

The Marriage of
Mr. Nathan Lewis Smith and Ms. Karyn Michelle Baughan
BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH
June 25, 2011

Prelude

Seating of Family and Special Guests

Parents of the bride and groom light the unity candles

Nate seats his mother and moves to be with Pastor Sean

The runner is extended

Nate and Pastor Sean Enter from the right door

Attendants Processional

Everyone Stands

Bride's Processional

The Welcome and Introduction

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today in the sight of God and the church that Christ bought with his own blood to join together Nate and Karyn in Holy Matrimony. This is the first institution God established when He joined Adam and Eve in marriage. This holy estate we call marriage was ordained by God for at least three reasons:

First, God ordained marriage for the propagation of the human race so that children would be raised in homes where the Word of God is taught, the gospel is lived out, and God is glorified in all that is done (Deut 6:4-7).

Second, God ordained marriage as the one estate where the natural affection men have for women and women have for men is set apart and enjoyed only by those who enter into a binding covenant relationship. For God himself said that

“a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh” (Gen 2:24).

Third, according to the Apostle Paul, God ordained marriage as a glorious picture of the mysterious union of Christ and his church. So then every marriage ceremony serves to remind us of the love Christ, the bridegroom, has for his bride, the church, who will be clothed in wedding garments secured for his bride at Calvary.

Therefore, if any man can show just cause why these two may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak or forever hold his peace.

Opening Prayer (Strings move to the pews)

Pastor Sean continues,

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

Tom answers, Her Mother and I.

Nathan takes Karyn’s arm.

Nathan, by the taking of Karyn’s arm, you are acknowledging your position as the spiritual leader of the home accountable to Christ on that Day of Judgment for yourself and your family.

Pastor Sean says to Nathan and Karyn,

Now to the both of you, I require and charge you both that, if either of you knows any cause why you may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony, you do now confess it.

Pastor Sean says to Nate,

Will you, Nathan, take this woman, Karyn, to be your wife, according to God’s holy decree; do you promise to be to her a loving husband, to cherish and keep her; and, forsaking all others, to be faithful only to her as long as you both shall live?

He answers: I will.

Pastor Sean says to Karyn,

Will you, Karyn, take this man, Nathan, to be your husband, according to God's holy decree; do you promise to love, honor, and obey him; and, forsaking all others, to be faithful only to him as long as you both shall live?

She answers: I will.

Pastor Sean says: You may be seated,

Move up the stairs with Be Thou my Vision being played.

A Gospel-Centered Challenge to the Couple

It is very special that this couple standing before us this day first met on the Lord's Day in a Sunday morning Bible study being led by Mike and Megan Germany. When I asked Karyn what made this difference with Nathan and what did she first notice about him? She spoke about his out-going personality and excitement about God and His Word. Then when I asked Nathan, "what was it about Karyn that caused him to take notice?" He was very forthright and said, "She was pretty." Nate, "Is she just as pretty today as the day you first laid eyes on her?" Nathan and Karyn are different people. And they will discover how different the longer they live together, but it is their faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ and love one for another that caused each to desire to be joined together for life in the most holy estate of marriage and will keep them married.

Nathan and Karyn, let me take a moment and share with you what will ultimately be one of the most difficult tasks each of you will encounter during your lifetime together. And this is the task of applying the truth and spirit of the gospel to each other when you believe he or she has sinned against you. Because of God's great grace and your faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, God has forgiven ALL your sins. There is nothing you can do to separate yourself from the love of God. Because of Christ's virgin birth, sinless life, and atoning sacrifice on a cross, God's justice has been satisfied on your account; and each and every sin you have or will ever commit has been forgiven and God will not hold your iniquity against you no matter what (Jer 31:34; 1 John 2:12). You will never have to face the wrath of God.

When you have been offended or hurt by the one you love the most on this earth, you will need to appeal to the grace of God and forgive your lover in the same way your Lord forgives you (1 John 1:9). This will not always be easy.

