

“A Last Sermon”
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I hope that over the last couple weeks you have thought about what you might want to say if it was your last chance.

Rabbi Stevens last week was wonderful as he suggested that the theme of his last sermon, and Moses as well would be → HOLINESS. Be holy because God is holy.

I still believe that Jesus would want to tell you that you are loved and to love others.

Jesus wanted to make sure that nobody felt excluded from God.

That nobody felt excluded from God’s kingdom

It has been an interesting experience working on this idea of a last sermon. I have to admit that it is a little intimidating. What do I, in my almost 49 years of life have to offer?

I have to be honest with you --- I really thought when I asked, you, as a congregation for your ideas that you would have shared some thought with me. I actually got only one response and that came from Amy Ying Ling, she wrote to me these three suggestions.

1. If you haven’t already – find a church where you feel close to God
2. Be kind to and fair to everyone
3. Always keep putting one foot in from of the other and keep looking for the positive.

I picked up a copy of H. Jackson Brown’s best seller LIFE’S LITTLE INSTRUCTION BOOK. Jackson Brown originally wrote *Life's Little Instruction* book in 1991 as a gift for his son who was leaving home to begin his freshman year in college. Brown says, "I read years ago that it was not the responsibility of parents to pave the road for their children but to provide a road map, and I wanted to provide him with what I had learned about living a happy and rewarding life."

He has some great suggestions:

Never give up on anybody. Miracles happen every day.

Be brave. Even if you're not, pretend to be. No one can tell the difference.

Think big thoughts, but relish small pleasures.

Learn to listen. Opportunity sometimes knocks softly.

Never deprive someone of hope; it might be all they have.

Be kinder than necessary.

Become the most positive and enthusiastic person you know.

Commit yourself to constant self-improvement.

Don't major in minor things.

Never cut what can be untied.

Overtip breakfast waitresses.

Never resist a generous impulse.

Never go to bed with dirty dishes in the sink.

Leave everything a little better than you found it.

Call your mother.

I found another awesome website that offered 10 life lessons for a happier life. Written by James a former lawyer who decided to become a college professor. He has put together ten simple lessons that will take you about ten minutes to read each one that might just change your life if you took them to heart.

As I began working on this – I just started making a list of the things that seemed important to me. And I will be honest with you, putting Jessica on a plane last month as she flew off to Australia for nearly five months, and spending the last couple of days in Bloomington as Lindsey gets ready to head to Indiana University to begin college has really got me thinking.

But also, having lost a brother 24 years ago, has taught me many lessons about life. So here are my twelve lessons that I wish I lived a lot better than I do.

- 1) Live every day as if it matters – because it does

Stewart's death had a profound impact on me. I was 25 years old when he died. I didn't think that 23 year old got sick and died, but obviously they do. I had to rethink my understanding of life. It was interesting because it didn't make me a libertine thinking that you only live once, so grab all the gusto that you can (boy that would make a great tag line for a beer). Instead I VALUED life more. And as my girls have grown, I sense the hurried pace of life. You see, I don't FEEL psychologically any different than I was at 25 or 30, but I now understand and appreciate how quickly life goes by.

- 2) Find something that you love doing – and stick with it.

I have the greatest job in the world – but I also have the worst. I get to be with you when you get married, when you have children, when you celebrate lifetime accomplishments. I get to be a part of all those wonderful moments in your live.

I can't tell you what a privilege it is to be with you at those milestone moments. And to be able to baptize a child – WOW – I have a great job.

But I also get to be with you when the sky is dark. One year ago, John Mybeck and I stood in the church parking lot crying as he shared with me the news that he had cancer. I have been with many of you when loved ones have died, I have visited you in the hospital, at home and at nursing homes. And it is never easy. I can't tell you how many times I have gotten in my car and cried as I drove away.

But wow – what a privilege. I wouldn't trade jobs with any of you.

Figure out what makes you get excited and keep on doing it!

- 3) Be positive and enthusiastic in everything that you do

We all know people who are black clouds. Everywhere they go they try to bring everyone down with them.

Be one of those people who are Tiggers – full of life and joy. Sure you might break a few things along the way – but you will do it with great joy!

- 4) Be generous
- 5) Forgive yourself
Girl in my first church . . .
- 6) Forgive others
Who do you think is being harmed when we hold on to grudges
- 7) Stop blaming others
- 8) Don't journey through life alone
- 9) Dream BIG → Dream even bigger!
- 10) Be bold and courageous

Joshua

(Joshua 1:9 NRSV) I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

- 11) Leave things better than when you found them

All I Really Need To Know I learned in Kindergarten – Robert Fulghum

Storyteller's Creed

I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge.
That myth is more potent than history.
That dreams are more powerful than facts.
That hope always triumphs over experience.
That laughter is the only cure for grief.
And I believe that love is stronger than death.

- 12) LOVE and be loved