

*The Christian Wedding of Dana Birr & Joshua Tadych*

*September 3, 2016*

*St. Matthew's Lutheran Church of Danube*

*3:00pm*

***“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. – Matthew 7:24,25***

Why are we here today? After all these years together, after meeting back in school, after having kids, and living as a family, some would ask, why are we here today? Dana, I know for a fact, that more than a few ‘wise guys’ at work asked you more than once, “why get married anyway?” Josh, is this merely some grand romantic gesture? Is this some old-fashioned way for you two to seal your relationship? Why are we here today, why get married?

We are here because marriage is important. Marriage is a special thing. It is a blessed institution. And no matter how much marriage gets beat up by public opinion, by changes in the law, by divorce rates - and that will happen as we live in a sinful and broken world - yet there will always be a certain place in our public consciousness that recognizes the need, the draw, the importance of marriage. In these promises that you two are making today *there is* a certain romantic gesture included as you publicly confess your love for each other before friends and family. It is kind of a big deal for Josh to get up in front of all these people and say words - especially these words. We are here today because yes, there is a trust that is built and cemented as the relationship is officially sealed; vows are made and a life-long commitment is established. Yes, these are important components of what marriage is, but this description only really scratches the surface of why marriage is important.

And so beyond this public profession of love and the union that is established, what else is involved. It is important to consider, why are we *here* in this building today? Why are you two in a church, standing at the altar in God's house, before God and all these witnesses. We are here today for this is God's will. Marriage has always been part of God's design for man and woman. Marriage is more than just a piece of paper or a fancy gesture. It is more than an outdated custom or an afterthought that may or may not be pursued in a relationship today. Marriage, as it is established by God is the crown jewel for the crown of his creation. Marriage is important and it is important to God.

Consider again those words that we heard from the Genesis chapter 2. God creates the heavens and the earth, he creates all living creatures, and creation all builds up to this remarkable moment when God not only makes man, but he makes man in such a way that he recognizes the need for a partner, a helper. God makes everything, he makes the heavens and the earth, the seas and the land, the sun and the moon and the stars, and at the end of each day, he says, ***it is good***. And therefore, it stands out like a sore thumb when God says, in Genesis 2:18, that ***it is not good for the man to be alone***. It stands out as important to God for it is revealed in these Holy Scriptures that the culmination of all creation is when God creates the woman from the man and for the man. God forms the woman from the rib of the man and gives this woman to the man as the suitable helper that he was lacking. And so in this very intimate, physical, and memorable way God not only completes his creation, but in doing so he creates a memorable moment for us to see just how important God considers this bond between man and woman. On that final day of God's creating work the LORD God causes the man to fall into a deep sleep, takes a rib from the man, and then creates for him someone who would be there to walk side by side with him through life, a woman whom God would give to him as his wife. And so as the man

wakes up, as he sees this special gift that God had made just for him, the man responds with complete delight and obvious joy. ***Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. 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."*** All creation was all building up to this and so God creates this memorable moment in which he blesses man and all mankind with a pattern and institution designed to be rich and lasting blessing. God gave the woman to the man and established an institution in marriage in which he blesses people like you with joy and security and a special kind of love. In marriage the LORD also establishes the basic structure of family and society and in marriage man and woman are cared for and blessed. That which was true in the Garden of Eden remains true today - this is important. ***For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.*** We are here today because marriage is important, it is important to God, and marriage is an important blessing that God gives to you.

Josh and Dana, for the last few weeks and months, for a good part of a year really, we have been able to study what God's Word has to say, about a lot of things, including Genesis chapter 2 and God's gift of marriage. I suppose this all started with a general understanding that marriage was something that was good and right, then a scattering of plans, some shared loud enough at work so that some pastor sitting at a back booth at the Country Kitchen was able to overhear. A co-worker and friend would pipe in so that I would leave my business card on the table. From there we set up a meeting, I got to meet the guy, and then the three of us met a whole lot. Some 20 sessions of bible information classes as well as additional 12 hours or so of pre-marriage classes.