At this point, on this day, it seems almost ridiculous to remind you, Nathan, that you must love Karyn like Christ loved the church (Eph 5:25), but I promise you there will be days in the years, perhaps even months, to come when and where you will need to remember that you are to love Karyn unconditionally without reservation after the pattern set forth by the gospel. And Karyn, my dear sister in Christ, there will be days in the future where it may be quite challenging to love, respect, or submit to Nathan's leadership like the church submits to the leadership of the Lord (Eph 5:22, 24). But you, too, must look to the power of the gospel to give you grace and strength to overcome the flesh and follow your husband (Rom 1:16; Eph 5). And in so doing each of you will model for your family, friends, and future children the power of the gospel in a most God-glorifying way until the glorious return of Christ or until He calls you home to be with Him forever!

Never forget that the vow you are about to make is being made first and foremost to God.

Exchange of the Vows

Nathan says after Pastor Sean,

My brother, Nathan, repeat after me: I, Nathan, take you, Karyn to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part.

Karyn says after Pastor Sean,

My sister, Karyn, repeat after me: I, Karyn, take you, Nathan to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, honor, and obey, till death do us part.”

Exchange of the Rings

Pastor Sean reaches for the first ring for Nathan to place on Karyn's hand.

The wedding ring is a symbol of eternity. It is an outward sign of an inward and spiritual bond which unites two hearts in a covenant relationship. And now as a token of your love and of your promise to be forever committed to love your bride as Christ loves the church.

Pastor Sean leads Nathan, as he places the ring upon the finger of Karyn's left hand and Nathan says,

Karyn, I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and faithfulness to you. With this ring I thee wed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Pastor Sean says,

By the same token, Karyn, you are promising to be forever committed to honor your husband. You may place a ring on the finger of your groom.

Pastor Sean leads Karyn, as she takes the ring and places it upon the finger of Nathan's left hand and Karyn says,

Nathan, I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and faithfulness to you. With this ring, I thee wed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Pronouncement of Marriage

Pastor Sean says,

By virtue of the authority committed unto me by the church of Jesus Christ and the state of North Carolina, I now pronounce you, Nathan, and Karyn, husband and wife, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder (Mark 10:9).

Ceremonies and Symbols of Marriage

Darren Reads

Nathan and Karyn have chosen two ceremonies to picture the unity of two becoming one from Matthew 5:13-16. Jesus said:

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt has lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A

city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it gives light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

The Salt Ceremony

From earliest times, salt has been known as a preservative and purifier that prevents decay and corruption. As it is enduring, never changing, and abiding forever, it is the very symbol of God's character and reliability. The term "Covenant of Salt," is indicative of the everlasting nature of the Covenant relationship between the children of God and their Creator.

A Marriage Salt Covenant asks Nathan and Karyn to combine their grains of salt. Their commitment to each other cannot be broken unless they can each retrieve their own grains of salt. Since this is not possible, it is a symbol of an unbreakable covenant and vow of eternal love.

Just as these grains of sand can never again be separated and poured into their individual containers, so will your marriage be. The life that each of you experiences now, individually, will hereafter be inseparably united, for the two shall become one.

The Candle Ceremony

The two outside candles have been lighted to represent their lives to this moment. They are two distinct lights, each capable of going their separate ways. To bring bliss and happiness to their home there must be the merging of these two lights into one light. This is what God meant when He said: 'On this account, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall be one flesh.'

From now on their thoughts shall be for each other rather than for their individual selves. Their plans shall be mutual, their joys and sorrows shall be shared alike. As they each take a candle and together light the center candle, they will extinguish their own candles, thus letting the center candle symbolize the union of our lives into one flesh. As this one light cannot be divided, neither shall their lives ever be divided.

House of Faith Song

Closing Prayer *(Strings Move Back Up to the Stage)*

Pastor Sean says,

Nathan, you may kiss your bride.

I now introduce Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Lewis Smith!

Recessional

Pastor Sean says, Please remain seated until an attendant dismisses your row to greet Nathan and Karyn.