

THE END

I love it when you get to the end of book or a movie and the last two words are: The End. It's like pulling into the station at the end of the rollercoaster ride, checking your pockets for things that might have flown out. You get ready to move on rather than be so entrenched in an experience, and ask the question, "So what's next?" Again, I love the end of books or movies...so I've got some last lines of famous movies to share with you:

- "I used to hate the water."
- "I can't imagine why." *Jaws (1975)*

"Wilbur never forgot Charlotte. Although he loved her children and grandchildren dearly, none of the new spiders quite took her place in his heart. She was in a class by herself. It is not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer. Charlotte was both."
Charlotte's Web (1973)

- "Where ya headed, cowboy?"
- "Nowhere special."
- "Nowhere special. I always wanted to go there."
- "Come on." *Blazing Saddles (1974)*

- "Grandpa, maybe you could come over and read it again to me tomorrow."
- "As you wish." *The Princess Bride (1987)*

- "Mr. Hammond, after careful consideration, I've decided *not* to endorse your park."
- "So have I." *Jurassic Park (1993)*

And finally..."Space, the final frontier. These are the voyages of the Starship *Enterprise*. Her ongoing mission, to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life-forms and new civilizations, to boldly go where no one has gone before."
[Star Trek \(2009\)](#)

Today, we heard some last lines from Paul in his final letter to the Corinthians and Jesus' last words to his disciples in the gospel of Matthew chapter 28. They are outstanding

final words because they not only answer the question "So what's next?"...there is a blessing in it as well.

"Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you."

Paul says to the Corinthians that even though his letters have been harsh in trying to unify this church in Jesus' name, he leaves them with final teaching words of harmony with one another, and blessing them with God's peace, love, grace, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

If this was your last day on earth, what would you say to the people in your church? Or your family? Or your friends? Think about that for a few minutes and I'll tell you what to do with them later.

Remember, outstanding final words are words that don't keep people in perpetual memory of your absence or stuck in the past, but words that move the people you love to go and do something new and gives them God's blessing to do it.

Second, you just heard Jesus' words where he commissions his disciples to take with them the authority of Jesus as they go out into the world, make disciples by baptizing and teaching people to obey everything Jesus' said. The blessing is where Jesus tells them that he will be

with them always. I was at a workshop yesterday at Annual Conference where two pastors and community organizers taught us the keys to reaching out to people in the neighborhood. The first key is to have the reputation or authority of someone who people know. You can't just go out on your own and start knocking on doors to talk to people in a strange neighborhood. You have to have someone or some connection that people will recognize before they talk to you. For example: "Hi my name is Glenn and I'm with the University United Methodist Church down the street, you know the one next to Franklin Elementary school? Well, this church loves to pray for other people and I was wondering if you have any needs or concerns or maybe even joys that you would like the church to pray for?" You

see, the neighbor knows the church, and even though perhaps they have never met me or you, the recognition of a church or a name brand institution, or even a neighbor that lives next door, will give you the authority you need to help people from closing the door in your face. What's interesting is that Jesus said that "all authority of heaven and earth is given to me, and so go in my name and make disciples of all nations..." Jesus is our authority, the name that people recognize, and so in His name we go out and make disciples of Jesus through prayer, by nurturing good relationships, and by sharing our story about God with others. Outstanding final words move people forward to the next step in their lives, and gives them God's blessing to do it.

I posed the question earlier that if this was your final day on earth...what outstanding final words would you say to the people you love? Well, guess what...today is the day! You can't live in the past and tomorrow may never come, today is the day that you may be called to a different city, a different house, or even called home to be with Jesus. Fathers, especially, today of all days, why not tell your children how proud you are of them and how much you love them? Why not tell them about your love of God and faith in Jesus Christ? Why not share with them your life story? How sad it is to never know the stepping stones of your dad's life and you know everything about your friend's life on FaceBook? Share some wisdom today, my friends, and some excellent and outstanding words that move people

closer to Jesus and blesses them with God's love...before it truly gets to be The End.

I would end this sermon with the story of Erin Kramp who was on the Oprah show in the late 1990's because she was dying of breast cancer. What was remarkable about Erin's story was that she decided to make videotapes for her daughter Peyton so that when she grew up; Peyton would know her Mom's advice on life and remember her Mom's love for her. Such a forward thinking woman who embraced each day and held it as precious, giving all she could to her family with the time she had left. Peyton and her dad Doug were on the final Oprah shows a few months ago and for me, the message and love of Erin was still a visible and indelible heartprint upon them.

You have outstanding words in the book in front of you or in your hands that God would like to share with you. They are not videotapes, but the Bible records the heart of God moving upon humanity throughout history, wanting to share with us grace upon grace. And in the person of Jesus, God shared his heart with Israel and through them the whole world. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son... God the Eternal Father says to you and me today, I love you, today is the day to believe that, receive my love for you...and if you ever forget, I've given you love notes called The Bible, I've given you the Church who wants to share with you how I've touched their lives, I've given you the Holy Spirit who always calls you and empowers you to a closer walk with me.

Won't you share your heart with God this morning?

Receive the love of God in your life. Take this day and all the days that you have left on this earth to share your relationship of love with God with the people you love, people you know. Get to know more people by the authority of Jesus who sends us out to make disciples. And may the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forever, Amen.