

Kev's sermon notes for eGroups

Sunday, Jan. 24, 2021

Elevation Church - Broadcasting from Ballantyne Campus – Charlotte, NC USA

Pastor: Pastor Steven Furtick

Sermon Title: "Room to Receive – Part 3 – "Beta Blessings – Appreciate both the Glitter and the Glue – Jesus is the alpha and omega – and we need Him in the Beta blessing as well – the in-between – God gives us certain things in specific seasons – Rely on the spirit and not the structure – It is during the Beta testing that the bugs are worked out – the bait that God uses to provide the blessing."

Elevation Worship:

- My Testimony: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NyH9mDYEck>
- Iykyk
- Authority: www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sX1xXzAO0E
- The Blessing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zp6aygmVzM4>

Scripture for this week:

- **Rev 22: 12 to 14:** Epilogue: Invitation and Warning - 12 "Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. 14 "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.
- **Joshua 5: 11 to 12:** 10 On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover. 11 The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. 12 The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate the produce of Canaan.
- **Gen 12: 1 to 3:** The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. 2 "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."
- **Malachi 3: 10 to 11:** 10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. 11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe," says the Lord Almighty. 12 "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the Lord Almighty.
- **Numbers 11:5:** 4 The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, "If only we had meat to eat! 5 We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. 6 But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!" 7 The manna was like coriander seed and looked like resin. 8 The people went around gathering it, and then ground it in a hand mill or crushed it in a mortar. They cooked it in a pot or made it into loaves. And it tasted like something made with olive oil. 9 When the dew settled on the camp at night, the manna also came down.

- Luke 5: 9 to 11:** Jesus Calls His First Disciples - 5 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. 2 He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. 3 He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. 4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." 5 Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." 6 When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. 7 So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" 9 For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, 10 and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." 11 So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.
- John 32: 3 to 14:** Jesus and the Miraculous Catch of Fish - 21 Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee.[a] It happened this way: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. 3 "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. 4 Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. 5 He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. 6 He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. 7 Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. 8 The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. 9 When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." 11 So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. 14 This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Sermon Title: "Room to Receive – Part 3 – "Beta Blessings – Appreciate both the Glitter and the Glue – Jesus is the alpha and omega – and we need Him in the Beta blessing as well – the in-between – God gives us certain things in specific seasons – Rely on the spirt and not the structure – It is during the Beta testing that the bugs are worked out – the bait that God uses to provide the blessing."

- Please consider joining an eGroup (small group) so you don't have to walk this walk alone? – See www.elevationchurch.cc.**
- Interested in joining Elevation Church: See: www.elevationchurch.cc**
- Interested in leading an eGroup? See: www.elevationchurch.cc**
- Interesting in serving at Elevation Church: See: www.elevationchurch.cc**

- Here Comes Church:
 - Profile of Tanya – leading a women’s eGroup
 - Over 21,000 people are active in eGroups at Elevation Church all over the world – the glue that holds the glitter together – Recall that old preacher quote: “A bible that is falling apart is reflective of a life that isn’t”
 - Elevation Worship has launched a new quieter & softer version of the “Graves to Gardens – Morning and Evening”
- Opening Prayer #1 by Pastor Steven Furtick on 1/24/2021: *“Receive this blessing from the Almighty God – for you and your family – and your children’s children – and for your mind – for your spirit, body, and soul – we are blessed before the feeling - because the blessing from God is more than a feeling – and God’s blessing is not a financial situation or an unfortunate circumstance – and let’s give God a great praise all over the world – we thank God for the blessing of breath in our lungs – the sustainer of all things – He is above every name – His throne is above all thrones and his kingdom endures forever – and there no volatility with this kingdom – and I declare this over your life today – let God invade this space today – the rooms that we normally don’t let God into – this month, we are talking about making room to receive – this is the flow that God has us in – make room for the miracles that God has for us – and this is not as easy as it sounds – because we keep ourselves so psychologically busy – turn your hands to heaven – even while we are full and running over - because the goodness and mercy of the Lord are unlimited – not based on our performance but rather the perfect work of Jesus Christ – and we ask you to bless our nation – although we are uncertain about so many things, we are confident in You – when we put it all in your hands it will always be enough – for you are the great I am – for you are the good shepherd – for you are the true vine – for you are the real bread – for you are a cup that runs over – for you are the fountain that never runs dry – and bless your people today - in Jesus name amen.”*
- I recall a book called the Glitter and the Glue by Kelly Corrigan. See: <https://www.amazon.com/Glitter-Glue-Memoir-Kelly-Corrigan/dp/034553283X>. Book talks about the wife of the family being the glue and the husband of the family being the glitter. Glitter can be kind of annoying because it falls all over everything – and we celebrate glitter and the new things and we don’t celebrate the glue that holds it all together - eGroups are the glue that hold it all together – what good is the glitter of a “shiny” sermon or worship song if it doesn’t stick? And we all need a way for the word of God ‘to stick’ in our lives – the seed that will get in the soil – if you need this e-Glue, go to www.elevationchurch.cc to find a group for you. Get that glue!
- See Rev 22: 12 to 14 – a well-known scripture in church circles.
- Today, I want to talk to you about “Beta Blessings.”
- By “beta” I mean beta version of new un-tested software – or something that is not fully proven or revealed or released – this is a sermon I’ve been thinking about since 2018 – now God has prompted me to preach it and release it
- A “beta blessing” is something that God puts in our lives and at the time we’re not sure if it is even a blessing – because it is still in beta form. This month we are talking about the Israelites that are in between seasons – between Egypt and the grapes of Canaan. Revelations 22 tells us that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega – the beginning in the end – Yes Jesus is the Alpha and Omega - however we need a beta blessing for the spaces in between.

