

## From Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Wedding Sermon

Charles E. Ford

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As God today adds his 'Yes' to your 'Yes', as he confirms your will with his will, ... he creates out of your love something quite new – the holy estate of matrimony.

Marriage is more than your love for each other. It has a higher power, for it is God's holy ordinance, through which he wills to perpetuate the human race til the end of time. In your love you see only your two selves in the world, but in marriage you are a link in the chain of the generations, which God causes to come and to pass away to his glory, and calls into his kingdom. In your love you see only the heaven of your own happiness, but in marriage you are placed at a post of responsibility towards the world and mankind. Your love is your own private possession, but marriage is more than something personal – it is a status, an office. Just as it is the crown, and not merely the will to rule, that makes the king, so it is marriage, and not merely your love for each other, that joins you together in the sight of God and man. ... so love comes from you, but marriage from above, from God. As high as God is above man, so high are the sanctity, the rights, and the promise of marriage above the sanctity, the rights, and the promise of love. It is not your love that sustains the marriage, but from now on, the marriage that sustains your love.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Enlarged edition, edited by Eberhard Bethge, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1971, pages 42-43.

This is an excerpt from a wedding sermon by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906 - 1945), a Lutheran pastor, written May 1943 from prison, shortly after his arrest for participation in the German resistance.

This excerpt was made by Charles E. Ford and read at the wedding of Stephen and Heather Carson on 20 April 2002.