

ACTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

SEPTEMBER 2, 2006

Work of Reconciliation

2Corinthians 5:11-21

- As we conclude this sermon series on “Acts of Righteousness” what a befitting way to end the series with a focus on the work of reconciliation! Christ, who is the righteousness of God, purposely came to this sinful world to reconcile humanity to God. After reconciling each one of us to God, He commits to us the work or message of reconciliation. Thus the acts of righteousness begin with the personal knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord and savior, who reconciles us to God.
- The acts of righteousness are fostered and strengthened by the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord makes you plain before man and grants you the desire to persuade men to fear God. This process can be summed up as the work of reconciliation. This is because as people fear (revere and respect) the Lord, they will live to please Him and move from selfishness and self-centeredness toward Christ-centeredness with interdependence on other believers and a total complete dependence on God. The purpose of such a relationship with other Christians and with God the Father is to cultivate and develop the Christ-like character that eliminates pride. For when Christ died, His love compels us to be convinced that He died so that we can die to self and become alive to the righteous things of God.
- Therefore, brothers and sisters I urge you not to focus on reputation but on Christ-like character development. You all know that character by far supersedes reputation because reputation is temporal whereas character is eternal. Your character is what and who you are whereas reputation is what you would have others to believe you are!
- Character development is Christ-centered and it propels you to cease from looking at people from a worldly point of view. Hence, the Bible becomes the final authority for your decision-making rather than culture, tradition, reasoning and emotions. This is because if anyone is in Christ he is a new creature, the old (the influences of culture, tradition, reasoning and emotions in your decision-making processes) has gone, and the new (faith in the Bible, the truth of God as your final authority in decision-making processes) has become a reality to stay. Then we are reconciled to God, the Father when we live to please God by being obedient to the Bible as the final authority for decision-making. Generally, each time you live in good terms with someone there would be no rift between you and such a person.

Similarly, when you are reconciled to God, you are justified and have peace with God. Having this peace of God within you that passes all understanding helps you to persuade men to fear the Lord and live to please Him. This is known as the work of reconciliation and it is an act of righteousness.

- Thus our text for the day begun, “Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again” (2Corinthians 5:11-15).
- Herein we note that Christ died for us in order to destroy selfish desires and self-centeredness with their consequent attribute of pride thereby causing us to have the true fear of the Lord. This true fear of the Lord involves loving God and obediently taking His word (the Bible) as the final authority in decision-makings for our lives. The acceptance of the Bible as the final authority moves us from selfishness and self-centeredness to Christ-centeredness. And the result is that we enjoy the interdependent relationship with other believers as we collectively totally depend on God.
- Then our text for the day continued, “So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.
- This implies that Christians are people that have their priorities right. We regard people from spiritual point of view. We look and see people from the light of God's that serves as our final authority as opposed to the world that look and see things from different view points with culture, tradition, reasoning and/or emotion as final authorities. Christians regard people from a spiritual standpoint because if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature with his thought processes transformed after the image of Christ as he develops the Christ-like character. So a Christian is an ambassador of Jesus Christ and God continues to make His appeal to the world through Christians.

- Thus our text for the day concludes, “We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. The work of reconciliation has been entrusted to Christians. The work of reconciliation compels Christians to persuade men to know the fear of God and to know that God made Jesus Christ who had no sin to be sin for us so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. Accepting the finished work of reconciliation by Jesus Christ on Calvary declares you righteous before God. Then you become an ambassador of Christ that continues to persuade men to be reconciled to God.
- And so as we conclude this series on the Acts of Righteousness and this wonderful worship experience, allow me to submit to you that the Acts of Righteousness begin and become a reality in your life when you have been reconciled to God the moment you accept Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and savior. The key questions then for us to answer as we close are have you been reconciled to God and are you indeed an ambassador of Christ doing the work of reconciliation? If not, why don't you give Jesus Christ some consideration this afternoon? If you are here and desire to accept Jesus as your personal Lord and savior for the first time, we invite you to come now. If you have already said yes to Jesus but you have not been involved in the work of reconciliation and you desire to recommit to Christ and be a true ambassador for Him, you too we invite you to come. And perhaps you are new in the area or have been searching for a Church home where you can continue to enjoy and experience every spiritual growth by walk in the Truth and in love as an ambassador of Jesus Christ consistent involved in the work of reconciliation, we invite you to consider uniting with this local body of Christ at Mt Traveler. For at Mt Traveler, we are “a Caring Church with Ministries, Changing Lives, Connecting People, and Creating Friendship and Favor with God and Man”. If so, why don't you come as the Choir leads us in a song? And if you are reading this synopsis on the Internet why don't you pray asking Jesus Christ to be your Lord and savior, then write and tell us at pastordatiri@mttraveler.org?

