

The Road Less Traveled – February 24, 2017

My son Andrew is getting married tomorrow. It will be a moment that will represent – at the same time – the beginning of an incredible journey and the culmination of one that began nearly six years ago. Andrew and his bride, Marianne, have spent the past 15 months thinking about tomorrow, planning for it, sweating the hundreds of details that go into planning a wedding and the accompanying celebration.

It's been an interesting exercise to watch and take part in. I'm not sure how many weddings I've officiated, but it's quite a few. But this is the first time since my own wedding 25 years ago that I've been close to all the planning. And as the parents of the groom, mine and Melissa's part of the planning is on the small end. We had to figure out what we would wear and where we would stay and, of course, plan the rehearsal dinner. But for the rest, we are largely on the sidelines. But even the sideline provides an interesting perspective.

It doesn't seem like it should be that much work, but it is. There's the when and where that have to be determined. There's the who – as in who will officiate, who will stand up with the bride and groom, who will be invited to attend, who will take photos, who will do the flowers, who will help with the ladies' hair and make-up? There's the what – what will we do for the reception? Will we have a meal, or just appetizers? Music or no? Dancing? Round tables or rectangle? Paper or plastic? And finally, the big one, the how. As in, how are we going to pay for all of this?

After watching for these past months, it's not hard for me to understand why weddings are counted by psychologists as one of the 10 most stressful life events. At the end of the day, of course, it will be beautiful. It almost always is. And yet I can't help reflect that in the midst of all the stress and planning, one thing often gets missed.

The why.

If you were to ask Andrew and Marianne, they will tell you that they are getting married because they believe God has called each of them to this covenant. That God has called them both to spend a lifetime ministering to the other, to spend each day trying to outdo each other in the act of love, to spend the rest of their lives lifting each other up so that, together, they become more than simply the sum of their parts.

Tomorrow, Andrew and Marianne will say yes to God and to that holy invitation. Their "I do's" to each other will represent the real way they will live out a divine call. It will be a holy moment to be lived out every moment of the rest of their time on this earth. That's the why.

I think in that way weddings are a wonderful microcosm of a larger life of faith. At some point along our journey, we each say yes to the invitation to follow Christ. Maybe it's a dramatic yes in a single moment. Or maybe it's a gradual answer that evolves over time. In any case, we say yes. And then we step back into life.

And life can be overwhelming in its demands and stress. And our yes to Christ can quickly become relegated to an hour of worship each week, maybe Sunday school for good measure. And the why of our decision to follow Christ can become overshadowed by life.

But the why behind our yes to Christ is that Jesus invites himself to do life with us. Every hour. Every day. Until our time on this earth is finished.

The decision to follow Christ is not a decision to set aside real life. It's about saying yes to the invitation to relentlessly pursue the real life that only Christ can offer.

See you Sunday.

Rev. Lee Trigg is the senior pastor of Aledo United Methodist Church.