- When the Israelites were in the wilderness, God was still with them – and God is with us now – and God is not waiting for us in some future destination.
- Getting closer to God does not happen when you memorize five Bible books in the future – and we ask God to come back to us the way He did during our initial salvation experience – which is typically overrated in our imagination – because we probably weren't as holy as much think we were.
- When we say that Jesus is the Alpha and Omega – if we are honest we also have to say he is the beta – the space between the Alpha and the Omega – and this is where we need His presence the most – and some of God's greatest blessings are beta blessings.
- Some of God's greatest blessings are in the form of manna while the Israelites are in the wilderness and are in need of God's provision – which literally means "What is it?" or "What it is." - It is What it is.
- **See Joshua 5: 11 to 12. See last week's sermon – "Flat Bread Faith – What God left Out" – sometimes we have to set out to God without knowing all of the details. Even Abraham had to do this in Genesis chapter 12. See Gen 12: 1 to 3 – before he had an "h" in his name. Abram had to abandon his way of thinking before he embarked on a journey. Note how clear God is providing Abram details on what he's leaving but providing very few details on what Abram is going to – this is the beta version – this is where beta blessings are required.**
- This is the original blessing for the nation of Israel - the father of our faith – and God's plan was to bless the whole earth through Israel.
- **And the Lord had such an enormous blessing for Abraham - 2 "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." – while we are so zoomed in in our own lives, note how big a blessing this is.**
- Also note the beta blessings (like beta software) are not released to everybody – you have to sign up for the beta trials.
- Over the last few weeks we encounter the Israelites while they were in the wilderness and while they are in "beta version."
- **While in beta version we always have to work out the bugs. And I wonder if God took his chosen people through the wilderness for 40 years just for the purpose of working out the bugs? As God left some things in our lives in a holding pattern – to bring us into spaces where we are not getting what we prayed for – or things are not happening as fast as we wanted them to – because maybe God wants to get the bugs out of us – so let's pray a prayer over our lives today to permit God to get the bugs out – because we do not want to prematurely release a version of ourselves to the world – a version that is viewed on YouTube or Face-Book by everyone with an opinion – to ensure our final version reflects what God wants to say.**
- I had this sermon on my phone for three years – and God wants me to share it with you right now – the stuff on my phone from three years ago was not wasted – it was just in beta form.
- God tells us there are things that you prayed for – there are things that you asked for – there are things that you need – however, it is in beta.
- A relationship might not be bad – it is just in beta form.
- The song that you might be working on is not a bad song - it's just in beta.
- **And when we get too attached to a beta version of ourselves we tend to put God in a box.**

