

Last Messages

**Receiving from the Past and
Giving to the Future**

January 1, 1876

I consecrate myself afresh to God, today, laying all upon the altar with a full determination to ever lean upon Jesus and follow Him, and with God's help to lead a new life. And also with a full determination to pray more earnestly for my boys.

God help me.

Sarah Jane Cook

A Personal Note

Several years ago, an elderly Doctor who was writing his memoirs, told me, “*Writing is God’s gift to an old man.*” But in a broader sense I have determined, “*Writing is God’s gift to all mankind!*” Through writing we can receive from the past and give to the future.

The accumulated wisdom of the ages is available to us today because of the written word. What a gift! Not only does it overwhelm me with gratitude for what I can learn from earlier generations, it also challenges me to pass on all I can to help those who follow.

For me, the greatest and most profound writing is the Bible. Distilled in these pages is the Hope of eternity. It never grows old, and its breadth and depth are inexhaustible.

One of its great strengths has been the themes and common conclusions reached by various writers over thousands of years. The last message of many of these writers is one of those themes.

Please accept the following words as one man’s attempt to utilize for God’s Glory and our betterment His magnificent gift of writing.

From Grandpa With Love

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Last Messages

Introduction

First and last statements are important. Opening lines in a book or a talk often tell us what we can expect to read or hear, and closing lines tell us what the writer wants us to remember. Inaugural Addresses can tell us what to expect when a person is taking office. Farewell Addresses can tell us what the speakers hope we will remember after they leave office. Although new born children can't tell others what they expect to do in life, many of us do have the opportunity when we are older to tell those we leave behind what we want them to remember.

Last Messages is the subject of this little booklet. Hopefully, reading through this information will help you receive and apply some of the gifts passed on to us by writings in the Bible. And, in addition, encourage you to write the Last Message(s) God has given you to pass on to succeeding generations.

Remember, these are simply my conclusions and experiences and we all err. So hold on to what is good (of God)—and discard the rest.

Seven Last Messages

God created our world in six days and rested on the seventh. He instructed us to work six days and rest on the seventh. The number “seven” indicates completion. Since we are talking about passing information on to others as we complete our own lives, it seemed appropriate to choose seven examples: three from the Old Testament; a last message from Jesus; and three messages from the New Testament.

The Book of Deuteronomy (Moses)

Moses lived about 1500 B.C. He led the Hebrews from Egypt to the Promised Land from age 80 to 120. During these years he wrote the first four books of the Bible. Just before his death, he compiled a fifth book we call Deuteronomy, which comes from the Greek word for second or repeated law. It reminds me of a Readers' Digest version of the first four books. In a way the whole book is a Last Message, but for simplicity, let's look at Deuteronomy 30:19-20:

“This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

Shortly thereafter, Moses was told by God, *“There on the mountain that you have climbed you will die....”* (Deuteronomy 32:50)

Question # 1

How shall I record my journey and encourage those following me to “choose life” and not “death”?

I Samuel 12 (Samuel)

Samuel was an Old Testament prophet who led Israel around 1000 B.C. and anointed Saul and David the first two kings of Israel. His age is not listed but he refers to himself as “*old and gray*” (1 Samuel 12:2) when he prepares to leave office. He makes it clear he wants to finish well as he talks with his constituents in 1 Samuel 12:3:

“Here I stand. Testify against me in the presence of the Lord and his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed? From whose hand have I accepted a bribe to make me shut my eyes? If I have done any of these, I will make it right.”

Question # 2

Who do I need to speak to and offer to “*make right*” any wrong I may have left unresolved?

The Book of Ecclesiastes (Solomon)

Solomon, the son of King David, lived a few years after Samuel. He is believed to have written the amorous Song of Solomon as a young man; the wise sayings of Proverbs in his middle years; and the book of Ecclesiastes as an old man. After determining “*of making many books there is no end*” and repeatedly explaining to his readers that we are “*chasing the wind*” when we seek the pleasure, possessions, position and power of the world, he concludes in Ecclesiastes 12:13:

*“Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep his commandments,
for this is the whole duty of man.”*

Question # 3

How shall I explain the futility of “*chasing the wind*” and the need to “*fear God and keep His commandments*”?

