

Kev's sermon notes for eGroups

Sunday, Nov 29, 2020 at 9:30 AM

Broadcasting from Ballantyne Campus – Charlotte, NC USA – **with a live audience**

Pastor: Levi Lusco – see: <https://levilusco.com/>

Sermon Title: "I woke up like this - Believing in God's Favor – Two biblical boat stories – Fishing with Favor - There is always more that you can do with what you have in front of you - Both Jacob and Peter were amazed, pulled in, lifted-up, invested, and forgiven - wake up in His control and in His command – Here is the closing question: What rest and peace will dwell in your life as you enter 2021 with God favor on your life?"

Scripture for this week:

- **Gen 28: 10 to 20: Jacob's Dream at Bethel** - 10 Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. 11 When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. 12 He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 13 There above it[c] stood the Lord, and he said: "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. 14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. 15 I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." 16 When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it." 17 He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven." 18 Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. 19 He called that place Bethel, though the city used to be called Luz. 20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear 21 so that I return safely to my father's household, then the Lord will be my God 22 and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."
- **Gen 35: Jacob Returns to Bethel** - 35 Then God said to Jacob, "Go up to Bethel and settle there, and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau." 2 So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes. 3 Then come, let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone." 4 So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had and the rings in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem. 5 Then they set out, and the terror of God fell on the towns all around them so that no one pursued them. 6 Jacob and all the people with him came to Luz (that is, Bethel) in the land of Canaan. 7 There he built an altar, and he called the place El Bethel, because it was there that God revealed himself to him when he was fleeing from his brother. 9 After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him again and blessed him. 10 God said to him, "Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel." So he named him Israel. 11 And God said to him, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will be among your descendants. 12 The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I

will give this land to your descendants after you.” 13 Then God went up from him at the place where he had talked with him. 14 Jacob set up a stone pillar at the place where God had talked with him, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it. 15 Jacob called the place where God had talked with him Bethel.

- **Luke 5:** Jesus Calls His First Disciples - 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.
- See Ep 5: 13 – 14: 3 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. 14 This is why it is said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."
- **John 21:** Jesus and the Miraculous Catch of Fish - 21 Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. 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.

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and in His command – Here is the closing question: What rest and peace will dwell in your life as you enter 2021 with God favor on your life?

- Please consider joining an eGroup (small group) so you don't have to walk this walk alone? – See [www.elevationchurch.cc](http://www.elevationchurch.cc).
- Interested in leading an eGroup? See: [www.elevationchurch.cc](http://www.elevationchurch.cc).
- **Here comes church:**
  - Year-end commitment offering – Recall video of Pastor Furtick and Holly Furtick for a year end offering – to give to the expansion in the movement of God – This year end offering is called **“The Favor Offering”** - that ends on 12/13/2020. – See Luke 4:19 – The year of Lord's Favor – where the favor of God is not dependent on your circumstances. See Luke 4: 18 to 19: *“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”*
  - These week's focus: Focus on Elevation Worship – Jan 15, 2020 live recording at Ballantyne campus – and the Song “The Blessing” birthed to life in Feb. 2020 and then released to YouTube – and then translated into many languages – followed by the release of “Rattle” in April 2020 – followed by release of “Graves and Gardens” album – with over 235 million views globally.
  - When the global pandemic hit, there was both faith and fear – and by the favor of God elevation church was able to donate \$9 million this year to reach partners – over 600K meals – over 30K volunteers serving over 8k hours – over \$500K for disaster relief - \$150K of flood supplies – over 500K tablets to inmates this year – over \$100K to church plants.
- **Opening prayer by Levi Lusco: Thank you Elevation Church for leading the body of Christ through this global pandemic – In Pastor Furtick's sermon “Stop Wasting the Rain” he tells us to be “stewards of our storms” – oh and I think this is great insight and help show how you've led the body of Christ in 2020 – through the pivots – through the sermons – through the giving – and through your worship music – I am grateful how this church has stewarded the storm with two songs – The first song being the “The Blessing” - a lullaby when we needed a hug from God the most during this pandemic – God's way of putting a hug around His children – and tell us that things are going to be ok. The 2<sup>nd</sup> song was the wake-up call for us called “The Rattle” – telling us all that we can't stay asleep forever and need to wake up. 2020 has been your time to shine – and many are drafting on in your wake. In the might name of Jesus. Amen.**
- **New book by Jenny Lusco – “Fight to Flourish”**
- The Favor Offering ends on 12/13/2020.
- There are many boat stories in the bible. The biggest boat story is Noah and the smallest boat story is Moses (in a basket) on the Nile river. Jesus got in a boat so many times teaching that the sea of Galilee is often called the fifth gospel. 18 out of 34 of Jesus' miracles occurred on this lake.
- The title of today's sermon is “I woke up like this” – and there are two angles to this – one is a false sense of humility where are you are Beyoncé and you say I just woke up like this. And there are other times when are embarrassed because we really say “I just woke up like this.”
- Recall funning story of Pastor Lusco sleep walking while in Israel.
- See Gen 28: 10 to 21.

