'S NAME) to be your lawfully wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love him and honor him, and forsaking all others, keep only unto (GROOM'S NAME) so long as you both shall live?

**WHO GIVES (GIVING AWAY OF THE BRIDE)?**

Who gives (BRIDE'S NAME) to be married to (GROOM'S NAME)? Her mother and I

**WELCOME:**

On behalf of (BRIDE'S NAME) and (GROOM'S NAME) and their families I welcome you all here today to participate in the saying yes to their yes in holy matrimony – You may be seated.

**EXHORTATION TO THE BRIDE AND GROOM:**

(BRIDE'S NAME) and (GROOM'S NAME), Roxie and I would like to thank you for the opportunity to participate in the investment that the two of you have made in planning for this event. I say that because as we have talked about the covenant of marriage and the covenantal relationship that you're going to engage in today, one of the things that it did for us is allow us to refocus on the critical elements that make for a successful Christian marriage.

**SPEAK PERSONALLY TO THE GROOM:**

(GROOM'S NAME), when I think about getting to know you over the last several months (appointments) one of the things that Roxie and I have noticed about you is....

My prayer for you (GROOM'S NAME) is that you would commit everything within you to a lifelong quest to know, love and serve your wife as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her.

**SPEAK PERSONALLY TO THE BRIDE:**

And (BRIDE'S NAME), when I think about getting to know you over the last several months (appointments) one of the things that Roxie and I have noticed about you is....

And my prayer for you (BRIDE'S NAME) is that you would find in (GROOM'S NAME) a model of God's love for You. And that you would serve and honor him as unto our Lord Jesus Christ.

**WEDDING MESSAGE:**

In thinking about this day I wanted to share 3 quick observations I've learned about marriage:

1. Marriage is not so much about finding the right person, it's more about being the right person. It means choosing to be loving and caring when you don't feel like it. It means choosing to gut it out when you don't feel like it and it means choosing to treat each other with kind of affection and kindness that Jesus embraces us with.
2. Marriage is not about being cherished by the one you love, it's about cherishing the one you love. When you think about cherishing something you think about taking care of it, treating it with dignity and respect. It's not giving 50/50. It's about giving 100% without expecting anything in return. It means treating each other with the love, dignity and respect that Jesus embraces us with.
3. Marriage is not about being right, it is about giving up your rights. In the quest to be right you can mess up a lot of wonderful dinners and ruin a lot of lovely weekends. You will no longer be seen as two individuals, but as one flesh in the sight of God. That process of becoming one is difficult and challenging and the most important words you can say to each other will be – I was wrong, please forgive me. It means giving each other the same forgiveness that Jesus embraces us with.

I am convinced that doing these three things requires the power of the Holy Spirit and the love of the Lord. Because this kind of love can only come from Jesus Himself. That is why John writes...

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1 John 4:7-11

My prayer for each of you is ...

- That you would receive the love that Jesus brings to your covenantal relationship today
- That you would receive one another as God's perfect and holy gift each to the other
- That you would receive the commitment of the friends and the family that are gathered here to witness this covenant – that they would support you, be with you and speak to you in truth with love and compassion and the grace of God.

#### **PRESENTATION OF THE GOSPEL:**

(GROOM'S NAME) and (BRIDE'S NAME), would like each of you to know and share in their relationship with Jesus Christ. They not only want you to share in the joy of their relationship here on earth, but to also share in the joy of their relationship for all eternity. That God so loved the world, that He gave His life for you and that if you would believe in Him, you would not perish, but have eternal life. Because, without a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, you will spend eternity in hell separated from God and separated from (GROOM'S NAME) and (BRIDE'S NAME). But, if you would commit your life to Jesus today, He will receive you, forgive you of all your sins and give you a new life – an eternal life in heaven. GIVE AN INVITATION.

#### **SONG:**

#### **ALTERNATIVE WEDDING MESSAGE:**

In just a minute (GROOM'S NAME) and (BRIDE'S NAME) are going to exchange wedding vows, but before they do we want to express the world changing altering effects that this wedding today will have on their lives and many of our lives. When they agree to say yes to each for better or for worse, they are doing the second most powerful thing they'll ever do.

The first thing they've already done which is to decide to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, to accept His free gift of salvation and to live with Him and enjoy Him forever. Now they'll be able to do that forever together.

The second thing is to decide to marry each other because the person you marry is the only other person who has the greatest power over your life once you become married.

Genesis 2 God looked down on His perfect creation and perfect human being and said – it is not good for man to be alone. Man had a completely open, naked spirit to naked Spirit intimacy with God, the most wonderful of all possible beings and yet ...