The Upper Room Discourse in John 13-17 (Jesus)

Jesus was a public figure for about three years. Now, at approximately 33 years of age, He is preparing to undergo His crucifixion, death and resurrection. As the monumental event nears, He celebrates a Last Supper with His 12 disciples in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. After washing their feet, he gives them a new command: *“Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”* He promises the coming of the Holy Spirit; explains the mystery of the vine and the branches; predicts the persecutions that believers must endure; speaks of the coming times and gives His magnificent prayer for the unity of the Father, Son and all those who believe. During these moments He makes it clear He is nearing the end of His earthly journey as He prays to His Father:

*“I have brought you glory on earth
by completing the work you gave me to do.”*
(John 17:4.)

Question # 4

**What work do I need to complete
before my life here on earth is over?**

2 Timothy (Apostle Paul)

Paul, a Pharisee and Roman citizen, was apparently born a few years after Jesus. Although they were contemporaries they never met during Jesus' lifetime. Later, while Paul was on the road to Damascus to persecute Jesus' followers, he was struck blind and commissioned by Jesus to bring the "good news" to the Gentiles. Despite innumerable hardships including beatings, imprisonments and shipwrecks, Paul faithfully carried out his assignment. Now in prison, probably around 65 A.D., and aware that his end is near, he writes to Timothy, his beloved son in the faith, to tell of his impending death:

*"For I am already being poured out like a drink offering,
and the time has come for my departure.*

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race,
I have kept the faith."*

(2 Timothy 4:6-7)

Question # 5

**What do I need to do in order
to keep the faith and finish my race?**

2 Peter (Apostle Peter)

Peter was one of the original 12 disciples. Brash and impetuous, he left the fishing business to follow Jesus and walked with Him for three years. Unlike the Apostles Paul and John, he wrote only two short Letters known as 1st and 2nd Peter. However, many believe much of the Gospel according to Mark originated with Peter. He is acknowledged as the first in the line of Popes established by the Roman Catholic Church. Historians believe Peter was crucified while still a relatively young man. The following quote in his second letter makes it clear he was acutely aware of his impending death, and he wanted others to remember the truth of the Gospel:

“I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.”

(2 Peter 1:13-14)

Question # 6

What effort shall I make to see that after my departure those following me can remember what I leave with them?

Revelation (Apostle John)

John was another of the original 12 Apostles. A contemplative man, he wrote the Gospel of John, and the Letters referred to as 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John and Revelation. John is believed to have cared for Jesus' mother Mary, following his commission from Jesus as He suffered and died on the cross. Contrary to the fate of the other 11 Apostles, John died a natural death, probably in his 90's. For many years he was a prisoner on the isle of Patmos, where he is thought to have written the last book of the Bible, *Revelation*. This book, and the Bible, closes with the great hope of every believer:

*“Behold I am coming soon!
Behold I am coming soon!”*
“Yes, I am coming soon.”
“Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”
(Revelation 22:7, 12, 20)

Question # 7

**How shall I express my hope and expectation that
Jesus is “coming soon”?**

Conclusion

For several years I have been writing booklets which were recently consolidated in the *From Grandpa With Love* series of books on Amazon. Last year I began adding *One-Liners That Changed My Life* at fromgrandpwithlove@gmail.com.

Most people will not write that extensively, but the following comments from an earlier booklet show how important it is to pass on our own Last Message(s) to future generations:

“On January 1, 1876, Sarah Jane Cook, the great, great, great, great grandmother of our great grandchildren wrote the following statement on an ordinary sheet of tablet paper:

I consecrate myself afresh to God, today, laying all upon the altar with a full determination to ever lean upon Jesus and follow Him, and with God’s help to lead a new life. And also with a full determination to pray more earnestly for my boys.

God help me.

Sarah Jane Cook

She died on January 26, 1876, just 26 days later!

For years that framed piece of ordinary tablet paper with those priceless words hung on our bedroom wall. Little did Sarah Jane Cook know her simple witness would encourage her descendants for decades after she was gone!”

***The issue is not so much how much we write,
but that we determine the important things we want to pass on—
and we place them in writing for those who follow!***

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