

Kev's Guys online Group Sermon notes

Elevation Ballantyne campus

Saturday, Aug 3, 2019

Pastor Steve Furtick

Sermon Title: "The Blessings of Both" – Both Grow Together

YouTube sermon video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzxBm06ITbE>

Elevation Worship:

God of the Promise: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G26HDdqCyGw>

With You: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ouhG6iPhxI>

New Song: You can do all things. Because You Never lost a battle and you never will

There is a Cloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZkmDqk2ivs>

Scripture:

- **Ec 11:5-6:** Ecclesiastes 11 New International Version (NIV) - Invest in Many Ventures: 11 Ship your grain across the sea; after many days you may receive a return. 2 Invest in seven ventures, yes, in eight; you do not know what disaster may come upon the land. 3 If clouds are full of water, they pour rain on the earth. Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there it will lie. 4 Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap. 5 As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things. 6 Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let your hands not be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well.
- **Mathew 13:24 to 30:** The Parable of the Weeds - 24 Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. 26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. 27 "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 28 "'An enemy did this,' he replied.
- "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 29 "'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"
- **Gen 48:13 to 19:** 8 When Israel saw the sons of Joseph, he asked, "Who are these?" 9 "They are the sons God has given me here," Joseph said to his father. Then Israel said, "Bring them to me so I may bless them." 10 Now Israel's eyes were failing because of old age, and he could hardly see. So Joseph brought his sons close to him, and his father kissed them and embraced them. 11 Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too." 12 Then Joseph removed them from Israel's knees and bowed down with his face to the ground. 13 And Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right toward Israel's left hand and Manasseh on his left toward Israel's right hand, and brought them close to him. 14 But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, though he was the younger, and crossing his arms, he put his left hand on Manasseh's head, even though Manasseh was the firstborn. 15 Then he blessed Joseph and said, "May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked

faithfully, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, 16 the Angel who has delivered me from all harm —may he bless these boys. May they be called by my name and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they increase greatly on the earth.” 17 When Joseph saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim’s head he was displeased; so he took hold of his father’s hand to move it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s head. 18 Joseph said to him, “No, my father, this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head.” 19 But his father refused and said, “I know, my son, I know. He too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations.” 20 He blessed them that day and said, “In your[c] name will Israel pronounce this blessing: ‘May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.’” So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh. 21 Then Israel said to Joseph, “I am about to die, but God will be with you[d] and take you[e] back to the land of your[f] fathers. 22 And to you I give one more ridge of land[g] than to your brothers, the ridge I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow.”

- **Mark 1:** A Leper healed – Jesus moved with compassion. Complacency and compassion can’t co-exist.

Sermon Notes – “The Blessings of Both” by Pastor Furtick

- Elevation Church Love Week 2019 recap: Over 300 partners, over 2000 events, and 100,000 hours served. Wow! Simply amazing – and Pastor Furtick preaching at Nash County Prison
- Opening prayer: Declare of this over your life today – anything is possible by the presence of the living God. God is alive and anything can happen in your life. Dear God, please set up residence in our praise today – we thank you for your perfect will – we thank that you establish and accomplish everything that you decree – and now I ask that this will be the time that you reveal miracles and refreshment in your presence for each person – regardless of how old they are or how young they are – it doesn’t matter to me and I know that it does not matter to you – none of that stops you – none of the deters you – none of that intimidates you – please just come on in and do what you want to do – and say what you want to say – where you can shape things and move things – and as we focus our attention on you – flood us with the kind of grace that lets us know that there is nothing that we can do to minimize your presence and your love. Embrace each person – we thank you for faith in this house – we thank you for your spirit – you said that our bellies will flow with living water – we declare in Jesus name that every need will be met by the mighty power and hand of and almighty God. If you believe that, please give Him a great shout of praise.
- What a wonder and awesome time of worship – thank you worship team.
- I have two scriptures to share with you – one of the new Testament and one from the old Testament.
- Today’s message is The Blessings of Both.
- I have so many things to share with you today – and this is something that have been thinking about since early June 2019.
- Hey, thanks for sharing during Love Week 2019.
- I especially want to thank you for those that contribute to this church in meaningful ways without a lot of fanfare or recognition – with your prayers, your giving, and your service – and you just do it for God – not for the approval of others or praise from others. You don’t blow your trumpet and you don’t announce it. You just do it – and not be known for it. It is not just a Nike slogan – it is how churches are built. I don’t know how to say it any more than that – I appreciate you – I really do.

