

## **SOME THINGS LAST FOREVER**

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### **2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

**<sup>16</sup>Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup>For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. <sup>18</sup>So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.**

Today is my last Sunday In the pulpit as your Senior Pastor  
Almost 11 years ago on Nov. 1 2008, you called me here to serve  
On that day I preached a sermon, and you voted in my favor  
I'd like to start this last sermon with you with the same words that I  
began that first sermon

If you know me by now, and I hope you do  
You know that I love children's books  
One of the greatest theologians I ever read  
Was one that you may have heard of  
His name is Dr Suesse

On that Sunday almost eleven years ago I started with his words that  
I want to end with today  
This comes from a not as well known book of his  
Everyone knows "The Cat In The Hat"  
These words come from a book he wrote called "On Beyond Zebra"

Shall I begin? Are you all listening...Here we go...

**"Said Conrad Cornelius O'Donnell O'Dell  
My very young friend who was learning to spell**

**The A is for Apple**

The B is for Bear  
The C is for Camel  
The H is for Hare  
The M is for Mouse. And the R is for Rat.  
I know all the twenty-six letters like that...  
Through to Z is for Zebra.  
I know them all well  
Said Conrad Cornelius O'Donald O'Dell  
So now I know everything anyone knows  
From beginning to end. From the start to the close.  
Because Z is as far as the alphabet goes.  
Then he almost fell flat on his face on the floor

When I picked up the chalk and drew one letter more!  
A letter he never had dreamed of before!  
And I said, 'You can stop, if you want, with the Z

Because most people stop with the Z  
BUT NOT ME!  
In the places I go there are things that I see  
That I never could spell if I stopped with the Z.  
I  
'm telling you this 'cause you're one of my friends.  
My alphabet starts where *your* alphabet ends!  
My alphabet starts with this letter called YUZZ

It's the letter I use to spell Yuzz-a-ma-Tuzz  
You'll be sort of surprised what there is to be found  
Once you go beyond Z and start poking around!...  
So, on beyond Z! It's high time you were shown  
That you really don't know all there is to be known."

I love this book of Dr Seuss because  
Just when you think its over....  
Just when you think you've arrived at Z  
The very last letter of the alphabet – and its done...  
It isn't over at all

Now it is true that my time with you, as your Senior Pastor has come  
to an end

I have had a wonderful time with you – with challenges along the way – but I will never forget you

It has been a rich time. A time of learning. A time of growth and a time of fostering deep relationships.

You are wonderful people and its been an ***honor*** to serve you

And I want to thank you for allowing me, a woman, to do this  
What a gift this was to me, and what a stretch for some of you

I am so glad that in my life I had a chance to serve as Senior Pastor.  
I have been deeply blessed

Now please listen one more time to me today...and this really important in terms of life in the Holy Spirit for so many circumstances....

The thing about this ending today, is that although in one way we have reached this ending

It really isn't an ending...just like Seuss described

By that I mean that what you and I have been involved in all these years has not just been a series of nice programs, and worship services and helpful gestures for one another and our community. Not at all.

What we have been involved in together has been eternal Holy Spirit filled kingdom work, that will never end.

The ripple of the effect of lives changed for Jesus will never cease to echo down the corridors of time. Together so many eternal things were accomplished. I hope you know this...

Let me remind you of just a few these...

The teenager who was baptized here a while ago, who had been nurtured and supported by this church for years — you were supporting this child before I even got here - and this teen finally decided it was time to be baptized, and was, and then said to me after the baptism

“When you put your hand, Pastor Kim, on my head and baptized me I felt the Holy Spirit rushing through me. Up to then I wasn’t sure I believed. Now I know everything we talk about at church is true.

Friends some things last forever. That was an On Beyond Zebra moment when God took charge and did something eternal. We did it together, you and I.

Or the time, at the very beginning, when Session voted to give Service Worship a try.

What a stretch that was. This crazy woman pastor and her ideas! Giving up a Sunday worship to serve the community. And yet you got excited and you supported it and went all in. Thank you.

I can’t tell you how many people, disillusioned by the church; people who complained about all of its abuses and distortions – stood up once again and despite all of their cynicism took notice of God’s people once again...

When you would go and clean yards  
Or feed the homeless  
Or deliver items of need to the shelters  
Or sing and deliver flowers to the elderly  
Or make prayer shawls, or deliver gifts, or whatever it was

How many people came up to me and said  
“That’s what the church should be doing”  
And some of them even said in so many words  
“You know I haven’t been to church in awhile. I think I might go back.”