And again the question might be why? Why go through all of this? The verses of Scripture before us today from Matthew chapter 7 very much speak to the reason why. Over all those weeks, those meetings, those bible studies, lectures, and discussions, a blessed foundation was laid. A foundation for you, for your family, for your marriage was laid on Christ through the study of his Word. As the passage from Matthew says, ***"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.*** In our discussion in those first few meetings, in those classes as we continued, you were guided by God's Word to see God's love and God's will. You were led to a firmer foundation on Christ Jesus and his teachings. As you looked to a life together as husband and wife you were led to see how important it would be to have God as a major part of your life. You recognized that things were a bit out of order according to God's blueprint and his plans. You even had to confess this to your kids, explaining how mom and dad didn't do things like God wanted. And so we continued in our discussions and we talked about God's will and we also talked about God's forgiveness in Christ Jesus. In nearly every meeting we talked about the love of your Savior, a love that forgives our sins completely, a love that builds us up and sustains us so that we may live in thankfulness to our God. Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her – for you and me, for all of us. God's is love. His love for you in Christ Jesus is patient. It is kind.... ***It is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.*** God's love for you is powerful. It forgives you, saves you, refreshes and makes you new everyday so that you may show this same type of love to each other. Knowing the love and forgiveness and love of Christ will help you to be patient, and kind with each other. Knowing the unfailing love of Christ that keeps no record of wrongs, that protects, and trusts, and perseveres, will be a blessing for your marriage and for your family.

Why are we here? We are here in God's house, standing before his altar, because this is a place of repentance and forgiveness. We are here because the Holy God forgives us for all our times we have broken by our ignorance or disobedience his holy will. In his love for us he sent his Son to pay for the punishment we deserve because of sin. Christ loved the church and gave himself up for us to make us holy, blameless, as he wipes away each stain of our sin, and gives us his gleaming white perfection. This is a place of his amazing forgiveness and grace, this is a place where our LORD transforms us so that we may live in thankful obedience to his will. Dana and Josh you have come to this place quite often and here you have heard the word of God, you now have a better understanding of what his will is for marriage, you have a better understanding of the love that Christ has for you and how his love and forgiveness will bless you in your life together. You are blessed in that a new foundation on Christ has been laid for you - a new foundation, a firm foundation for your life together, for your marriage, and for your family. You have heard the words of God and now like a wise man and wife you are putting them into practice, you are building your house, your home, your marriage on Christ and God promises to bless you with his strength and security. You have been blessed with a greater understanding of his unfailing love so that you may be patient and kind, forgiving and selfless, in your love for each other.

Occasionally a person might see a house that has been lifted up off the ground and placed on blocks in order that a new foundation may be poured. Consider the effort of lifting a home and pouring a proper foundation underneath. It probably should have been built a different way in the first place, it may take a lot of effort and time to lift the house up and lay a new foundation. It may be hard and difficult process - painful even. A part of you wonders if it would have just been a whole lot easier to leave things how they were. But in the long run it is worth it. To have a proper foundation to hold up and protect your home with strength and integrity is important.

Today we celebrate how a new foundation has been laid for your marriage and your family, and we give thanks to God that this foundation is built on Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior.

Why are we here today? We are here today because you two love each other. We are here today, because God loves you. In his love God has made you for each other. He has made you in such a way that you fit together so nicely as a couple, you complement and support each other, and today you are made one. In his love for you God brought his word into your life, so that you are not only celebrating a wedding today, but you are here celebrating a new foundation in Christ for your life and your marriage and your family. Here you are a few feet away from the place where three of your children were baptized a few months ago and now you stand dressed in your best, clothed in the righteousness of Christ, standing as one in God's house, receiving his forgiveness, his blessing, and an outpouring of his love as your marriage is being built upon him. You have heard his word and now you are doing your best to put it into practice. Continue to build on Him. Find strength for your marriage, for your family, in this foundation God has laid for you and you will be blessed. Through all the ups and downs of life God and his love for you in Christ will be there to hold you up as one. Praise be to God for the power of his Word and for Jesus Christ our Rock and foundation. We hear these words of our Savior from Matthew chapter 7 once more: ***"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.*** AMEN.