

Opening Remarks and Blessing:

Good Afternoon. Welcome friends and family. Thanks for joining us here today to celebrate the marriage of Scott and Sara.

Happiness in marriage is not something that just happens. A good marriage must be created. In the art of marriage, the little things are the big things.

It is never being too old to hold hands. It is remembering to say, "I love you". It is at no time taking the other for granted. It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives; it is standing together facing the world. It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice, but in the spirit of joy. It is not expecting perfection in each other. It is cultivating flexibility, patience, understanding, and a sense of humor. It is having a capacity to forgive and forget. It is establishing a relationship in which the independence is equal, the dependence is mutual, and the obligation is reciprocal. It is a common search for the good and the beautiful. It is not marrying the right partner; it is being the right partner. It is discovering that your love for one another at its best will never lose sight of or be blotted out by the common place experiences of life.

And it is remembering that remaining devoted, confident and hopeful in one another are the secret ingredients, which will help you to remain two very happy people, richer for your oneness.

Marriage Blessing

Blessed are you who come here in the name of God. Serve God with joy, come into God's presence with song. O most awesome, glorious and blessed God, grant Your blessings to the bride and groom.

Wine Ceremony

Scott and Sara will now combine two different wines into one glass.

Blessing over the Wine: Two thoughts are suggested by this cup of wine. The first is that wine is a symbol of the sweetness we wish for your life. There will be times when you drink from other cups, from bitter ones; but life offers opportunity to savor the sweetness. The awareness of the possibility of a life filled with true meaning is what we toast: the good that is life. The second is that wine is a symbol of sharing. You have shared many moments together, and out of this time has grown the love which brought you to this day. As you continue to share in each other's life, you will, as a symbol of this enduring cooperation, share this cup of wine. Blessed are you, O God, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Readings –

~ modification from Walt Whitman's Song of the Open Road~

*I do not offer the old smooth prizes,
But offer rough new prizes,
These are the days that must happen to you:
You shall not heap up what is called riches,
You shall scatter with lavish hand all that you earn or achieve.
However sweet the laid-up stores,
However convenient the dwellings,
You shall not remain there.
However sheltered the port,
And however calm the waters,
You shall not anchor there.
However welcome the hospitality that welcomes you
You are permitted to receive it but a little while
Afoot and lighthearted, take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before you,
The long brown path before you,
leading wherever you choose.
Say only to one another:
Camerado, I give you my hand!
I give you my love, more precious than money,
I give you myself before preaching or law:
Will you give me yourself?
Will you come travel with me?
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?*

Exchange of Vows

Sara and Scott, have you come here freely and without reservations to give yourselves to each other in marriage?

Response: We have.

Sara: I, Sara, take you, Scott, to be my husband. I promise to be true to you always, in sickness and in health, in poverty or wealth, in my thoughts and in my speaking. I will be your dearest friend and your lover. With these words, I commit myself to you.

Scott: I, Scott, take you, Sara, to be my wife. I promise to be true to you always, in sickness and in health, in poverty or wealth, in my thoughts and in my speaking. I

will be your dearest friend and your lover. With these words, I commit myself to you.

Exchange of Rings

These rings in their unbroken wholeness are tokens of the continuity of your love. May their shining substance be a symbol of the enduring trust and affection that you bring to one another.

Sara and Scott have brought rings to present to one another as a symbol of their marriage vows today. Although there is no precise evidence to explain the origin of the tradition of exchanging wedding rings, an ancient and widely accepted explanation refers to the early Egyptian's belief that a circle was the symbol of eternity--a sign that life, happiness, and love have no beginning and no end. A wedding ring, or circle, was placed on the third finger of the left hand, the ring finger, because it was traditionally believed that this finger was a direct connection to the heart -- the perfect spot to place a symbol, representing eternal love and commitment. The *vena amoris*, that is, the vein of love, runs directly from the "ring finger" to the heart.

Scott as you place the ring on Sara's finger, repeat after me: Take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity.

Sara, as you place the ring on Scott's finger, repeat after me: Take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity.

From every human being there rises a light that reaches straight to heaven. And when two souls are destined to find one another, their two streams of light flow together and a single brighter light goes forth from their united being. *[Written by the Baal Shem Tov, a famous rabbi]*

The Seven Wedding Blessings

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who created all things for Your glory.

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of man.

Blessed are You, O Lord our God King of the universe, who created man and woman in Your image, fashioning woman in the likeness of man, preparing for man a mate, that together they might perpetuate life. Blessed are You, O Lord, Creator of man.

May Zion rejoice as her children in joy are restored to her. Blessed are You, O Lord, who causes Zion to rejoice at her children's return.

Grant great joy to these beloved companions, as You did to the first man and woman in the Garden of Eden. Blessed are You, O Lord, who grants joy to bride and groom.

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who created joy and gladness, bride and groom, mirth, song, delight and rejoicing, love and harmony, peace and companionship. O Lord our God may there be heard in the cries of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem voices of joy and gladness, voices of bride and groom, the jubilant voices of those joined in marriage under the bridal canopy, the voices of young people feasting and singing, Blessed are You, O Lord, who causes the groom to rejoice with his bride.

Pronouncement

Your friends and family, all of us here, rejoice in your happiness and we pray that this day marks only one of many more blessings you will share in the days and years ahead. And now that you have spoken the words and performed the rites that unite your lives, we now, by the power of your love and the commitment you have made, declare your marriage to be valid and binding and declare you Scott and Sara, husband and wife.

Breaking of the Glass

We conclude this ceremony with the breaking of the glass. It is a joyous ceremony. There are many different explanations for the breaking of the glass. Today, the fragility of the glass suggests the frailty of human relationships. The glass is broken to protect this marriage with the implied prayer... May your bond of love be as difficult to break as it would be to put together the pieces of this glass. After Scott breaks the glass, I invite everyone to shout the Hebrew words "Mazel Tov," which means "good luck" and "congratulations."

You may now kiss. Ladies and Gentlemen, I now present to you Scott and Sara, Husband and Wife!