- **The manna from heaven was not meant to be on the menu permanently for the Israelites – it was a beta a blessing – what God gave them in between - it was a seasonal provision – and when the manna went away in Joshua 5, they thought it was really bad. Here’s an interesting question: are you loyal to something that the Lord used in a prior season – at the expense of something that He’s bringing in this season?**
- About all the ways that we use sermons so that we do not have perseverance? Let this think in. This is not a confirmation for you to quit – but it is a command for you to grow.
- A rabbi wrote this: Our wisdom is distinguishing between those things which remain unchanging in our lives and those changes we need to accept.
- Once Moses had taken the Israelites the furthest they could go – Moses was the person that God gave the Israelites in order to get them to a certain place – the beta version. God gives you instruments – God gives you provision – God gives your manna.
- When Moses led the Israelites to the limits of God’s promise – it was beta – it was not bad – it was in beta.
- Say this this week: It is not bad it is in beta.
- And when the real product is finished as in Joshua five – the product is fully updated.
- We don’t need to keep beta versions forever.
- See Ex 16 – Recall that manna was only good for one day – when the Israelites tried to keep the mana more than one day it spoiled and attracted maggots (bugs). It would stink and rot. What God gave them became infested by their lack of faith.
- When they kept the beta too long, it got bugs. If the Israelites used what they were supposed to use – if they did what they were supposed to do – if they moved to the voice and rhythm of God – there would always be more manna.
- So if we want to watch all of these economic predictors – and consume all of the social conclusions – and listen to all of these talking heads that say the worst things for the sole purpose of just keeping us watching – we will end up getting maggots in our manna.
- What gave us certain things for seasons – and for some of us we need to grow up.
- **Do we embrace the maggots over maturity? Don’t rely on crutches and prior habits to deny yourself what God is trying to tell you – where we dwell on the structure and not the spirit of God. It takes trust to embrace what God has you doing in a new place**
- See Malachi 3:10 to 11 – “10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. 11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the Lord Almighty. 12 “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the Lord Almighty.”
- The scripture is more than just tithing – it is about trust – it’s about trusting God to transform you – it is about trusting God to teach you – it is about trusting God in the transitions.
- God tested his people – it is in testing that the bugs are worked out – where we learn not to be petty and offended – I’m not to be paranoid – but rather to rely on God.
- God says test me this.
- The testing create space in your life – and God tells us that if we do this there will be not enough room to contain it.

- We need to have room to receive what God brings into our lives – and we will be so full that it will keep the pests and bugs out.
- If every square inch of our minds are occupied we cannot create space that we need to create for God.
- Trust God in this space – the space in the wilderness.
- Your kids are buggy because they are still in development – strong will and stubborn kids are in beta form – this may plant the seed for fruitful boldness.
- God is getting the bugs out of my crops this year. What might seem like a burden now will be a blessing in the future.
- Our Vines will produce truth in season.
- How many have a beta blessing working in your life right now - Something God is establishing, revealing, providing, and perfecting in your life?
- We already know Alpha and Omega. We know who started it and we know how it's going to end. Praise God in the beta stage – where we are right now.
- Work the bugs out.
- Get the unbelief out.
- Work the thoughts out.
- So that we have room to receive it.
- It may not look like a blessing – how many have you ever purchased a boat? It was a blessing when you first got it.
- Recall Pastor Furtick's hilarious story of a CD promotion via Columbia House Records - where the first 10 CDs were free at first – free at first are the things that look like a blessing when they come into your house – however they are not.
- Manipulation and pornography are free at first.
- We all have tried to manipulate what God has given us at one time in our lives.
- The fish for the Israelites in Egypt were free at first.
- Let me show you the continuity between the fish in Egypt, the 12 tribes in Israel, and the 12 disciples.
- **Recall in Luke 5 - Peter fished all night and caught nothing. However this was a beta blessing because it set the stage for him to meet Jesus. They went from empty nets to sinking boats.**
- Are you going to have a year of boat sinking blessings?
- And some of the blessings that you receive this year will come in a form that material possessions cannot be exchanged for.
- I declare this year to be the year of boat sinking blessings for some of us – and these blessings will come when you obey - not when you pray. See Luke 5 when Peter was washing his nets from the prior night.
- **Continue to do and continue to serve out of obedience.**
- **Will you have the room to receive boat sinking blessings?**
- We cannot remain in isolation this year – See Luke 5 – Peter needed help from friends to collect all the fish they caught – we have to signal other boats and we have to stay connected to thrive this year.
- **See Luke 5:9-11: Peter is not a bad man he's just in beta form. Jesus knows that we are buggy and whiny. Yes. Jesus blessed them to catch the fish. After the blessing, they put away their**

boats and left everything. The fish was not the blessing. The fish was the bait. What does this mean? How can we be OK with leaving things that are going well in our lives? The catch of fish was what God used to channel their calling – the fish was not the blessing – the manna was just the means to get them to Canaan – the beta and the bait.