- See Ec 11: 5 and 6.
- See Mathew 13: 24 to 30.
- BTW: By the time that something appears in your life, it has been planted for a little while. There is a difference between the time when it was deposited in the soil and when it showed up in your life.
- Master, did you know sow good seeds? Did you not got to church? Did you not raise your kids right?
- When Jesus was teaching about “The Kingdom of God” – it was a new phrase. It was a new concept. Israel thought of themselves as a Kingdom in a military sense or nationalistic sense.
- **The Kingdom of God is and invisible realm – and it required Jesus to not only explain it but to also demonstrate it – and both are always necessary.**
- Say Both.
- This is why Love Week is so important – those 100,00 hours that we served validate the message that we preach. It is one thing to explain love and it is another thing to hand someone some warm food – or a blanket – or to spend time with someone in need.
- Jesus had to do both - and he had quite a challenge on this hands because he would demonstrate something (like working a miracle) and then he had to explain it – because the people that witnessed the miracle would miss the point.
- Last week, we talked about how Jesus took a McD’s happy meal to feed 5000 men + women and children – and after he fed everyone – the people thought that the miracle was that their stomachs were full – and because they wanted Jesus to be their Burger King – Jesus had to clarify things by stating that that they need to drink my blood and eat my flesh for your sins are forgiven.
- Jesus would also demonstrate it and the explain it so they would understand it.
- Jesus even says that if you see it, but don’t understand it, it will be like a seed that is eaten by a bird – before it has an opportunity to take root in the soil.
- **If the lesson in your heart is not learned during the power of demonstration, you will miss the message.**
- If you receive the demonstration but not the explanation, you will receive the message on the wrong level – and you will always think that the physical thing is the real thing and not understand where it really points to – and not knowing that ever habit in your life started in your heart - leading you to behavior modification - to change something in your heart.
- **Until God enters the soil of your heart, you will not be able to weed out the things that are choking you and replaced by the seed of His word.**
- And Jesus must felt overwhelmed by this process – and he needed his disciples to take His message after he left – and there others that merely come to eat the fries – and He had to separate the two out – and he would have to pull the disciples aside – and say – this is what I meant.
- He had to teach to the crowd at their level and then had to teach the disciples at a different level.
- I can relate to this challenge. Some of you in this church might be able recite Mathew 13 from memory and others might say Mathew who?
- And Jesus was always able to speak to both.
- Jesus would say to a paralytic – your sins are forgiven – and now take up your bag and walk. The reason that He told him to get up and walk was to provide a visible demonstration of a spiritual authority.
- **It is demonstration and explanation – and Jesus is doing both.**

