

## Jeremiah and Monica Zeigler's Wedding

We come together this morning for a very special occasion. Jeremiah Zeigler and Monica Maust are going to join their lives together in marriage.

I have watched with great respect for how these two have sought to honor God through the whole process of courtship and engagement. I listened as Jeremiah explained the conversations he was having with Monica. I'm sure he didn't tell me everything. But Jeremiah and Monica discussed the direction and purpose of their marriage prior to committing to it. They reached agreement on potential issues prior to making their commitment to each other. They are committed to following Christ together in a better way than they could follow Him separately. You see, Jeremiah and Monica are looking forward to sharing their **lives** together, but they share the most important thing **in life** already.

They share a faith in Jesus Christ, their Savior and Lord.

Some of you may wonder what I mean by that. And this is one thing that Monica and Jeremiah wanted me to be perfectly clear about. You see, Jeremiah and Monica don't think that they are such good people that they **deserve** God's approval. No, the direct opposite is true. They realized at some point in their lives that they were guilty of sinning against God and deserved his wrath. They also learned at some point in time that Jesus Christ died for that exact reason. He died to take upon Himself the wrath of God that we all deserve. And they received what He did on their behalf by faith. They learned that as Eph 2:8,9 says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." Monica and Jeremiah expressed faith that Christ had paid their penalty and in exchange they can live forgiven of their sins and in newness of life. And that is the perfect platform for marriage.

Today if you want to have that salvation for yourself, it is available to you. John 3:16 says For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Today Jeremiah and Monica welcome you to join them in the faith they have in Jesus Christ.

(Look at the couple)

Now, based on the faith that you share, I have instructions for you from God. Some people see the Bible as a book of mysteries and they believe the purpose of Bible study is to solve the mysteries. I think that is a mistake. Mike Friend, our previous preacher used to tell us that it's more like a lawn mower manual. It is a book from the manufacturer about how the product should be used. If you want

to use your lawn mower to trim tree trunks you can, but your mower won't run very well. Scripture tells us that God made us. It tells us that God made marriage. And God tells us how a marriage should be conducted. As believers what God says has to be our manual for all of life, and marriage is included in that. If you conduct your marriage and your lives according to what God says, you will honor God. If you don't, you won't.

So, first it is important that you understand that God made marriage.

**Matt 19: 4And Christ answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' 5and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 6So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."**

When God made male and female he knew exactly what He was doing. He created male and female in such a way that He knew that a man would be willing to leave the security provided for him by his parents in order to experience this oneness with his wife. He would be willing to take on the responsibility of providing security for his wife at the expense of himself. Never forget it is **God** who created these dynamics. He created them for good. It was God's idea that men and women are attracted to one another. He intended the fireworks that we experience in marriage. And since God created marriage, that means it is **His rule** that you must submit to in how you carry out this marriage.

You see, God never granted the state of Maryland or the Federal Government the authority to grant or retract marriage. He retains that for Himself. The world can define marriage however they like, but their opinions do not affect the truth of marriage in any way. God will mock their decisions. God alone has authority over how you **behave**, Jeremiah and Monica,. So look to God's Word as absolute authority over all your behavior.

I'd like to read from one of the scriptures where God revealed his heart about the roles in marriage.

**Eph 5:**

**22Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.**

Monica, by taking Jeremiah as your husband today, you are agreeing

that you trust him to the degree that you will submit to him. You understand that by saying “I do” to Jeremiah that you are, in effect, giving him authority over your life. You trust that he has your best interest in mind to the degree that you are willing to do what he tells you to do. You trust that Jeremiah is submitting his life to Christ in such a way that you can depend upon him to treat you in the way that Christ treats him. This kind of submission is not popular in our culture. But it is popular with God. Submission is the only way that you will gain the security that this marriage is intended to provide you with. Authority is given to create order. Without it there is chaos. Your first priority is to submit to God. You must always keep that first. Never disobey God to obey Jeremiah. But as Jeremiah submits to God’s rule over his life, you now must obey **him**. And that submission is pleasing to God. In fact from this day forward part of your way of pleasing God will be to obey your husband.