- Recall all of the circumstances that Pastor Furtick experienced in college that permitted a relationship to grow with Holly Furtick.
- **The prior thing that you thought was the blessing was only the beta or the bait – just the beginning of something else – you have not seen your best self yet – this is just a rough draft.**
- **God says I have blessings I want to bring to you – and God will use bait and a beta version of yourself to get you to the places that he wants you to go – and may even use the things you hate to bring you into the blessings that you pray for – and this is why we have to keep on surviving and working – and commit to it.**
- After Jesus died on the cross, Peter is still in beta.
- And you think you're supposed to have arrived by now?
- Please do not put that kind of pressure on yourself – we are in beta – and this is not a reason for us to stop growing – it is the reason we need to.
- Don't you want to see what it's like when you are really free?
- **See John 21: 3 to 14 – Peter is going back to beta – going back to Simon – the layers of the prior you. Peter goes back to fish – you have no idea what God is going to do through you – alpha is exciting and Omega is great – beta is really different – middle school and mid-life are both stages where we talk about folks losing their minds. Sometimes the failure is the goal – God says do things a different way to meet those needs that were put there by God – a way that does not make you feel worse – fish that you can eat – things that don't make you feel like crap in the morning – things that don't cause you to retreat into isolation – then Peter experienced another boat sinking blessing.**
- **See John 21: 8 to 14: Jesus says bring the blessing that I just gave you – it will not break the net – Jesus says come and have breakfast with me – Question: which fish did Jesus bless? The fish they just caught or the fish that Jesus prepared? – all of things that we bring to God in order to be better in order to be blessed by God – we find that when we get to the shore and recognize Jesus for who he is – he is already cooking. Have you been fishing all night and you're now frustrated? Are you stuck in a version of you that isn't really you? Today is the release date – for what we have been holding onto – be free from the expectation is that we have placed on ourselves - that did not come from God – how we long to eat the bread that does not spoil – God we praise your right now for the beta blessings.**

Kev bonus: The inauguration ceremony of President Joe Biden started with an invocation prayer delivered by Catholic priest Leo J. O'Donovan, Jesuit, a former Georgetown University President.

Here is the full text of this invocation prayer: Gracious and merciful God, at this sacred time we come before you in need - indeed on our knees. But we come still more with hope, and with our eyes raised anew to the vision of a "more perfect union" in our land, a union of all our citizens to "promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." We are a people of

many races, creeds and colors, national backgrounds, cultures and styles - now far more numerous and on land much vaster than when Archbishop John Carol wrote his prayer for the inauguration of George Washington 232 years ago. Archbishop Carol prayed that you, O creator of all, would "assist with your Holy Spirit of counsel and fortitude the President of these United States, that his administration may be conducted in righteousness, and be eminently useful to your people." Today, we confess our past failures to live according to our vision of equality, inclusion and freedom for all. Yet we resolutely commit still now to renewing the vision, to caring for one other in word and deed, especially the least fortunate among us, and so becoming light for the world. There is a power in each and every one of us that lives by turning to every other one of us, a thrust of the spirit to cherish and care and stand by others, and above all those most in need. It is called love, and its path is to give ever more of itself. Today, it is called American patriotism, born not of power and privilege but of care for the common good - "with malice toward none and with charity for all." For our new president, we beg of you the wisdom Solomon sought when he knelt before you and prayed for "an understanding heart so that I can govern your people and know the difference between right and wrong." We trust in the counsel of the Letter of James: "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." Pope Francis has reminded us "how important it is to dream together... By ourselves," he wrote "we risk seeing mirages, things that are not there. Dreams, on the other hand, are built together." Be with us, Holy Mystery of Love, as we dream together, to reconcile the people of our land, restore our dream, and invest it with peace and justice and the joy that is the overflow of love. To the glory of your name forever. Amen.

This week's Charles Spurgeon Moment (CSM):

Spurgeon's comments on Samuel 11:2: "At that hour David saw Bathsheba. We are never out of the reach of temptation. Both at home and away we are liable to meet with allurements to evil. The morning opens with peril, and the shades of evening find us still in jeopardy. David should have been engaged in fighting the Lord's battles, instead of himself up to luxurious repose, for he arose from his bed at eventide. Idleness and luxury are the devil's jackals and find him abundant prey. In stagnant waters noxious creatures swarm, and neglected soil soon yields a dense tangle of weeds and briars. Oh, for the constraining love of Jesus to keep us active and useful! When I see the King of Israel sluggishly leaving his couch at the close of the day and falling at once into temptation, let me take warning and set holy watchfulness to guard the door. Is it possible that the king had mounted his housetop for retirement and devotion? If so, what a caution is given us to count no place, however secret, a sanctuary from sin! While our hearts are so like a tinderbox, and sparks so plentiful, we need to use all diligence in all places to prevent a blaze. Satan can climb housetops and enter closets, and even if we could shut out that foul fiend, our own corruptions are enough to work our ruin unless grace prevents it. Reader, beware of evening temptations. Be not secure. The sun is down, but sin is up. We need a watchman for the night as well as a guardian for the day. O blessed Spirit, keep us from all evil this night."