

Kev's Guys eGroup Sermon notes

Pastor Furtick

Sermon Title: "When Better Feels Backwards"

Sunday, Sun. Sept. 22, 2019

Elevation Worship:

Echo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8aggyGlaD8>

Authority:

Hallelujah Here Below: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWpSa_fkT84

Scripture

- Psalm: 9:1-2: Psalm 9: 1: I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. 2 I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High.
- Hebrews: 6: 9 to 13: 9 Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are convinced of better things in your case—the things that have to do with salvation. 10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. 11 We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized. 12 We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised. 13 When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, 14 saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." 15 And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.
- Hebrews: 1:3 to 1:4: Hebrews 1 New International Version (NIV) God's Final Word: His Son: 1 In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. 4 So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

Sermon notes - "When Better Feels Backwards" by Pastor Furtick

- **Opening prayer: Father we thank you for your presence today - we thank you for your kindness which is our confidence in you – and we approach your throne in the name of Jesus – and we can come boldly and find help in times of trouble. We give you your praise today because no one else deserves it - everybody in this room has flaws and failures - and we come in your presence today to find your perfection - that is so elusive in our everyday lives - and we thank you that you accept us - as who we are - we don't have to dress up, and add makeup, or transform one thing in our lives – who we are right now is welcoming you in our presence - we thank you for it - we clap our hands for this - where excited about this - Lord I ask you now - in the name of Jesus - and I was taught to boldly ask you - if there any broken hearts here today that you would bind them - that if there anyone under the attack by the enemy, that you would stay and still his or her hand on their lives - that you would fight for those whom are weakened and defenseless - and give strength to the weary - and give grace to the humble - we ask all this not because we are good enough to deserve it - but because you are so good and bless us - bless your people today Lord - bless them at every location - bless us so that we worship you God - and whatever storm that we are going through – your glory rattles through the noise. We pray that a flood of your grace would sweep through this place - to rearrange our minds - until the only thing left at the center is the purpose of God - and we love you and we adore you - and we anticipate great things in your presence - we thank you for seeing us through another week - we**

thank you for giving us breath - and we worship you because of who you are - holy is your name and worthy are you to be praised – Amen.

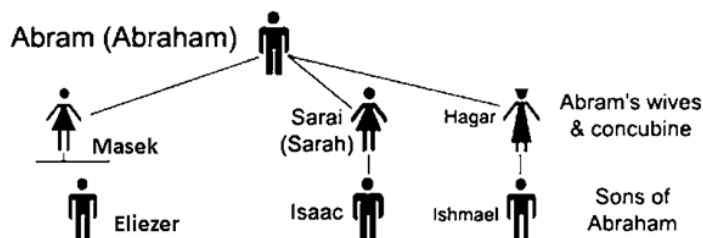
- See Hebrews 6:9
- In this context in Hebrews, some are falling away and giving up - this message is for Jewish people that converted to Christianity.
- And some are going back to old systems of thought because things are proving to be too challenging for them.
- The writer of Hebrews says not you! Not you! Where the writer of Hebrews says - not you beloved - we are sure better things - things that belong to salvation.
- With God's help, I want to preach to you today on the subject of *"When Better Feels Backwards."*
- And I pray that this message will encourage you.
- **2nd prayer: God if I share my opinion today, it will be close to worthless. If I share human wisdom today, it will have a short shelf life. But your word is eternal - speak now Lord. We are listening - give us open hearts – so that we receive the things that you desire to say to us - in Jesus name amen.**
- On the Enneagram Personality Test, people are categorized on the scale of 1 to 9.
- I'm a 1 - someone who is a perfectionist - the motto of a type 1 Enneagram Personality Test is "it will always be better"
- I thought about how this can be such a wonderful thing - if you trying to make something great or create something special. However, it can be such a horrible way to approach everyday life - That it could always be better.
- Consider the one person that came up to me after we baptized over 2,000 people one day - and his comment was "Wow! Your water bill must have been through the roof." Really? Is water consumption this biggest concern?
- **Always looking for "how things could be better" isn't necessarily the right posture to live our lives.**
- I know type 1s are very annoying - however don't you want a perfectionist to design the airplane your flying on? Or would you prefer the type of person that glued on the air wings - not quite straight?
- **It is indeed progress to seeking perfection - yet the byproduct in our quest for perfection – we fill our minds with ways that could be better - not realizing that some of the best things in our life - not the things we asked or prayed for – but the things that we are currently working on.**
- The challenge for the author of Hebrews - is that he's writing to a group of Christians whose lives are getting worse. They have accepted Jesus as the Messiah - and this has caused all of their Jewish counterparts to think that they are crazy - that they have absolutely lost their minds following the teachings of a carpenter - who was crucified on a Roman cross - and so now the writer of Hebrews is writing to encourage them not to retreat and not to go back.
- **Don't go back to the old way of doing it - because the new way is better.**
- **And for the Christians in Rome that are about to face severe persecution from Nero - this unfamiliar territory of trying to learn to live by this thing called grace and faith – where you are constantly being tempted to live by logic - and calculation - and what is fair - the temptation to live by control when God is directing you to surrender - and there is the temptation to go back to the old way.**
- The writer of Hebrews is telling this people - don't go back because Jesus is better. In fact, he tells them 13 times in the book of Hebrews.
- The Greek word is kreittón -- better. It means better. It's translated in several different ways in English – superior, supreme - but mostly translated to be better - better in quality - better in substance - by comparison Jesus is better.
- **Jesus is better because he made a better covenant than the old covenant - a covenant is an oath - God didn't make an agreement with humanity (this time) - God made an agreement with His son - God knows**