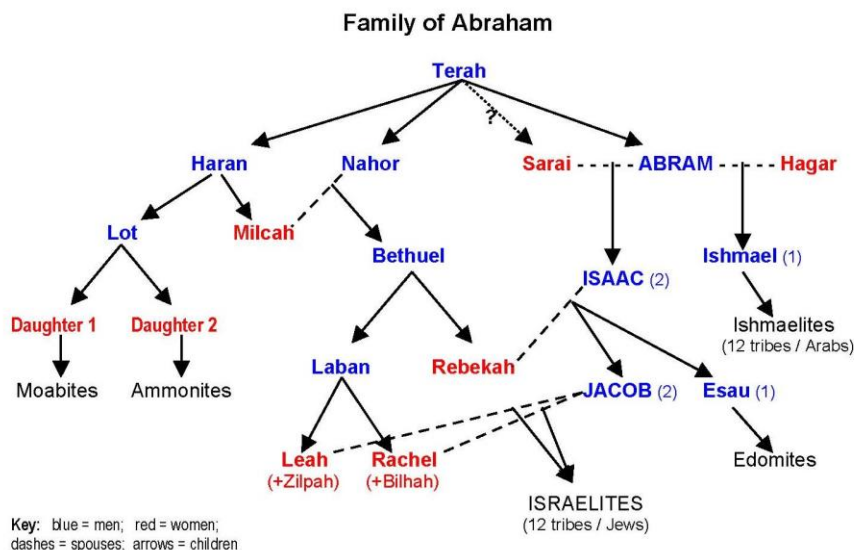
- In the context of the Kingdom of God, Jesus would often have to teach this Eschatology principle (part of theology concerned with the final events of history, or the ultimate destiny of humanity).
- What I noticed about this is that as my devotion to Christ grows – so do the things that distract me – to try to pull me away – vs mere child-like devotion in the grace of God.
- **And so, Jesus is using a parable and uses a symbol to explain a spiritual truth. The master planted wheat and someone else planted weeds. Jesus wants us to understand that both need to grow together. As the ministry of Jesus increased, so did the opposition. As his popularity grew, the more vocal his opponents became. Because both grow together.**
- Recall the story of Pastor Furtick attending Youth Group in Monks Corner, SC led by Rick Barnette (sp??), and after worship, Rick would ask for praise or prayer reports – and some kids would call out an “unspoken praise or prayer” request – which usually involved a person of the opposite sex.
- **In our lives we will often see the following cycle: What will be our prayer request in one season of our life will become our praise report in the next season only to become our prayer request again.**
- There is probably someone here right now expecting a child – and you might even have prayed for God to give you a child – and then you will give birth to this prayer request – and then you praise God for it – and then you start praying for it all over again.
- So what is this? You prayed to have a baby. You praise when the baby is born – and now you pray because you have not slept in 34 days. You pray for the right schools and the right teacher – and then pray for yourselves when your child gets a driver’s license.
- Your prayer request became your praise report that turned back into your prayer request.
- **Consider this: You prayed for your current problems.**
- A Pastor Furtick Classic: Yes, you did – You prayed for the promotion on the job – and the promotion came with people – and people are stupid and lazy and are tardy. You prayed for this.
- Don’t get mad about it now – you prayed for it.
- You need both.
- It is like marrying someone that loves to Lord and you are also attracted to. You need both.
- A Pastor Furtick classic: Most preachers will not say things because they sound carnal and not spiritual. Have some chemistry - You will be looking at each other all of the time. You need both.
- We always want to separate the weeds from the wheat. We always want to separate the good from the bad. We talk about being in a season of blessing right now - or I am going through a really hard season right now. Let me let you in on something: All of us are going through a season of blessing right now and all of us are going through a hard season right now – it just depends on which angle that you catch me from as to what season I am in. If you see on my good side, I appear to be the most blessed man in the USA – full of wisdom - like a flood – projecting the reign of God. And on the other side you will see me yelling at one of my kids just before I came to preach today – I can do both in the same two hours – “call me the transformer.”
- **In describing the Kingdom of God, we read that the wheat was good - and the weeds were bad – but they both grow together – isn’t this so true in our lives – both the opportunities and the responsibilities grow.**
- God wants to take us deeper in our walk with him. In this process, we gain intimacy in Christ – and you will also become aware of your ignorance – because the closer you get to Him, the more you realize the stuff that you still do not know.
- This is why I like Ecc 11.

- Here Solomon chased things that he called vanity.
- In the context of having success and fulfillment – if you have one without the other, it is problematic – if you have success without fulfillment - this could become your ultimate failure – because to chase something that you thought that you wanted – what you thought you wanted – only to ask yourself – well – what do I want now? This is the point that Solomon was writing from.
- He says that there are certain things that you just don't know.
- And Solomon mentions two things in Ec 11. When we are sowing and investing our lives – doing the things that God has called us to do – without know if it was making a difference at all.
- There is so much we do not know.
- If you watch the wind, you will never sow and if you watch the sun you will never reap – we will always find excuses and we will always perceive a situation as not the right time. And Solomon is trying to tell us we still don't know how breath enters the bones of a baby in a womb. Despite all of the great technology today, there is part of the process of human life that we can't explain.
- **Solomon says there is the breath (the spirit – the Hebrew word owha – pronounced ooowha) and the bones. There is the structure and the spirit. If you have structure and no spirit, you will not have life. If you have spirit but do not have structure, you will not have life.**
- In Church, you can pray for the spirit of God to come. However, without structure and capacity to manage what God brings you, there will only be irresponsibility and wishful thinking.
- On the other hand, you can have organization and structure – and charts and resources – and all of things that project the perception that you are successful – but without the spirit – the thing that only God can do – there will be no life.
- As a 14-year preacher, I can have all of the notes and preparation – however, there are somethings that only God can do. Yes, today I had some structure and some scripture to share with you – there is a part of me that says – God if you do not breath on this or you don't blow on this – if you don't do that thing that I can't do – to rip open that façade and speak to someone down deep – then I will just be clanking symbol. I will merely project my voice and not say anything. God, I need you to breath on my life. God if you don't breath on this, I will not be fulfilled – and your will - will not be done.
- **I need both. I need the bones and the breath. I need the structure and the spirit.**
- I need the friends and the enemies.
- I noticed that when Jesus was putting together his disciple dream team, he knew that one of them was the devil and kept him anyway.
- I get John – he even writes in his gospel that he was the one that Jesus loved – now this sounds a bit biased and subjective.
- You need wheat and weeds.
- And you are trying to pull the stuff out that you do not like - If you tear out the weeds, you also can tear out the substance – the very thing that God wants to see how you handle in a particular situation – where the wheat and the tares are intertwined – and sometimes - what God is doing in your life is beneath the surface is intertwined within a greater purpose – do you hear me – the thing that you do not like about yourself is sometimes the think that God is using – and we often ask God to use us – and we ask God to instill His will into our lives – unless we do not like it – and then we say “hey God do this but don't do that” – And what Solomon said and what Jesus said is that you do not know which one is which.

