

**SARAH and JAY WEDDING**  
**October 30, 2021**

Jay and Sarah want to welcome you to their wedding. We are thrilled you could be here for this ceremony.

We are gathered here in the presence of God and these witnesses to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony. This is a sacred celebration of the union of Jay Grant and Sarah Keplinger

We learn from God's Word that the Lord Jesus honored a marriage ceremony in Cana with His presence, working there the beginning of His miracles. These miracles indicate that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, the Sovereign, and the Creator of the universe. And the wedding ceremony was first used to demonstrate this glorious fact.

We are gathered here because God, who has created us in His likeness and said it is not good for man to live alone, has brought Jay and Sarah together. And they now wish to publically vow their love, loyalty, and lives to one another before God with you as witnesses and supporters.

*Let us pray: Our Father in Heaven, we rejoice together on this happy occasion that you have providentially led Jay and Sarah to each other and to this time of mutual commitment. When you first created us male and female, you left within a sense of incompleteness that moves us to find another with whom we can share our life. Although you give to some the gift of celibacy and to others you entrust the discipline of loneliness, we thank you today that you have given Jay and Sarah to each other.*

*And as they begin this great journey on this day of sharing their lives in exclusive love and commitment, we ask that you help them to listen to the still small voice of your Spirit as He says to them, "This is the way in which you are to walk." Then give them the courage and the patience to walk it. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.*

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Scripture readings – 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and Ephesians 5:23-33

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**Message**

When God created man, He also created a companion for him. Marriage was ordained of God before man sinned so that man and woman could intimately share their life, their work, their love, and their God.

The first marriage was ideal. It consisted of three parties, not two: the man, the woman, and Almighty God Himself. But when man sinned, selfishness entered his life and marriage lost its original beauty. Nevertheless, marriage has remained one of God's greatest blessings bestowed upon humanity, and truly the foundation stone of any stable society. The original marriage is described for us in the second chapter of Genesis:

*"The Lord God said, 'It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.' 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 brought 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. For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother, and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. And they were both naked and not ashamed."*

Here we notice several important truths.

1. First, husband and wife are natural partners. The woman is taken from the side, not man's head, which would imply superiority, nor from his foot, which would imply inferiority.
2. Second, husband and wife are permanent partners. They are each to leave the families which raised them, to be cleaved together, literally, bonded, or glued to one another in a union which creates a new family.
3. Third, husband and wife are exclusive partners. Their mutual fidelity becomes the base of something so unique, so precious, that there is nothing like it in the whole world. That is what makes it so special. And it only appreciates in value over time through their shared experience.
4. Fourth, husband and wife are intimate partners. They are naked and open to each other in a mutual commitment to and quest for intimacy and vulnerability. The hallmarks of this intimacy are continual communication and adjustment.

The Bible also describes in Ephesians 5 the union of man and woman in marriage as a mystery because it explains a profound truth about Christ and the church.

Ephesians 5:31 is a quotation of Genesis 2:24, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one." Then Paul adds in verse 32: "This is a great mystery, and I take it to mean Christ and the church."

The divine reality is revealed in this metaphor of marriage. God ordained the man and woman should be in union in marriage. God also ordained a permanent union between His Son and the church. Human marriage is the earthly image of this divine plan. As God willed for Christ and the church to become one body (Galatians 3:28; 1 Corinthians 12:13), so He willed for marriage to reflect this pattern—that the husband and wife become one flesh (Genesis 2:24).

Just as God did not want man and woman to be alone, He also wanted that all human beings would be in fellowship with Him. But sin entered the world and entered each one of us. We are sinful and separated from a holy God. The apostle Paul teaches that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:3). The good news is that by sending His Son Jesus Christ to pay the penalty for sin that we deserved, we can experience the gift of eternal life through faith. Paul concludes, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). If you have never placed your faith in Jesus Christ, I know that Jay and Sarah would love to talk to you about this important decision.

The Bible also speaks of the importance of love in a marriage. The New Testament verses you selected were from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 – *Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

What is described in 1 Corinthians 13 is not just ordinary human love, of which the two of you and all others are capable. Rather what it is describing here is specifically Christian love. And Christian

love is something that comes into our marriage and intensifies and builds upon the love we have for one another and carried us through difficult places.

Jay and Sarah: we live in a society where the emphasis today is on the individual and individual rights. And because of this, it is very difficult for people now to make the kind of sacrifice and the commitment that is necessary to hold the marriage together through good times and bad. But I will assure you that if you make the effort, you will never regret it. And we ask God's blessing you to both today.