Mt. Traveler Missionary Baptist Church, Waverly, Alabama
Synopses of Sermons Preached by Rev. B. C. Datiri, Pastor

MARRIAGE

- Marriage is the very first institution created by God to show us the gravity of its importance. Marriage therefore cannot be taken lightly because it is the union of the hearts, minds, and souls of two individuals to become one. An alloy is the product of two metals to form one. Married partners are allies.
- Marriage in its truest sense as the institution created by God is the union between a man and a woman. This is the kind of marriage that honors God because it is symbolic of our union as a church to Christ. When you unite with a church in essence you are uniting with Christ. In a deeper sense you are married to Jesus!
- Marriage was created by God to depict the type of intimate relationship He desires to have with man. He desires to walk with man in a covenant union and fellowship with him. Allow me to submit to you therefore that marriage is a covenant relationship. A covenant is an agreement between two parties, in this case between a man and a woman that involves the unity of hearts, mind and the soul. In other words it is an agreement that involves the two parties in totality. No wonder the scriptures through the prophet Amos asked in Amos 3:3, “Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?” Therefore Marriage is an agreement between a man and a woman to walk together through this life’s pilgrimage.
- Marriage ensures that one is not lonely. Loneliness is a distasteful feeling. This is why God did not want man to be alone. In His infinite wisdom God knew man needed a companion that is different from him and so He created a woman for him. This companion is to walk alongside with man. God also knew that man was incomplete without this unique companion call woman. He knew that another man could not completely fulfill the deep yearning of a companion of a man and so He created a woman.
- Marriage is therefore a union between a man and a woman and not between a man and a man or a woman and a woman as our evolving culture would have us belief and accept. This culture redefines marriage as a union of any two individuals to embrace individuals with reprobate and immoral minds who have damaged their consciences and calls such union alternative lifestyles. This is to allow homosexuals and lesbians to marry themselves. If God wanted such union He would have created a man for a man or a woman for a woman. He created Eve for Adam not Steve for Adam or Eve for Anna. This is because marriage is an intimate relationship between a man and a woman involving the union of their hearts, minds and souls.
- The first institution, marriage that was created by God, is therefore a union between a man and a woman for the purpose of companion, friendship, fellowship, intimacy and procreation. Thus the scriptures in Hebrews 13:4

clearly states “Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral”. Implying that you are not honoring marriage and you are sexually immoral if you are sexually involved with anyone you are not married to or before you get married to the person. The issues of purity and morality are essential in marriage because marriage is symbolic of our relationship with Christ. Spiritually when we unite with the Church, it is our union to Christ as His bride for the purpose of spiritual companionship, friendship, fellowship, intimacy and procreation (the making of disciples). Therefore unless you are united or married to Christ you are none His and as such you cannot be found to be faithful or fruitful in your relationship with Him.

- Therefore marriage is ideally a union between a man and a woman. Such a union is blessed of God. In fact it is a favor from God. Proverbs 18:22 states, “He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD”. This rules out polygamy or polyandry, homosexual and lesbian unions because these are human relationships created due to selfishness, greed and immorality.
- God therefore created the institution of marriage for the union of a man and a woman. Thus our scriptures for the day began, “Then God said, "Let us make man in our 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. God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; 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’” (Genesis 1:26-28).
- The text for the day then continued with a key recognition of marriage that God made at creation, “The LORD God said, ‘it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’ Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them 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, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man” (Genesis 2:18-22).
- The text concluded with the presentation of woman to man by God as the first marriage occurred and the institution of marriage formed. The concluding text for the day reads, “The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.’ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and

they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame” (Genesis 2:22-25”