Those were On Beyond Zebra moments, when the Holy Spirit was touching hearts through your compassion. We did it together, you and I, and the lives impacted by you, the people of God, *that will never end*. Great seeds were sown and will continue to grow for all eternity.

And what about the saints here that have gone to be with the Lord. Some of you have said to me, “We’ve lost so many”  
And it seems like the end of something so special when we lose them

But don't forget what Paul says  
He tells us that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses  
Meaning that those who have gone before us are surrounding us  
now, and cheering us on  
They haven't left us, they are with us in spirit  
And they have left us a legacy that is here in this church

For instance I think of Don Eldridge who passed and his friend Carrol  
McCune who doesn't have too much longer here...

But they left a legacy of compassion in the DNA of this church that is  
an eternal quality here that will never end

Their love for people is just something that this place will always  
exude because of them

I think of Rhoda Gill and her tenacity  
When no one would go to RSM that first trip, she went in her eighties!  
She bought hiking boots and she went and pioneered the way

She leaves the legacy of taking risks that this church has always  
been willing to do for the sake of mission and outreach

And then I think of those who were people of encouragement – this  
church always has supported and encouraged people new in the  
ministry  
And I was new as a senior pastor and their encouragement meant  
everything to me in those first years – people like Edith Pinhoe, and  
Grace Johns, and Ruth Sakai, and John DeFugo...Betty Rager...Lou  
Pasquinelli...Lorraine Mancebo  
I can't mention everyone

But because of their gift of encouragement, I stayed as long as I did,  
and they also leave a legacy of encouragement here...for new  
pastors and missionaries and people in Christian service that will  
never end. It will always be in the DNA of this place

That's how the kingdom of God works  
When the Holy Spirit enters in what we think is over, keeps on  
keeping on

Some things last forever

I think too about this church's commitment to prayer;  
How Tom Mancebo praying early on Tuesday mornings – he hardly ever missed for ten years – he would just pray in the spirit for things he had no idea about that were written on those yellow prayer cards....I knew the details but he didn't...and yet the Lord led him to pray precisely for what was going on there...time and time again...

I also remember after a prayer training we had here how we went to the hospitals and began to pray for people who were sick.  
And I remember one incident when we went to pray where the healing was instantaneous.  
And the persons life was transformed

That was an On beyond Zebra moment that will last forever in that persons life.

I think too of all the children who have come to me during all the years we have had VBS. I see their heads bowed in prayer in my office as they asked Jesus into their heart for the first time.

Some of the things they said to me I will take with me and never forget...things like

"After I asked Jesus into my heart I felt peace. I am not afraid anymore."

OR

"After I asked Jesus into my heart I listened, and I heard him call me by my real name – my ethnic name - that no one ever uses– and tell me he loved me."

OR said the eight year son of a Presbyterian Pastor

"I just came to see you because I consider myself reformed and this VBS curriculum seems very focused on good works. I just want to be sure that you agree that it is by grace we are saved...and not works. And if so I've never formally asked Jesus into my heart so I'd like to do that now too..." (I kid you not)

Friends, some things last forever.

Kids asking Jesus into their heart – that has eternal significance. It keeps on keeping on because its real. I have had so many On Beyond Zebra Moments with these children. And you and I...we did that together too.

Or the ESL class that's still happening. People found Jesus there as well. People who never thought they would! Thank you for doing this with me. Eternal kingdom moments together.

And you want to know something else? Our friendship, yours and mine, will never end either. I have made so many relationships here at this church that I cherish.

I am convinced that Christian relationships empowered by the Holy Spirit are sacred. They mirror our relationship with Jesus Christ, and they too are eternal.

So what seems like an ending in one sense – my leaving -is not really an ending at all in another sense. What we have been involved with together is of eternal proportion and that will last forever.

It keeps on keeping on

How many of you have had the experience of God picking up the chalk and drawing one letter more when you thought something was over?

In ministry done together in the spirit

Aslan is always on the move as CS Lewis put it in his Narnia Chronicles.

The eternal purpose that we have been involved in here together will keep making an impact again...and again and again...

In one way the crucifixion was an end...wasn't it?

But then the followers of Christ discovered a resurrection morning that was right around the bend

Just beyond their sight

And they realized that what seemed like the end was actually a part of an eternal story that would never end

God was saying to them, "My alphabet starts where your alphabet ends."

We have a God who goes on beyond Z

And you know what?

The ripple effect of the resurrection of Jesus Christ keeps happening.

People keep getting their lives mended by the risen Jesus

And this church is a testimony to that

Some things last forever

Thanks for being an On Beyond Zebra church for eleven wonderful years. AMEN