that we have a hard time holding up to our end of the bargain - so rather than make an agreement with our fickle selves, God made an agreement with his faithful son who is obedient even unto death on the cross.

- He did better.
- **We have a better hope - not just the hope we have when things are leaning in our direction - but a kind of hope that is an anchor for our sole - it's a better hope - because an anchor works better when it's on the bottom. Surface hope is only the kind of hope that floats - and when things are ok and you feel pretty good – but, there's a better hope – hope that gets down to the bottom - and it doesn't fully function and serve its intended purpose until it is bottomed out.**
- You have a better hope in Jesus - because he's better.
- Better covenant - better hope - better promise.
- **The Bible says that Jesus had a better ministry - where his blood speaks a better word - so when condemnation rises-up in your heart to tell you what you are not - remember for a moment who Jesus is. He went into the holy of holies and didn't shed the blood of bulls and goats (like the Old Testament) - but the blood of his very own perfect body for your sake - when his blood hit the mercy seat, it spoke over your life - a hope that is better - and does not matter what has been - because the future is better.**
- And these Christians in Rome that have lost so much - are asking this question: if Jesus is this good, why is my situation getting worse?
- Important point: Better is subjective.
- Pastor Steven humorous classic: some things are better objectively: For example, Kendrick Lamar vs Jay Cole - one is better. IOS vs. android - iOS is far better. Some things are just better - Clemson Tigers - better than everybody else this football season - Krispy Kreme versus Dunkin' Donuts: you can't even need to have the conversation - No prophesying over your future today - an original glazed hot dozen tray of Krispy Kreme far surpasses Dunkin' Donuts - I will prophesy today that the carbohydrates will never come your way - It will bless you.
- **When it comes down to things that really matter in life, I think we all know that better depends on our perspective. It is very subjective.**
- Some people's lives are better than yours because you only see the parts of their lives that they show you - they might have a better house, but, I wonder what goes on inside - and you don't know which is better.
- If you live long enough - you will realize that the people you spend most of your life envying might actually be miserable.
- Better is not something that you can actually measure based on what you see with your eyes.
- We all say that we have got to get the iPhone 11 - yet we don't even like the texts we receive from people on the old phone that we have.
- **The writer of Hebrews goes all the way back to get the people to move forward.**
- **You are better - just look we are started. Do you remember when you weren't even going to church? Consider the thoughts that you no longer act on? Consider the temptations that you now resist?**
- **It is both subjective and relative.**
- Look at you now? You now have a church pen! Yes, you stole it during a worship experience - the least you stole it from a church.
- Tell someone I'm doing better - take a look at your bloodline and what you have been able to become.
- Better compared to what?
- Yes, the sermon could be better - speaking on behalf of God - the gap between what He knows and what I say will always be a big one - so I understand that this sermon could always be better.
- And this torments me sometimes.
- Recall that the writer of Hebrews is writing rather eloquently to believers that are very familiar with the established religion in the Hebrew culture.