There is also something else that you might want to keep in mind. In Genesis 2 God gave Adam a job. He was to dress and keep the garden of Eden. Then God created, in His words, **“I will make him a helper comparable to him.”** This pretty much means that God created woman to help the man to carry out the responsibilities that he must answer to God for. As a wife, that is what you are signing up for. Jeremiah must provide a platform of security for his family. It is your role to do all in your power to help him in his carrying out of that responsibility. Your focus now becomes his agenda and not your own. Your question becomes, “How can I help Jeremiah in carrying out all of his responsibilities?” You will become more and more precious to him as he depends upon you to look after his interests in ways he’d have never thought of, or never been able to do. If you read about the proverbs woman, you see a person who had this mastered. She was as competent as the day is long, but she used all that competence to further her husband’s interest. It has been a blessing to me, already, to see how you help Jeremiah to keep his life organized, especially when you remind him of the times he is supposed to go visit his parents.

As you enter your marriage, keep in mind these instructions scripture gives and continually go back to them when you want direction for your life.

And Jeremiah- The scripture in Ephesians goes on to say this:

**25Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.**

Now Jeremiah, it is your job to provide the platform of security for your wife to serve from. It is your job to love your wife like Christ loves his church. It is your job to love Monica like you love yourself. Now remember what **Christ** did for **you**. He **died** so you can **live**. That is the attitude you must have toward Monica. Your service to the Lord now includes your service to your wife. Do you remember how, when the fox attacked the chicken coop, the rooster was always the first casualty? That is the attitude you must have in your service to and protection of Monica. Your life is expendable for her good.

Part of that service will be to listen to your wife/  
**to** understand what is important to her.

**To** treat the things **she thinks** are important the way you would treat the things **you think** are important.

**To** love your wife as yourself.

When I entered marriage I had no trouble **loving myself**. I knew how to go fishing when I wanted to go fishing. I knew how to buy the things that **I wanted** for myself. I knew how to spend my time to please **myself**. And I knew what I wanted Carla to do that would make **me** happy.

What I wasn't good at was putting myself in her shoes. I wasn't good at considering what **she** might like or how **she** might think about things that I did.

My first three years of marriage were pretty much spent in surprise. I'll bet there are a lot of married men out there that would say the same thing. I was surprised by how much **of what I did** affected Carla. I was surprised by how much

**differently** a woman sees the world than how a man sees the world. And I was surprised that I was not **nearly as loving a person** as I saw myself as being. I now believe that marriage is the school for loving. God places a person very close to you. And God will show you things about yourself through her that you could never see by yourself. It is your job in that process to learn to love your wife, to place her needs above your own. And, as a side note, as you practice **that** you will begin to prepare for having children.

Realize too that your treatment of your own wife is so important to God that if you fail to treat her properly, even your prayers will be hindered. **I Peter 3:7**  
**7Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.** God expects that when He gives you Monica as your wife that you will cherish her in the fashion that He cherishes her. You will most surely fail at that at some points. And when you do, confess it to God and to Monica, get back up and go about loving her again.

Now notice Monica and Jeremiah, that the instructions for marriage in this text are couched in the context of Christ and His Church. I don't think this is an accident. Your obedience to Christ in marriage is to be surrounded and aided by the brothers and sisters that you love and depend upon. God never says that marriage and family are designed to meet all your needs. Marriage meets some needs that you are allowed to meet nowhere else, but there are many spiritual needs that will only be met by fellow members in the body of Christ who were spiritually gifted with things that you need. And you are gifted to meet needs they have. So don't ever make the mistake of thinking that your spiritual needs will be fully met by just the two of you. That puts way too much pressure on your mate to provide things that he or she can't. You must make it a priority to be thoroughly committed to your local body of believers, no matter where you might find yourself. It is only there that your marriage will be surrounded by the kind of support that God intended for you to have. And it is there that you can be more involved in those ministries that are dearest to His Heart.

So Jeremiah and Monica, I would like to charge you this day to live according to our Lord's commands. No matter what you face in your lives together, keep the perspective that Christ is in charge. No matter how you might feel toward each other on any given day, keep in mind that it is Christ who put

you together. It is Him to whom you will answer for how you lived your lives together. Jeremiah- love Monica like Christ loves the church. Monica submit to Jeremiah the way the church should submit to Christ. If you will both do that, you will live out a marriage the way God intended it to be. And your lives will be richly blessed in your married life together.

And for those of you in the audience who are believers and are close to Jeremiah and Monica, continue to encourage them to hold true to the course they have pledged themselves to. It is our job to help them, sometimes to remind them, to stay true to their commitment to each other and to work it out in the unique way that every married couple works it out.

I couldn't be happier for you both and I pray Christ's richest blessings upon you.