- And so we have to be very careful when we are trying to do our own gardening – because - I don't know about you - but I am not a horticulturist – nor do I have a lot of agricultural experience – and we can lack spiritual maturity to know the difference between the wheat and the tares (weeds) – and we continue to run from things and move some things and resist things – and in the process of pulling out the weeds we accidentally pull out the wheat.
- Yes, Bruce Almighty was a pretty good movie – however this is bad theology and does not work.
- Recall the story of Pastor Steven learning how to do pull ups. He thought that he was making progress until one of his friends told him that there are two parts to every rep – the pull up & the resistance coming back down.
- There is just as much benefit in coming down as there is going up.
- **You need to start so see the things in your life that you perceive to be negative – that might be a crucial function in building your strength and stamina – and there are somethings that you can only learn from God by going down – the resistance phase of a pull up.**
- Peter saw this for the first time when he was walking on water while being supported by Jesus.
- And you do not know the difference between wheat and weeds.
- And you can't do the angles job.
- **Let God sort it out. Keep sowing and stop sorting. Stop judging the experience when it happens. Take some time to see what it is.**
- Some of my successes have been through my failures.
- Some of the things that have produced the most in my life – were the things that I was the most embarrassed about.
- Some in the church recall the song “Come to the Alter.” This song was almost never sung. There were 12 versions of that song – and they all sucked.
- **A Pastor Furtick Classic: Want a deep revelation here? Try this one: Success starts with suck. Because you don't know the difference between wheat and weeds - since seeds can be deceiving.**
- Seeds can look awfully small.
- Seeds can look empty.
- And then they go dormant – and when you don't see it, they multiply.
- Some of the things in your life that you said goodbye to – that you needed to say see-you-later - and don't need to come up again - because we can experience resurrection in other areas of our lives.
- We need both in our lives.
- Paul had both his life.
- Paul had this thing he called a “thorn in his flesh” - he tried to weed it out - and he asked three times to take it away - that's fine if you ask God to take something away - but if he doesn't do it - leave it alone - and here's why you can leave alone - the presence of the weeds will not cancel out the presence of the wheat - what is supposed to grow along with the wheat you should leave alone for a while - and see what it becomes - and see if it bears fruit.
- This thing that is weighing you down - this business that you started - and it turned into a bit of a mess - wait a little while - it might become the seed that others will celebrate in the future - and you will know and God will know that you almost gave up - where the devil will tell you to stop sowing because it is working - you kept sowing - and you continue to love anyway - and you continue to forgive anyway - and you continue to still show up - you went to Scripture even when you didn't feel

like it – continuing to sow even when things weren’t going well - and even tried to weed it out – you didn’t get impatient or immature - and you waited for the will of God to come to pass.

- **Don’t ever stop sowing. Because you don’t know. Solomon tells us that we don’t know the difference between the breath and the bones.**
- We don’t know which sermon God is going to use to touch people - to it makes me mad when I think I prepared a great sermon - that nobody liked -- however that’s not how “breath” operates. Because we always need to be reminded that we need both structure and the spirit of God.
- In some things in your life will surprise you - because you don’t know.
- And Solomon reminds us that both may be good.
- Just like how things happened to Jacob son Joseph.
- See Genesis chapter 48.
- Recall that Joseph wore a coat that was the favor of his father - and this resulted in him getting thrown in the pit to die. The coat reminded Joseph that he was chosen even though his own brothers did not like him.
- **You need both - not everybody is supposed to like you. A Pastor Steven Classic: If everybody likes you - you are doing nothing. If everybody likes you - you stand for nothing. If everybody agrees with you - you are saying nothing.**
- You don’t need everyone to like you.
- A few years ago, I asked God to stop the criticism coming to me - and with that came an important revelation - if God stopped all the criticism - he would also stop the blessing. Because both together.
- Sarcastic comment: I want to be used by God and I want everybody to agree with me - and agree with my decisions and therefore validate my existence. No, you don’t.
- Both grow together.
- I find it remarkable that it was the Ishmaelite caravan that picked up Joseph when he was thrown in the pit to die. This is just like God. He always uses both. Recall that Ishmael was the son that Abraham had - who tried to do things his own way. Isaac was the son of Abraham that did things God’s way. And God still found a way to use the offspring of Ishmael to help Joseph.