- They came from religious system that was not manufactured out of a meth lab.
- They are not being tempted to go back to the world - they are being tempted to go back to an old religious system - and fall away from grace.
- The writer of Hebrews tells his people that they should be further along than they are now. He tells them that they should be teachers by now - yet they are still dealing with the basics.
- And then the writer of Hebrews says that if they fall away from grace they can never come back – and this depressed me - until I realized what the writer was really saying - when you get grace, you can never really fall away - and what he's teaching them - like a tennis instructor will do - is to switch their grip.
- Recall humorous story of Pastor Steven explaining how we had to unlearn all his bad habits in tennis before he could play the game better.
- **Sometimes in order to get the better - you have to go backwards.**
- Sometimes in order to get the better - you have to go through bad - and I'm preaching this to someone who feels that things have been going backwards.
- **The thing about it is: when God shows you a new grip called grace - for a little while in your life, it is harder for you - because you are used to controlling things - and manipulating things - and when you get something new - even if it's better - your first reaction is have this thing get on your nerves.**
- **God will do a new thing in our lives - and God will be teaching us to forgive - and be teaching us to get over offenses - and he will be teaching us to trust him - and God will be teaching us how to find different ways to connect to joy - and God will be teaching us to not be so fake - and God will be teaching us not to live by our feelings.**
- When God fixed our grip and we see our shot going over the fence instead of in the box - we start thinking - I wonder if I would be better off doing this the old way?
- So, we go backward instead of moving forward - into better.
- The writer of Hebrews says you can't go back because you have something better.
- When we get depressed, we stop believing this.
- When we get uncomfortable, we stop believing this.
- We go back to trying to grip life like we used to.
- **We have to go backwards in order to get better - we have to go through some dark seasons to get better - we have to understand that sometimes in our lives, loss is the way to gain.**
- **We have to be comfortable enough in our lives to know that - the most painful moments are the most purposeful moments.**
- **We have to be comfortable in her own lives to stop comparing ourselves to people that are not meant to be the standard anyway - Jesus is better.**
- **I know some of you are intimidated because you are not as good as a Christian as other people in this room.**
- **Here's something important in being a better Christian: Memorizing Scripture doesn't necessarily mean you're a better Christian - it just means you have a good memory. The people that crucified Jesus had a very good memory and they could recite 600+ laws in the Old Testament.**
- **Better is relative to purpose.**
- I walked into Guitar Center and asked the person behind the counter - which software was better for making beats for my son instrument - the person responded, it all depends on what you want to use it for - which depends on how you intend on utilizing the software.
- Better is relative to purpose.
- Some of you think that everyone else is better - and smarter - and taller.
- Maybe God needed someone like you to display his wisdom - maybe God needed someone like you that was hopeful enough to say that it's not I but God.

- By the way if Jesus were to walk into this room today, none of us would have enough clout to put on a fashion show - none of us will be able to roll out our righteous deeds - we've all have sinned and fallen short of God - and grace is a way of life because you need him - and I need him.
- His blood was enough for you and me - if it cleansed Billy Graham, it can cleanse me too.
- And the fact that Jesus is better does not mean that life at times will not get worse.
- So, we need a new definition of better.
- **Better is not always higher - what is better means going deeper?**
- **What if better is not always a feeling? What if it's more like a foundation?**
- **What if better is not always what God is doing for you - but rather what God is doing through you?**
- They didn't recognize Jesus in the form of a baby - because they were waiting for something better.
- Then didn't recognize Jesus when he was led away silently by his accusers.
- **Is it possible that better is right in front of us? And we don't even recognize it. And so, we don't receive it.**
- Some of us are so used to bad that we reject better when it comes.
- Sometimes backward feels better - because it feels familiar.
- Sometimes we go to back to bad relationships because they feel better.
- **Some of us say that we need to go back to our old grip.**
- This is what Abraham did - the father of their faith.
- God told him he needed to do things a certain way, but Abraham thought another way was better.
- And Abraham slept with the servant of his wife Sarah – and had a baby with the servant - that was on a different timetable vs. God - and Abraham thought his way was a better than God's way.



- **The writer of Hebrews shows the people how much better is to wait for the promises of God.**
- And as the Hebrew people are tempted to walk back from what they walked into - as their situation seems to get worse - the writer reaches back to Abraham - before Abraham and Sarah had Isaac (the child of promise) – Abraham got tired of waiting - he had the right word but the wrong womb.
- And I know why he did this - because he came from a place called Ur.
- And so are we - not geographically anyway.
- **Abraham was from Ur - and we are from Er.**
- **Because anything that God does in our life - we just have to get on our phones to find something that is Er than us – bettEr, richER, strongER, happiEr, thinnEr, cutEr, and smartEr.**
- All you have to do is watch a commercial on TV and conclude your back to the land of Er.
- We all say things like: Life would be better if _____. If I was famous or significant and people knew my name – Oh really, do you think that would be better? Ever see a celebrity commit suicide? Are you sure this is what better really is?
- And we say things like: If I had more money I would be happier - or really? Are you sure about that? Have you ever met a miserable rich person?
- **It not just about the people in Rome that are being persecuted - you and I are being drawn back to the land of Er - and we continue to compare ourselves to others - that were never meant to be our standard.**