- Jacob was embarrassed and was at the end of himself.
- Jacob woke up like this.
- Gens 28, Jacob has ruined his life – where he is at rock bottom – and has nothing and is in the middle of nowhere – he has burned every bridge and used up every favor – Jacob jumped to the wrong conclusion – unlike like John the Baptist – Jacob concluded that he squandered what was given to him as a descendent of Abraham.
- When we live a life of manipulation – always taking advantage of people like Jacob did – we eventually reach a point of estrangement from others.
- **See Gen 30:30 and vs. 43: 29 Jacob said to him, “You know how I have worked for you and how your livestock has fared under my care. 30 The little you had before I came has increased greatly, and the Lord has blessed you wherever I have been.” – 43: 43 In this way the man grew exceedingly prosperous and came to own large flocks, and female and male servants, and camels and donkeys. He is no longer a man on a run – as his father prophesized on him – He become two companies – both Jacob and Israel – See Gen 35 – and Jacob got to be one of the links in the chain that God was connecting – where Jesus builds a church where not even the gates of hell would prevail against it.**
- Kev’ bonus study as quoted in Ligonier Ministries: “From Jacob to Israel: “He said to him, ‘What is your name?’ And he said ‘Jacob.’ Then he said, ‘Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed’” (Gen. 32:27-28).
  - God asks the patriarch to reveal his name before He favors him (v. 27). Do not discount the importance of this question and Jacob’s response.
  - Despite his sin, the Lord has blessed Jacob (30:25–43; 31:9), but he must fully submit to God for this blessing.
  - Jacob yields to the Lord when he surrenders his name.
  - The Lord does not let Jacob’s past define him. Instead, He forgives and no longer hold’s Jacob’s sin against him.
  - He renames Jacob Israel (32:28), which loosely means “El (God) fights.” In the history of the nation of Israel, the Lord fought with and for His people (Ex. 14; Jer. 1:13–19). He also warred against Israel when He judged her through pagan armies (Judg. 2:11–14; Jer. 21).
  - Jacob’s new name hints at this future, but we are also told he is called Israel because he has prevailed in his struggle with God and men (Gen. 32:28).
  - Understanding that the Lord wrestles with us whenever we are tempted or face trouble helps us answer this question.
  - He allows trials without being guilty of sin (for our good, Rom. 8:28). Jacob prevailed in this battle by admitting His guilt and absolute dependence on the Lord, clinging to Him with all his might.
  - Such cleaving is the only way we can prevail with the Lord and trust Him to work for our good even when life is tough.”
- Jacob was two companies + different sons from many wives – which I shall leave for another sermon.
- **What did Jacob do to become who he was? Did Jacob take a 12-week revitalization course? Did he do something that involved exotic supplements? Were essential oils involved? No. How did he change? He woke up like this – and not based on who he was – it was based on an encounter**

– Jacob is not responsible for the change in his situation – He woke up like this – Jacob was dead and became alive – he was a narcissist – He experienced a revelation – The heavens opened up for him – It was not Jacob's decision – God change and blessed Jacob – Jacob woke-up profoundly amazed and woke up to a ladder – because he relegalized that he was no longer alone – and he now had a pathway to heaven – a tower of sorts that descends from Heaven to earth – God initiated a latter from Heaven down and not earth up – and Jacob experienced the revelation because we woke up like this.