- Kev side note as quoted in Wikipedia: *"Ishmael is recognized as an important prophet and patriarch of Islam. Muslims believe that Ishmael was the firstborn of Abraham, born to him from his second wife Hagar. Ishmael is recognized by Muslims as the ancestor of several prominent Arab tribes and the forefather of Muhammad."*
- God will use both - God will use your mistakes to bring about a deliverance in your future - yes God will even use that dumb thing you did - if he is sovereign, he will - it is his job to super-intend your life.
- When David slept with Bathsheba - and after their first child died - their second son was Solomon - who is considered the wisest man that ever lived - who wrote Ecclesiastes - one of the world's best voicemails.
- God is using both in your life right now.
- When Joseph is thrown in prison - which we can all agree was not very fun - he meets a person that eventually gives them access to the Pharaoh of Egypt - where God uses a famine to create favor for His people
- **And when Joseph is finally standing before his brothers in Egypt, he has a revelation - everything that happened in his life was not good - yet everything that did happen in his life was held by the hand of God - so God doesn't just use something that felt good to you - not only the stuff that you praise Him for – not only the stuff that you thanked Him for.**
- **Paul eventually arrived at a situation where he thanked God for the "thorn in his flesh" – to use the things that Paul did not choose - the things that tormented him – that became a mentor that that transformed Paul into who I needed to be - so that Paul learned to rely on the grace of God.**
- It's both the spirit and the structure.
- God is going to use both.
- I promise you this - this is what the cross represents after all - the vertical beam is you & God and the horizontal beam is you & people. You need both.
- Love your God with all your heart soul mind and strength + love your neighbor as yourself. It's both.
- I praise God when I feel it and I praise God when I don't feel it.
- I praise God when I sense Him - and I praise God when I don't sense Him.
- I praise God even when he feels so distant – and I question his presence.
- I praise him in the good times - and I praise him in the bad times.
- I praise him when he does what I ask of Him - and I praise him when he is running four-days late to Lazarus' funeral.
- it's both. It's both pain and purpose. Yet we still continue to ask for stability in our life and that all of our relationships to be harmonious. And God says I need you to learn how to celebrate the wheat even while you're looking at the weeds. Even the enemy serves a purpose. Even the devil works for God. God uses everything that happens to me - there's nothing in your life that will not have to pass through the hand of God by the time it is said and done.
- I saw this picture in Genesis 48 where Joseph's father was present with his son Joseph - where Jacob was at the end of his life - and as we all know that Jacob was an interesting character - he had two names – Jacob (deceiver and heel grabber) and Israel (Prince). Which one was he? Answer: both.
- If you are really honest with yourself, you would say that you are both as well.

- So please don't judge people - even when their shortcomings are exposed – without the grace of God, who knows where you'd be.
- When Jacob was about to die, Joseph wanted to get his kids in front of Jacob - so they could be blessed - and Joseph brought two of his sons to Jacob/Israel - and sat on Jacob's knees for a minute - and the sons have significant names - Manasseh means to forget (meaning I'm going to forget the pain and memory of Egypt) and Ephraim means fruitful (meaning it is amazing that God produced such fruit in the hardest of circumstances).
- When Jacob was about to bless the boys, he did something weird. See Genesis 48:13 – 19 - When Jacob/Israel crossed his hands, he violated protocol and tradition - because he was supposed to bless the oldest child first.
- **God doesn't do things the way we expect him to do things. We don't get what we deserve from God - we get his grace and his mercy.**
- You experience grace of God - something you didn't deserve - like Ephraim being blessed first.
- Do you know why you and I can ever be jealous? You know why we don't have to take offense when God blesses someone else? Because God is big enough to bless both of us.
- And you know this.
- **It's above your pay grade to go pluck stuff yourself. Don't engage in a self-improvement project without God's help. Otherwise you'll mess up the masterpiece.**
- God says it's all working together for the good.
- Recall our new song: You never lost a battle. You never lost a battle. You can do all things. Because You Never lost a battle and you never will.