God said – it's not good for man to be alone, so He created woman from man's rib and brought woman to man and he said – this is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh – which is Hebrew for WOW!!!

God said – I will make her to be a helper for him, somebody who can be appropriate to him to help him in life. Today we can say that (GROOM'S NAME) and (BRIDE'S NAME) have been made for each other to help each other fulfill their calling as human beings made in the image of God. They're each the other half of each other – they complete each other.

- They will help each other through thick and thin.
- They will help each other when one falls.
- They will help each other achieve the highest and best that they can in this life.

Today they are ending their aloneness in this life. Marriage is the most profound, intimate and powerful way of that aloneness being filled. They were brought into the world naked and alone and for many years they will be together in life – their aloneness will be ended live together, work together, bear children together, sleep together and finally that aloneness will return when one or the other dies. But for those middle years, their aloneness will be ended.

And then God said – it is for this reason that a man/woman leaves father and mother and is united to his/her spouse and they shall become one flesh. And those are three movements or elements to what a marriage is.

1. They will leave their original family – they will leave mom and dad. Today she is changing her name and they are making a public proclamation to important friends and to the public – this will be registered with the state – they will say we are leaving the original arrangement and together we are agreeing to start a new one.
2. The Bible says they will leave and cleave. Modern lanaguage says they will leave and unite. They will unite their goods, they will take the same name, they will sleep in the same bed, they will have the same money, they will know each other's most intimate thoughts, fears and desires, they will share their lives together in the most profound sense and they will unite.
3. They will become sexually united and the children that are born out of the intimate relationship will be a testimony to their one fleshness.

These three elements are necessary to make a marriage and we are doing one of them today – so they are including all of us to join in by asking us to pray for them, to support them and at some point in the future to speak up, encourage or even correct in order to help them make it through the difficult transitions of life. But all of us are invited to join together in supporting, loving and enjoying this most awesome event in their life. You may even desire to reflect on your own wedding day and renew your vows with (GROOM'S NAME) and (BRIDE'S NAME) as they recite their vows for the first time.

### **MARRIAGE VOWS:**

In light of what the Bible teaches us about marriage, are you prepared to exchange your vows?  
AWAIT RESPONSE

Is there any reason that you know legal or moral that you cannot be united today in holy matrimony? AWAIT RESPONSE

Is there any reason that any of you know (addressing crowd) legal or moral that (GROOM'S NAME) and (BRIDE'S NAME) cannot be united today in holy matrimony? AWAIT RESPONSE

TURN TOWARDS EACH OTHER:

(GROOM'S NAME) please repeat after me...

I (GROOM'S NAME) promise before God [PAUSE], our family and our friends [PAUSE], to take you (BRIDE'S NAME) [PAUSE], to be my wedded wife [PAUSE], to have and to hold from this day forward [PAUSE], to share my life with you in wealth and in poverty [PAUSE], in joy and in sorrow [PAUSE], in sickness and in health [PAUSE], to love serve and cherish you [PAUSE], as long as we both shall live [PAUSE], this is my promise to you.

ALTERNATE VOWS:

SPEAK TO THE GROOM: (GROOM'S NAME) would you take (BRIDE'S NAME) right hand and as you face her I want you to repeat...

"I (GROOM'S NAME) take you (BRIDE'S NAME) [PAUSE] as my lawfully wedded wife [PAUSE] to have and to hold [PAUSE] from this day forward [PAUSE] for better or for worse [PAUSE] for richer or for poorer [PAUSE] in sickness and in health [PAUSE] to love and to cherish [PAUSE] until death do us part [PAUSE] and according to God's holy ordinance [PAUSE] I pledge you my love.

(BRIDE'S NAME) please repeat after me...

I (BRIDE'S NAME) promise before God [PAUSE], our family and our friends [PAUSE], to take you (GROOM'S NAME) [PAUSE], to be my wedded wife [PAUSE], to have and to hold from this day forward [PAUSE], to share my life with you in wealth and in poverty [PAUSE], in joy and in sorrow [PAUSE], in sickness and in health [PAUSE], to love serve and cherish you [PAUSE], as long as we both shall live [PAUSE], this is my promise to you.

ALTERNATE VOWS:

SPEAK TO THE BRIDE: As you continue to hold hands, (BRIDE'S NAME) would you repeat...