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## **Marriage Vows**

Perhaps the most important part of a marriage ceremony is the marriage vows. And it is my prayer and I know the prayer of Jay and Sarah that those of you who have already taken the vows of marriage will witness the love of these two people, and as you hear them share their vows, perhaps it will strengthen for you the memory of your happy day and remind you of the meaning of the vows you yourselves once took.

The bridegroom and the bride are partners in life, each forsaking parents to cleave to one another. They share a common name, a united household, a common experience, and a love which blesses and transcends all the cares and trials of life. The mathematics of love add and multiply the joys, while subtracting and dividing the sorrows.

In token of having chosen each other as partners for life, you may now join your right hands and declare your vows to one another. Jay, repeat after me:

*I, Jay, take thee Sarah, to be my lawfully wedded wife. To have and to hold from this day forward, for better or worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, honor and cherish, till death do us part.*

Sarah, repeat after me:

*I, Sarah, take thee Jay, to be my lawfully wedded husband. To have and to hold from this day forward, for better or worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part.*

## **Exchange of Rings**

Jay, what token do you give to show that you will faithfully perform these vows?

The ring is a fitting symbol of marriage. The precious metal speaks of an enduring relationship and faith, even though tried in the fires of adversity. Its unending circumference, without beginning or end, symbolizes the permanence of this marriage. And the giving of these rings to each other is the tangible expression and reminder of the solemn vows you have just expressed to each other.

Jay, place the ring on Sarah's finger and repeat after me:

*In token and in pledge of the vow between us made, with this ring, I thee wed.*

Sarah, what token do you give to show that you will faithfully perform these vows?

Sarah, place the ring on Jay's finger and repeat after me:

*In token and in pledge of the vow between us made, with this ring, I thee wed.*

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### **Unity Knot**

Jay and Sarah will now braid a cord of three strands. Ecclesiastes 4:12 proclaims that "a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

One strand represents God – this divinity of God is represented in the white middle strand. This covenant relationship is initiated by Him and is intended to glorify Him.

Another strand represents Jay (the groom) – as a new creation in Christ, the majesty of the groom is represented at the right hand.

A third strand represents Sarah (the bride) – having been cleansed by salvation in Christ, the purity of the bride is represented at the left hand. As the wife honors her husband, the Lord will mature and strengthen the marriage relationship.

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### **Prayer of Blessing**

*Father, as the God Who is Love, you have established marriage for the welfare and happiness of mankind. It was your plan, fashioned in your mind, and only with You can we work it out with joy.*

*Lord Jesus, we pray for Jay. Bless him as the provider of nourishment and raiment and sustain him in all the demands and pressures encountered in fulfilling this God-ordained responsibility. May his strength and comfort be ever present. And may he so live that Sarah will find in him the haven for which the heart of a woman truly longs.*

*Likewise, Lord, we pray your blessing upon Sarah. We ask that you give to her the desire to honor, respect and support her husband, and that her life might be characterized by that inner beauty which is so fitting of a helpmate.*

*Father, teach Jay and Sarah that marriage is not living merely for each other, but rather is truly expressed in joining hands to serve you. Give them a great spiritual purpose in life, rather than just making a living. Help them earnestly seek your kingdom and your righteousness in all that they do, knowing that the other things shall be added unto them.*

*And Father, may they not expect of each other that perfection which belongs only to you; may they minimize each other's weaknesses, may they be swift to praise and magnify each other's points of comeliness and strength, and see each other continually through a lover's kind and patient eyes.*

*Give them enough tears to keep them tender, enough hurts to keep them humane, enough fear to keep their hands clenched tightly in yours, and enough success to make them sure that they walk with you.*

*May they never take each other's love for granted, and may they always experience the boundless wonder that exclaims, "Out of all the world, you have chosen me."*

*Give them a long life together, and when life is done, and the sun is setting, may they be found then, as now, hand in hand, still thanking you for each other. May they serve you happily, faithfully together until at last one shall lay the other in your arms. This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, Our Savior and Our Lord.*

### **Pronouncement**

Jay and Sarah, you have made your vows in the presence of Almighty God and these witnesses. And you have sealed those vows with the giving and receiving of these rings.

I do therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me, before God and before these witnesses, pronounce you husband and wife, and what God has joined together, let no man put asunder. You may kiss the bride.

I present to you Mr. and Mrs. Jay Edwin Grant