

A Great Outdoor Wedding

Have you ever been to an outdoor wedding in the fall? With all the colors of the leaves and the browns and grays of the dormant grasses and plants in the open fields, these weddings can be just beautiful. Cathy and I had the opportunity this past weekend to celebrate the wedding of a couple of former students of ours from Clinton. The wedding was in Johnson Creek and the students were Aaron Roth and Tiffany Wiley. It was a beautiful setting and even though it was a bit cool, most everyone was very comfortable and enjoyed the scenery immensely. The happy couple have been dating since high school, and together they have looked forward to this day for a long time.

What made the day even more special was that we also had the privilege of witnessing our son, Mitchell; perform the ceremony for two of his best friends who were committing their lives to each other. Not only was Mitchell the officiant, but he was also the best man.

Over the years Mitchell and Aaron have been rather inseparable, to say the least, spending so much time together that they might as well have been brothers. At the reception, Mitchell relayed the story of how they first became friends. It happened on the football practice field when Aaron was a freshman and Mitchell was a junior. It has always been an unwritten rule that the freshmen's job was to carry equipment down to the practice field each night after school for the evening football practice. It is sort of a right of passage in a way for the freshmen to do a little extra work in this way. The upper classman would transport it back to the high school when the varsity practice was finished long after the freshmen had gone home. Anyway, the first night of practice Mitchell saw Aaron with two large tackling dummies, one over each shoulder, lugging them down to the field. Aaron wasn't complaining or struggling too much, and Mitchell was impressed so he jogged over and took one of the dummies helping Aaron out. From that day forward the two of them were buddies. They very seldom were seen apart from each other over the next two years of high school and then every summer thereafter for the next several years.

I was blessed to have them both on a couple of my championship baseball teams that I coached at Clinton High School during that period as well. You talk about a couple of class acts, they were just that, and very talented players too. Aaron holds the all-time school record for most

pitching wins in his four year varsity career and Mitchell was a sparkplug for those teams becoming one of the greatest clutch players I ever coached.

They both went on to play college baseball at different schools. One very cool thing that happened while they were both playing was that their two teams ended up at the same complex in Florida one spring. I was able to surprise them by flying down and watching them both play one weekend in March. What a great experience that was. Solid caring friendships like theirs are hard to find these days.

The Bible says there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. That friend is the Lord Jesus Christ. When we put our trust in Him, the Bible says that we receive His Spirit and His companionship for the rest of our life and all eternity. Even our best friends on earth do not compare to the friendship of Jesus because He alone can save us from the penalty of sin which is death and eternal separation from our loving heavenly Father. Jesus died so that you and I could live forever and ever with Him, the friend who sticks closer than a brother. Until next week, God bless.