"I (BRIDE'S NAME) take you (GROOM'S NAME) [PAUSE] as my lawfully wedded husband [PAUSE] to have and to hold [PAUSE] from this day forward [PAUSE] for better or for worse [PAUSE] for richer or for poorer [PAUSE] in sickness and in health [PAUSE] to love and to cherish [PAUSE] until death do us part [PAUSE] and according to God's holy ordinance [PAUSE] I pledge you my love.

### **THE EXCHANGE OF RINGS:**

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO EXCHANGE AS TOKENS OF THESE VOWS?

COMMENT ON THE RINGS:

They are beautiful – remind us of the beauty of God's love that He would bring (GROOM'S NAME) and (BRIDE'S NAME) together in holy matrimony.

Made of precious metal – remind us that love is not common or without cost, but that love may cost us dearly – even our own lives as God demonstrated for us.

No beginning or end – symbolizing that their love and commitment to each other is for eternity – it will never come to an end.

These rings serve as a constant reminder of the vows you are making today.

#### ALTERNATE SYMBOLISM OF THE RINGS

Through the years a ring has been used as a symbol for eternity. For as you look at the ring it has really neither beginning nor ending... It just goes on and on and on, in an endless cycle. It thus spoke to man about that state of existence that would just go on and on, until he used the ring to symbolize the eternal state.

Through the years from the time of the book of Genesis, a ring has been used as a pledge. When an agreement or a covenant had been made between two parties, one would often take their ring and offer it to the other as a pledge whereby they guaranteed their intention of keeping the promise or the vow that would have been made.

(GROOM'S NAME) please repeat after me...

(BRIDE'S NAME) I give you this ring [PAUSE], as a symbol of my love [PAUSE], with all that I am [PAUSE], and all that I have [PAUSE], I pledge you my love [PAUSE], in the name of the Father [PAUSE], and of the Son [PAUSE], and of the Holy Spirit [PAUSE]. Amen.

(BRIDE'S NAME) please repeat after me...

(GROOM'S NAME) I give you this ring [PAUSE], as a symbol of my love [PAUSE], with all that I am [PAUSE], and all that I have [PAUSE], I pledge you my love [PAUSE], in the name of the Father [PAUSE], and of the Son [PAUSE], and of the Holy Spirit [PAUSE]. Amen.

#### ALTERNATE EXCHANGE OF RINGS

SPEAK TO THE BRIDE:

And so (BRIDE'S NAME), this ring is first of all a symbol of the love that (GROOM'S NAME) is promising to you. He is promising a love that's just to go on and on and on. It is also the pledge that (GROOM'S NAME) gives to you, whereby he guarantees his intentions of keeping these vows that he has taken before God. So as you wear this ring, you look down and you see it upon your finger, to you it will be a very beautiful reminder of this day when (GROOM'S NAME), standing here before the Lord, and with his promise to love... places it there on your finger.

(BRIDE'S NAME) RING FOR (GROOM'S NAME)

By the same token (GROOM'S NAME), this ring now becomes the symbol of (BRIDE'S NAME)'s love that she has promised to you. Her love is just to go on and on. It also is a pledge that she gives to you, whereby she signifies her intentions of keeping these vows she is taking before God.

So as you wear this ring, and you see it here on your finger, it will remind you of this day when (BRIDE'S NAME), standing here before the Lord and with her promise to love... places it there.

SPEAK TO THE BRIDE

(BRIDE'S NAME), as you put this upon (GROOM'S NAME)'s finger, would you repeat:

Wear this ring, (GROOM'S NAME), as a pledge of my love to you. For with this ring I thee wed, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**LET US PRAY:**

Thank you Father for the opportunity of sharing this special moment of joy and blessing with (GROOM'S NAME) and (BRIDE'S NAME). Thank You for Your love that made it all possible. Your love that has brought them to this place of standing here before you and pledging their love and their lives to each other. And now Father, seal their vows with your Holy Spirit. May the love that drew them here only increase and grow with each passing day. Father, we pray that you will bless the home that they establish. We ask that you would fill it with your joy and the consciousness Lord of your presence. Guide them Father, according to your perfect plan. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

### **LIGHTING THE UNITY CANDLE**

The two outside candles have been lighted to represent your lives to this moment. They are two distinct lights, each capable of going its separate way. To bring joy and radiance into your home, there must be the merging of these two flames into one.

From this time onward may your thoughts be for each other rather than for your individual selves; may your plans be mutual, your joy and sorrows shared.

As you each take a candle and together light the center one, you will extinguish your own candles, thus signifying the end of your aloneness and signifying the union of your two lives into one flesh. As the center light cannot be divided, let not your lives be divided, but instead be the united testimony of a Christian home as you serve the Lord Jesus Christ together.

