

DRIZZIES DRIZZLE



PREACHING AT A WEDDING

I have never been one inclined to preach sermons at a wedding. I have also always carried a conviction that my role in the marriage ceremony is to facilitate the wishes of the couple getting married.

So when the couple I married last weekend asked me to “preach to them” at their ceremony their wishes trumped my preference. I did what I always do when I am preparing to share from God’s Word. I asked Him what He wanted me to say. I also asked God to help me keep it short.

As I went through that process my heart was directed to two verses about marriage in the Book of Malachi. It is a kind of forgotten and unused portion. In the English Standard Version Malachi 2:14-15 reads like this;

“She is your companion and your wife by covenant. Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union?”

There is an important word in these two verses. It is the word “covenant” – the thing I was doing in front of the crowd of family and friends was all about uniting a guy and a gal in a covenant. They weren’t entering into a contract - but a covenant. There is a huge difference.

With a contract, if one agreeing party does something in violation of the contract then it is consider a broken contract. The whole contract becomes null and void. Basically the signers of a contract agree to hold up their ends as long as the other signatories hold up theirs too. That view of marriage is now the common one and it has, unfortunately, even crept into the church.

Getting two people to agree to a contract is not what we are doing when we stand before a crowd of people uniting a couple in marriage. In God’s eyes it is a covenant day. In covenant a violation of covenant by one party doesn’t matter as far as the other party’s responsibility to continue to do what they agreed to do is concerned. In marriage you keep on giving when the other stops.

Marriage is the most Christ-like commitment we make in our lives. It is full



of grace. It is for better or worse. It is for richer or poorer. The covenant relationship endures through the disappointments and struggles and shortcomings and even failures of the other person.

It is not property being exchanged in a wedding. That’s what contracts do. Covenants exchange persons. Couples are entering into a covenant relationship that says “I am yours.” In a contract you exchange something you have – a skill, a piece of property, money. In a covenant you exchange your very being, you give your very self to another person.

Marriage is a covenant. The man swears an oath to the woman “I’m yours forever.” The woman swears an oath to the man, “I’m yours forever.” Right there is the key to a marriage that goes the distance, a marriage that brings joy and fulfilment to each other, a marriage that brings great delight to Father God. Marriage is not about getting something it is about giving of self.

Covenant....not contract....covenant.

If the church isn’t going to remind the world of the sacred who is going to? do it?

And there is another truth in this Malachi portion. We talk about two becoming one. That’s sort of right, but it is really three becoming one. Did you catch the last portion of the verses. “Did He not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union.” The Spirit of God hops into marriage with us.

This union is not just the two, but God is joining the union as well! He gives couples a portion of His Spirit in their marriage. It is a deeply spiritual and sacred commitment. God is in it. We don’t have to make our marriage work on our own. God gives increase to our love. God will walk with us through every circumstance that comes our way in our marriages. He will give us the strength to guard our tongues and shield our hearts.

As we stand before couples and unite them in marriage as gospel ministers we need to boldly declare the sacredness of marriage. The world is increasingly losing sight of God’s role in marriage. It is increasingly seen as a contract that people have the right to opt out of at their whim.

When I was finished sharing my requested sermon I thought that preaching at weddings maybe wasn’t such a bad idea. After all, if the church isn’t going to remind the world of the sacred who is going to do it? The weddings I perform may have just become a wee bit longer.

Your superintendent and friend.

Life’s Brighter Under the Son,

John Drisner