- **The only standard that is worthy of comparison is the full potential of Christ in you - in the hope of glory.**
- **And we don't understand how good it already is.**
- **We are forgiven - we are set free - we are redeemed - we are breathing - we are walking/talking examples of the miracle of God - I release this over your life - it is already better.**
- You can give God your thanks right now for His goodness.
- **Don't let your quest for better miss the grace of God that is already present in your life.**
- It could always be better - but look what you have right now.
- And look what He did - He did not treat me as my sins deserve - it's already better.
- **And I'm so interested in how this writer constructs this argument. He talks about the whole story of Jesus Christ and his glory. And he doesn't provide an introduction - he gets right to business. He's giving us what so many of us need in our lives - a frame of reference.**
- When the enemy start speaking, you lose all sense of reference as to where you are in your life - and you forget how good grace is - because you all you think about is how bad things are.
- See Hebrews 1.
- He is beginning to construct the argument - by introducing the word better the first of 13 times in this epistle.
- The writer of Hebrews says - I am convinced of better things for you.
- The writer explains that many years ago God spoke to the prophets - but in these last few days God spoke to us through his son - whom he appointed to be heir of all things - this is better.
- The prophets were good, but Jesus is better.
- The old way was good, but the new way is better.
- Dunkin' Donuts is good, but a hot Krispy Kreme dozen is better.
- In the exact imprint of his nature is better, he upholds the universe by the power of his word.
- **See Hebrews: 1:3 to 1:4: Hebrews 1 New International Version (NIV) God's Final Word: His Son: 1 In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. 4 So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.**
- **What surprised me about vs. 4 was not that the writer says that Jesus is better than the Angels - he made the Angels so it stands to reason that He is better than the Angels - there's nothing in your life that God has given that he is not greater than - don't worship the gift, worship the giver.**
- **The giver is the source. The gift is the resource. Better covenant, better word, better resource.**
- He's better than popularity. Jesus is better than man's praise. He's better than what you can get from some people - he's better than what you can put in your body that makes you feel better for five hours.
- So how did Jesus become better as stated in Hebrews 1?
- I know from my studies that Jesus did not improve his character.
- I know from my studies that Jesus was immutable (could not be changed) - however he did get better - and people got better.
- In verse 3 in Hebrews chapter 1, explains of God became a man. What is better a God or man? God. The right interpretation is that Jesus was revealed as better. He did not get better. And how did he do it? We think of better is when we climb up - but Jesus is not Drake - he did start from the bottom - he started in a celestial space - that is untouched by the temporal - he started in eternity and came into time - he started on the Road in divinity and glory - and went into flesh and shame. Hebrews says that he was the radiance in the

glory of God - he was the exact imprint of His nature - so how to become better? He purified our sins - and then sat down.

- **For anybody that's been dealing with shame and you feel like you're going backwards - because you keep slipping and because you keep stumbling - and you feel like going backwards - know this - Jesus went backwards so that we could see that He is better.**
- He came down to left us up.
- If you haven't been feeling well lately - and some things have been subtracting lately - I want to declare today that you are getting better backwards - God's going to do it in you - he is preparing you.
- **Sometimes you have to get better by going backwards. Sometimes you have to switch the grip and know that that it is grace and mercy and not your effort – and not your ability to walk in perfection - we are getting better backwards - we are getting better by the power of those things that we endure - and we refuse to go back - when what I have is better - make that declaration today - what I have today is better.**
- DL Moody (the great evangelist) was talking to a critic - the man did not like his preaching because he made too many grammatical errors – and the man spoke better English than DL Moody - but just because you know better English doesn't make you a better preacher. And even when the man criticized, DL Moody responded with humility – and when he was approached and told that the man did not like the way he gave invitations (*no Internet courage back then - the man had to confront DL Moody face-to-face*) - DL Moody responded by saying I don't like how I do invitations either - and I probably need to find a better way - then DL Moody asked the man: how you do it? And the man said I don't. I don't have a way. DL Moody responded by saying - well then - I like mine better then.
- **I know it's not pretty sometimes – and other people's progress can make you revert back to past ways when you compare yourself to the wrong standard - in the presence of God and in the presence of Jesus – who is greater than all things - spoken not only from eternity - from he who knew no sin - became sin - that we may become the righteousness of God. Jesus says don't get discouraged in your life - don't get discouraged in your marriage and don't get discouraged while watching other people's marriage - don't get discouraged by what you don't have - but instead declare over your life today - relative to my purpose - there is not a better person to be on the earth in position and on assignment – and humbly before the presence of God - knowing the fact that you can't do this on your own - is what makes things better in this world - in this world of approving - in this world of Er.**
- Don't miss things while chasing this place called Er.
- God's name is not the great I-Er.
- He is the great I am.