- In marriage a union between the hearts, minds and souls of a man and woman truly occurs. In our union with Christ, we are spiritually married to Him and our hearts, minds and souls are united in a relationship for the purpose of spiritual companionship, friendship, fellowship, intimacy and procreation (the making of disciples). This relationship begins when we receive Jesus Christ and His completed work on Calvary.
 - Therefore, as we close this wonderful worship experience, won't it be great for you to know Jesus as your personal Lord and savior and be united with Him? And so if you are here and desire to accept Jesus Christ and His finished redemptive work of salvation at Calvary, we invite you to come now. And if you have already said yes to Jesus and are not showing the Christ-like character but you desire to start today, you too we invite you to come. Perhaps you are new in the area or have been searching for a Church home where you can continue ministering and fellowshiping with other believers and God, we invite you to consider Mt. Traveler and unite with this local body of Christ. For at Mt Traveler, we are “a Caring Church with Ministries, Changing Lives, Connecting People, and Creating Friendship and Favor with God and Man”. Why don't you come as the Praise Team leads us in a song? And if you are reading this synopsis on the Internet why don't you pray and ask Jesus Christ to be your Lord and savior, then write and tell us about it at pastordatiri@mttraveler.org?
-

MARRIAGE

SEPTEMBER 17, 2006

Courtship

Matthew 1:18-25

- On last week we established that marriage is the first institution created by God for a man and a woman to unite in heart, mind, soul and spirit in a relationship for the purpose of companionship, fellowship, friendship, intimacy and procreation. The key question is does one achieve this? It begins with the process known as courtship. It is in courtship that you learn to know each other's character while at the same time keeping yourself pure until you commit in marriage. But prior to courtship or during courtship you need to know the will of God concerning you for marriage.
- The way to know the will of God for you in marriage is through prayers. The scriptures say, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds

in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7). Now if you do not experience deep inner peace in your heart and mind in a relationship (no matter what is going on in the relationship externally) perhaps God is not in it or is not pleased with it. In the Scriptures peace is often transliterated rest, which in turn is transliterated sleep.

- Therefore men and women need to sleep (be dormant or restful or peaceful) before they can know the will of God concerning marriage. It is in your sleep or rest that God performs the supernatural surgery to form your spouse and then presents him or her to you. You cannot be sexually involved with everyone and expect to know the will of God for you concerning marriage. What does this mean? I am glad you asked because it is a good question. It simply means that you need to sleep or have self-control if you desire to know positively God’s perfect will for you concerning marriage. Allow me therefore to submit to you that God created everyone sexually active. However, what you need to do is to develop self-control until you can express your sexuality in marriage. The book of Hebrews admonishes, “Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral” (Hebrews 13:4). This means that you should respect marriage because it is not sin to have sex in the confines of marriage but if you have sex outside the institution of marriage you are an adulterer and sexually immoral and God will judge you. Beware of everyone tells you I love you when in actuality they are lusting after you to have sex with you only.
- Hence Christians must make prayer the number one priority as they seek God’s guidance and leading towards meeting and/or knowing their life-partner to whom they will unite in marriage. Secondly, you ought to seek the advice of other mature Christians so that you can avoid getting unequally yoked with an unbeliever. Thirdly, be certain that you are mature and prepared to handle and have self-control of the emotions that come along with a union in marriage.
- A good example for us to follow is reported in Genesis 24. When Isaac was mature and ready to for a relation in union, he discussed it with his father Abraham. Abraham then sent his chief servant to find a wife for his son from among his people to avoid his son from getting unequally yoked with unbelievers. In other words always get your parents involved when you feel you are mature and ready for marriage. Abraham’s chief servant was wise to know that it is God that creates a perfect match and union between a man and a woman in marriage. And so he prayed for God’s guidance and God led him to Rebekah whom He had prepared to become Isaac’s wife. You can read the details in Genesis 24. However a portion of this reads, “Then he prayed, "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. May it be that when I say to a girl, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too'-let her be the one you have chosen for your

servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master." Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor. The girl was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever lain with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again. The servant hurried to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water from your jar." "Drink, my lord," she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink. After she had given him a drink, she said, "I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking." So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels. Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn whether or not the LORD had made his journey successful. When the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold nose ring weighing a beka (1/5 oz or \approx 5.5grams) and two gold bracelets weighing ten shekels (4 oz or \approx 110grams). Then he asked, "Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?" She answered him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son that Milcah bore to Nahor." And she added, "We have plenty of straw and fodder, as well as room for you to spend the night." Then the man bowed down and worshiped the LORD, saying, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the LORD has led me on the journey to the house of my master's relatives" (Genesis 24:12-27).

- Your spiritual relatives are Christians. You must seek your spouses among Christians. Yes, it may take you a long spiritual journey but you will eventually find your spouse. Therefore let me say to the ladies to note that Rebekah was a virgin at this time that she was chosen to be Isaac's wife. So ladies, if God is going to provide you with a great husband in His perfect will, you have to be a virgin and remain a virgin until after your wedding. Men, be righteous men and keep yourself pure reversed for your virgin. If you have goofed up already, our God is a God of chances and so you can be repent and start on your way of being spiritual virgins and righteous men waiting patiently until you are married before engaging in sex. This is because the marriage bed is undefiled.
- Please for a moment allow me to share my personal testimony. When I was about thirteen the Spirit of God led me to this profound truth I have just shared with you from Genesis 24. So I started to pray to God to provide me with a wife. I prayed for fourteen years and it appeared there was no answer from God. It was not easy. Sometimes I got frustrated but I persisted to pray to know and find my wife. I did not ask God for a girl friend but a wife because the scripture says he who finds a wife finds a good thing and receives a favor from the Lord. On such promises I continued to pray until one morning during

my devotion time as I knelt petitioning God for a wife one more time that I God my answer. God spoke within my spirit as loud and clear giving me the name of my wife. I was startled and my response then to God was, “oh no!” And this was because my wife happens to be the younger sister to my best friend. Then God spoke vividly in my spirit again asking me, “will you argue with Me?” My response again was, “oh no!” And because of the excitement of that revelation, I got up from my knees and wrote it in my diary with a footnote, “I live to see this thing come to pass”. Since then the rest is history because I have been married to her for over twenty-six years now in 2006. Now let me caution everyone. God may not answer you exactly the way He answered me but He will. And if I am to do it all over, I will do it the same way by keeping myself pure and waiting for the Lord to bring my wife to me! Recall the excitement when God brought Eve to Adam that is how excited I was when God revealed my wife, my only girlfriend and my honeybunch to me.

- The lesson to take home is: first, I learned to seek God’s perfect will concerning marriage in prayers. Secondly, I kept myself pure for my wife; have never had or will never have another girlfriend but my wife until death does us part. Was it easy or is it easy? No, but prayers kept me focused and pure to remain righteous for my spouse, and it still does. Thirdly, I did seek guidance from mature Christians instead of my pairs.
- Now let us focus more on courtship. What is courtship? Once you have known whom God has prepared for you for this special union in marriage, there is need for courtship, the time period you spend together for both of you to truly seek God’s plans for your life together. It is not a period for kissing, “knecking” and fondling but a time to study the Scriptures together and pray to know God’s perfect will for the relationship. The same thing should continue into the marriage. It is a time for planning and working out differences, discovering the strengths of each other and building on the strengths rather than beating on each other because of your weaknesses. It is a time to be very careful to keep yourselves pure sexually until after you say “I do” to each other in marriage.
- Thus our text of the day brings to us a story about two young people who knew God and His word. They both kept themselves pure and so they found favor with God and became the earthly temporary parents of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ. Of course you all know their names. These young people were Mary and Joseph. The text says Mary was a virgin and Joseph was a righteous man. Can God confidently describe you as a virgin or as a righteous man? Even after Mary and Joseph had engaged, they remained pure during their courtship period that they were both perplexed when Mary got pregnant of the Holy Spirit. How were they able to keep themselves pure? It was because they were faithful in obeying the Word of God that they knew very well. They were also faithful in serving God. The Psalmist advises in Psalm 119:9-11, “How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek

you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you”.

