

Wedding Message

The wedding message. What do you actually do? How do you put that together? Should it be a meditation or a sermon? I want to begin by first of all saying that there are different expectations throughout the world. I remember twenty-something years ago when I went to the pastorate, there often wedding messages, they were wedding sermons in the United States. You'd have the wedding ceremony and the preacher would preach a message. Thirty minutes right in the middle of a ceremony. There are some places where the bride and groom and the whole wedding party actually go down and sit down in the pews, sit down in the seats while the pastor preaches a wedding message. Maybe you live in that kind of a place in the world where that still happens.

Now in America, it's sort of tacked in the wedding meditation. I'm going to talk about that, the wedding meditation, because that's what we do here, and if you're in another place where it's more of a wedding sermon, I would look for a local mentor to talk a little bit about that or just do a sermon like you do in the worship service. But a wedding meditation is really what we're seeing most in the area where I'm ministering right now. What that really is is how the walk of life or the people involved in the wedding message, how it comes together, and the length being about five to fifteen minutes.

How do you get that? In the last presentation, I talked about interviewing the couple when the program came together. You'll get a lot of ideas there. In that time or in another time, go back to special wedding verses if that wasn't talked about in or in-depth or you don't have all the information you need. Get some wedding verses ideas in that time. Maybe Genesis 2:24, "Man shall leave his father and mother." Ecclesiastes 4:12 is about the cord of three strands. Or Luke 6:38 is about "Give and it will be given to you." 1 Corinthians 13 is a great passage about love. Ephesians 5 is about husband and wife. The apostle Paul talks about that and etc.

There are many more places you can go. And when you interview the couple, know those basic wedding places and more. If the couple can't think of a wedding verse, it's really good to sort of have them pick between various ones you know or give a new one to you. Sometimes they don't have a favorite wedding verse or a favorite verse at all. And so as a pastor, you can sort of help them into that. Now when you're interviewing the couple, as I mentioned before, is to find that angle. How does the thought or theme in the passage relate to or encourage the couple?

I did put a sample message for you. The couple in that sample message picked 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "Give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." As you'll see that message notice how the give-thanks theme will come again and again and again and also connect to the real life of the couple that I'm doing the ceremony for. So you want that theme to sort of bubble up even as you connect to the real life of the people.

I'm going to talk about some wisdom that you should think about whenever you do a wedding or a wedding message. One thing is to stay away from bashing marriage. Sadly enough, a lot of pastors and leaders, when someone gets married, will go into this long thing about how marriage is something that nowadays people just aren't doing it. It's almost like that second point. Don't make it hopeless. No making marriage hopeless. Where it's like, "You know, very few people keep married today. Half the people end in divorce."

Uh-uh. When someone gets married, stay away from bashing the institution of marriage or bashing how men are not attentive to their wives nowadays and all they think about is watching football, or the statistics. I tell you. Just don't do any of that bashing, hopelessness stuff. You are not there to make somebody so high and ruin the day for the people that you're marrying.

Don't embarrass the couple. Sometimes pastors, they're not really paying attention. Somehow let's say you have this sort of guy who's sort of sloppy. That's his basic personality. And now today, he has a really nice tux on and he looks really neat and clean. And then you have a gal who's really neat and clean and very particular marrying the sloppy guy. So you got the sloppy guy and the really clean gal. Now what you can do is they're sort of funny is you can sort of make like Sloppy Joe is marrying Neat Nelly and everybody laughs. But in the couple's heart, maybe they don't consider those excerpts about themselves most desirable. Instead, have those things that are positive in the differences that make an awesome combination.

Don't call attention to yourself too much. I've seen that happen in wedding messages where the wedding message, there's ten minutes of talking and eight minutes is about an experience the pastor's had in marriage. "You know, when we were first married, my wife and I made a covenant that we're going to do this and we did this and then this happened and this happened and this happened. What I want to say to you, couple, is learn from us." You're not really taking the scripture and making it apply and really encourage the couple in their life. You're making it about yourself.

Don't be too superior or preachy where there you are, you have them before you, and now you start saying, "And you should... And a wife should... And a husband should. As the church of God here, we should all" and sort of have this superior attitude.

Lastly is smile here and there. But again, don't go overboard. Sometimes I've seen it where everybody's happy but the pastor is just not happy. There's not one smile. You'd think this is a funeral, not a wedding. So you have an opportunity to bless a couple to be encouraging and take that opportunity with a seriousness and bring joy to those that you are doing the ceremony for.

A message is a great opportunity. I tell you. Memorize your message. Yes, you can look down. But better yet, memorize. And don't feel you have to stick to everything. If you have to have it written down, that's okay. But try to at least memorize it first a little bit. Try to at times, if you have it written in notes, to still look into the eyes of the couple. These are just a few little wisdom thoughts, a couple of concluding comments about making the wedding special. The message is special for those you're doing the ceremony with.