### **SONG:**

### **PRAYER FOR THE BRIDE AND GROOM: AS THE LORD LEADS**

### **PRONOUNCEMENT OF MAN AND WIFE:**

Therefore, by the authority vested in me as a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, and according to the laws of the sovereign State of (STATE), I now pronounce you husband and wife. What God has joined together, let no man separate. You may now kiss your bride.

**NOTE: IF COMMUNION IS BEING SERVED – DO NOT ALLOW THEM TO KISS!!!!**

### **ALTERNATE PRONOUNCEMENT**

Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. For as much as you, (GROOM'S NAME) and (BRIDE'S NAME) have consented together in Holy wedlock, you have witnessed the same before God and in the presence of our company together with your friends, and you have declared your love for each other, while joining right hands, and you have given and received the rings.

So according to the authority that has been vested in me by the State of (STATE), And by the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ... I declare that (GROOM'S NAME) and (BRIDE'S NAME) are now husband and wife, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **COMMUNION:**

As their first act together as husband and wife, (GROOM'S NAME) and (BRIDE'S NAME) have requested that they take communion together. I invite you to reflect and pray with us as we celebrate the Lord's Supper.

**ALTERNATE COMMUNION WITH GOSPEL PRESENTATION:**

And now because you have requested that your first activity as husband and wife be a spiritual activity whereby you set the tone for your future, a marriage that is to be founded on a spiritual base, upon your common faith in Jesus Christ, and love for Him. It is my privilege to bring you the broken bread and the cup. The broken bread that speaks to us of the body of Jesus Christ that was broken for us. The cup that speaks to us of the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed for our sins. They are emblems of His death. But much more. Whenever we think of Jesus dying for us we must ask... "Why should He die for me? And the answer always comes back... Because He loves me – so completely. In fact, Jesus said: "Greater love has no man than this, than a man will lay down his life for his friend." And then He laid down His life for us. So they are emblems of supreme love... "no greater love"

**SPEAK TO THE GROOM**

And as such, (GROOM'S NAME), they speak to you today in a very new and a special way... Because the scripture's say: "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ love the church and gave Himself for it." So (GROOM'S NAME), as you take the cup to your lips, and you think that... He loved me so much, He gave His life for me... The Spirit will be speaking to you and saying: "(GROOM'S NAME), this is what it is all about... this is the kind of love you are to have for (BRIDE'S NAME)... self sacrificing... giving... a love that is so deep and complete that you would lay down your life for her.

**SPEAK TO THE BRIDE:**

(BRIDE'S NAME) as you also receive, the Spirit will also be speaking to you. For again, the scriptures say: "And wives, submitting yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." And (BRIDE'S NAME), even as you have come to know the love of Jesus... and because of His rich love for you... You have surrendered your life to Him... Now, as His love comes flowing forth to you from your husband (GROOM'S NAME)... you are to just surrender your life to him.

**SPEAK TO THE GROOM:**

(GROOM'S NAME), God wants you to be the spiritual leader in the home... ministering to (BRIDE'S NAME), your wife in the things of the Spirit, and so I want you to begin your ministry to (BRIDE'S NAME), and as we stand here before the Lord, I want you to offer to her... those emblems of God's love for us.

(GROOM'S NAME) will you take on of the wafers and put it on her lips and say

"(BRIDE'S NAME) receive the body of Jesus Christ."

(GROOM'S NAME) receive the body of Jesus Christ (The pastor serves the groom)

(GROOM'S NAME) offer to (BRIDE'S NAME) the cup and say

"(BRIDE'S NAME) receive the blood of Jesus Christ."

Now (GROOM'S NAME), if you will take the cup. (GROOM'S NAME), as you take the cup... again I want you to remember that He loved you so much that He gave His life for you... And that's just how much he wants you to love (BRIDE'S NAME), completely... fully... no reservations. (The pastor serves the groom)

**SONG:**

**YOU MAY KISS THE BRIDE:**

Now (GROOM'S NAME) and (BRIDE'S NAME) your next activity as husband and wife will be of a different sort... because (GROOM'S NAME) you may now kiss your bride.

[WHISPER] Don't forget your bouquet. God bless you both. Turn around and face the congregation.

And now let me be the first to present to you Mr. And Mrs. (GROOM'S NAME AND BRIDE'S NAME WITH GROOM'S LAST NAME).

**RECESSIONAL SONG:**

**PARENTS ESCORTED OUT:**

**GENERAL DISMISSAL:**