- Listen to the text for the day on more time, “This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us." When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus” (Matthew 1:18-25).
- As the text says, Jesus means savior and Immanuel meaning God with us, you can have a covenant relationship with God through our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ. When you ask Him to be your personal Lord and savior, the Holy Spirit will come into your life and remake you to be pure before God. This is because each time God looks at you He sees you through His son Jesus Christ. Moreover, the Holy Spirit, the indwelling resident technician will bring to remembrance the word of God to you and provide you strength to keep yourself pure in your courtship until you are legitimately married.
- Therefore if you desire to accept Jesus as your Lord and savior for the first time, we invite you to come now. If you had already accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and savior but you have messed up, you too we invite you to come so that you can start anew again with Him for our God is a God of chances. Perhaps you are new in the area or have been searching for a Church home we invite you and also urge you to consider uniting with this local body of Christ at Mt. Traveler to continue your worship and fellowship so as to please God. For at Mt Traveler, we are “a Caring Church with Ministries, Changing Lives, Connecting People, and Creating Friendship and Favor with God and Man”. Why don't you come as the choir leads us in a song? And if you are reading this synopsis on the Internet we urge you to pray and ask Jesus Christ, the author of salvation, the one who reconciles us to God, to be your personal Lord and savior so that you can be pure before God, then write and tell us at pastordatiri@mttraveler.org?

MARRIAGE

SEPTEMBER 24, 2006

The Wedding

Matthew 1:18-25

- In our series on marriage we have so far established that marriage is the first institution created by God for a man and a woman to unite in heart, mind, soul and spirit in a relationship for the purpose of companionship, fellowship, friendship, intimacy and procreation. We also established that once you have known whom God has prepared for you for this special union in marriage, there is need for courtship, the time period you spend together for both of you to truly seek God's plans for your life together. It is not a period for kissing, "knecking" and fondling but a time to study the Scriptures together and pray to know God's perfect will for the relationship, which should into the marriage. It is a time for planning and working out differences, discovering the strengths of each other and building on the strengths rather than beating on each other because of your weaknesses. It is a time to be very careful to keep yourselves pure sexually until after you say "I do" to each other in marriage.
- When you have truly discovered the will of God for you concerning marriage, feel you have known each other enough to commit to marriage and you are burning for sexual intimacy, then it is time to "tie the knot" or be united in marriage. The act of being unite in marriage through a formal procedure publicly in the presence of witnesses and officiating individual is known as the wedding. The day when this occurs is known as the wedding day. On your wedding day you make the covenant to unite your hearts, minds, souls and spirits in marriage for the purpose of companionship, fellowship, friendship, intimacy and procreation. Our culture today through Hollywood has adulterated the wedding day that the substance of intent has been lost. It is now almost all Hollywood or acting. No wonder close to 50% weddings in the United States ends up in divorce marriages or separations before one of the couples die. This is an alarming figure, as the seriousness of marriage is not thought through thoroughly before making the commitment. Most people do not take the wedding vows seriously. Therefore the wedding day has been glamorized with the intent to boost reputation rather than to reveal character. As such in many weddings, Jesus is left uninvited. As such on the wedding day Jesus is absent because the man and the woman uniting in marriage did not request His presence to bless the marriage to become the miracle of a home that "tastes" great for others to emulate.
- During the wedding ceremony, the vows you make are a reflection of your commitment for a life-long relationship or not. Often, many vows are Hollywood-like, just acting and not serious commitments. Therefore let me submit to you that the significance of the wedding day is that it determines your real commitment to each other in the covenant relationship which involves your

hearts, minds, souls and spirits for the purpose of companionship, fellowship, friendship, sexual intimacy and procreation until death does you part. Let me also submit to you that companionship, fellowship, friendship and general intimacy are developed during courtship. However, sexual intimacy and procreation begin after the wedding otherwise you have gotten the “cart before the horse” in your marriage, a condition that warrants a difficult marriage relationship.

- Many of the things done on the wedding day are symbolic of reality in Christian cycles. For instance, the woman wears a white gown to symbolize chastity and purity of life that she is still a virgin. And in certain cases those who are honest and know they have not kept themselves pure often opt to use a variety of other colors than pure white. The exchange of rings symbolizes the exchange of continuous, unconditional, unending and pure love. The lighting of the unity candle and the putting out of individual candles by the groom and the bride symbolizes the union into living together as a couple and the ending of individualistic selfish lives. It implies from henceforth my life is not mine alone but for my spouse too. This is why the traditional Christian wedding has vows that insist that the relationship being entered into is life-long until death does the parting. Thus the vows include phrases like “for better for worse”, “for richer for poorer”, “in health or in sickness”, etc. to signify that marriage is lifelong and is based on continuous, unconditional and pure love. The wedding day is publicized and/or the wedding is publicly held because you want witnesses and the whole world to know so that no one will consider your sexual intimacy and procreation illegitimate.
- The wedding day marks the beginning of the covenant relationship. It separates you from all others and sets you apart for sexual intimacy and procreation with only your spouse. For the Christian the wedding day is like baptism. Baptism symbolically lets the whole world know that you have died, was buried and resurrected into newness of life with Christ and now you are united (or married) to Jesus as you join His local body, the church and His bride. The wedding says to the whole world: this man is united to this woman and they are joined together to become one flesh.
- The Scripture indicates to us in Genesis 2:24-25 that “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame”. This implies that it is after the wedding that you can engage in sexual intimacy without sinning and shame. Otherwise it is immoral, shameful and sinful. Hebrews 13:4 states, “Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral”
- Now when I was courting my wife the Lord led us to three profound truths in the scriptures during our courtship that have since then served as guiding principles to keep our marriage together. Listen to them: “Do two walk

together unless they have agreed to do so?” (Amos 3:3) “What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:31-32). “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12). The three principles from these scriptures are we were to walk together; we know that God is for us so who can be against us?; and finally it is not good to be alone, but it is great to be together with Christ in the center to enable us overcome the unfaithfulness that occurs in marriages. Then the last sentence of Ecclesiastes 4:12 summed up everything for us. It says a cord of three strands is not quickly broken and we took it to mean that our marriage cannot be broken as long as my wife, Jesus Christ and I are involved in this covenant relationship to form the cord of three strands. Therefore Jesus need to be invited to your wedding and kept in your marriage if it is to stand the tests of time and be successful and blessed.

- Thus our text of the day records another incident when Jesus was invited to a wedding (ceremony). It was where He performed His first miracle during His ministry on earth. Do you think it was coincidental for Jesus to perform His first miracle on the occasion of a wedding ceremony, honoring marriage – the very first institution that God created? By all means, no it was not coincidental! Therefore every wedding ought to invite Jesus to it so that He can bless it with the miracle that others can benefit from such a blessed relationship.
- Now listen to the text for the day: “On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied, "My time has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him”

(John 2:1-11). Is Christ's glory revealed in your marriage? The best covenant relationships are those where Jesus Christ is invited to the wedding and kept in the marriage as part of the cord with three strands.

- Let me pause and ask, have you ever at any time invited Jesus into your life and were baptized into a covenant relationship for you to join the local body of Christ (the Church)? If not you need to invite Him in right now.
- Therefore if you desire to accept Jesus as your Lord and savior for the first time, we invite you to come now. If you had already accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and savior but you have messed up, you too we invite you to come so that you can start anew again with Him for our God is a God of many chances. Perhaps you are new in the area or have been searching for a Church home we invite you and also urge you to consider uniting with this local body of Christ at Mt. Traveler to continue your worship and fellowship so as to please God. For at Mt Traveler, we are "a Caring Church with Ministries, Changing Lives, Connecting People, and Creating Friendship and Favor with God and Man". Why don't you come as the choir leads us in a song? And if you are reading this synopsis on the Internet we urge you to pray and ask Jesus Christ, the author of salvation, the one who reconciles us to God, to be your personal Lord and savior so that you can be pure before God, then write and tell us at pastordatiri@mttraveler.org?