- Bethel = the house of God or house of El.
- In Gen 11, the tower of babble was an attempt to reach God – this was a false gate to heaven. The tower of babel was trying to get to transcendents and to healing and it didn't work. And we still have towers of babble to today – using heroin or money to get to place we can't reach on our own – and some of us even think today that if we just stack more Ben Franklin's on top of more Ben Franklin's will finally get there.
- When God initiates a latter from Heaven down (and not earth up), Jacob realized how heaven really works – this is the correct gate of Heaven – and Jesus is the ladder that has descended down from heaven.
- Recall John 1 – When Jesus tells Nathaniel – I saw what you did under the fig tree. Jet Nathaniel still experienced the revelation – not earned but solely on the mercy and grace of Jesus Christ.
- Jacob was included – and he had an important part to play – and we have an important part to play in this church – and we get to be a part of the plan to change the world – and we get to experience this grand master plan.
- Jacob was pulled in – Jacob was included – Jacob was also invested – to have skin in this game – and at the time of the decision he was broke and could only place a pillar (the first stone) at Bethel – he did not let what he didn't have stop him from doing what he could do – he couldn't crash a bottle of champagne on the side of a new church because it did not exist – but yet, he was able to see what was to become – and he saw what was going to be spread out all over the world.
- When Jacob committed a 10<sup>th</sup> of all future wealth, he was now safe to bless – with his future wealth, he was fully invested in the stock market – the live-stock market that is.
- **Generosity is the only thing that can relieve us from the stranglehold that money has over us. The love of money and the desire to be rich will creep into your soul and pierce you with many sorrows – and none of us is immune to this temptation and seduction of money – and the hypnotizing power of the deceitfulness of riches – and will choke away your desire to live with God – and drain you of spiritual power.**
- And with generosity we stab the idolatry of greed in the heart.
- **Money will sneak in and get you to build a tower of babel all over again – money will sneak in and cause you to build your own kingdom once again – who do you honor the most?**
- **Recall George Washington Carver – he saved the agricultural south – by added peanuts to the cotton fields to replenish nitrogen in the soil – it is not what you are missing – you have to plant some generosity into the ground to restore your soil. In fact George Washington Carver invented over 325 uses of peanuts – what can you do with a peanut? That should be the motto of Elevation Church – there is always more that you can do with what you have in front of you.**
- There are 325 things you can do with the Spirit of God to enrich your life.

- **And every time you sow into God's word there is both protection and purpose – keeping you focused on a mission of what God called you to do – let God use your boat – because we have unfinished business.**
- See Luke 5: 1 to 11. Who do you call when you are in trouble? Do you have any partners to signal to? Do you have someone to help you – Like and eGroup? Participate and get involved. Peter had fished all night – and he woke up like this – and I believe God wants to use your boat to wake people up.
- **See Ep 5: 13 – 14: “3 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. 14 This is why it is said: “Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” And I believe that God wants you to see your part to play – the significant calling on your life is to grow your business – to scale your wealth – and be protected by the purpose of whatever God has for you – and to do so with the vision - in the explicit intention of trust in God.”**
- And in Jesus's case he use the most effective communication tool available to him – the amplification of his voice over a body of water so that more people could hear what he had to say.
- Our mission is to get the word to more people.
- God has called you to thrive and God has called you to excel – and protect you from the idolatry of greed – and God calls us to expand the influence of this house – so that more people can know the goodness of God.
- **Two fishermen on the sea of Galilee joined the ministry of Jesus Christ and left their fishing careers behind – Josephus the historian tells us that there were over 230 fishing enterprises on the sea of Galilee at the time of Jesus – and we can assume that some were probably saved – and their place of ministry continued to be their profession – sometimes the only thing that requires more faith than going is to stay – to be a blessing for others – at your job or at your studio – we have important work to do.**
- Recall that WWII Higgins Boat discussion by Pastor Lusco. See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LCVP\\_\(United\\_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LCVP_(United_States))
- June 6, 1944, 150K soldiers landed on five beaches in northern France – and who was responsible for this audacious victory? Patton? Churchill? Dwight D Eisenhower said this during an interview with David Ambrose at Gettysburg PA and assigned credit for the WWII victory: “Peter Higgins was the one that won the war for us.”
- Peter Higgins was a boat builder from New Orleans – that had a shallow draft and a protected propeller - that could be beached easily – and he was the first person to hire blacks & whites and men & women and pay them all the same – his boats were needed to execute the largest amphibious landing in all of history – and soldiers needed a connection – they needed a ladder – to carry a whole platoon of 35 men or 12 men and a jeep.
- In order to accomplish this Peter Higgins had to scale his operation from one factory to eight factories and employ more than 25,000 employees – and stressed a sense of urgency to all of this employees.
- **We have work to do – we have things to do – and do this with urgency. One businessman can change the world – over 8,000 Higgins boats were used in the D-Day invasion – what you do and what you build can having supernatural impact on history.**



- See Luke 5: 4 – the KJV version - 5 *“And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, 2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. 3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. 4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. 5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.”*
- The command was plural but the obedience was singular – meeting Peter was going through the motions – this found all over the bible – strike the arrows, fill the jars, and dig the ditches.
- **What mercy and grace do you want to see flood into this church next year? When God works in our world, it's never about His ability - it's always about our capacity – God can't fill what is not made available.**
- Both Jacob and Peter were amazed, pulled in, lifted-up, invested, and forgiven.
- The boat that won the war for Peter was not the first boat – it was the last one.
- **See John 21: 1- 14 - Jesus and the Miraculous Catch of Fish - The war that Peter won was with himself – What Peter learned is what Jacob knew - that we do not have to be dressed in our Sunday best to be loved by our Father – Peter was filled with defeat – Jesus made it so that Peter felt forgiveness and not defeat – and God says good morning Grace – and God loves you just as you are.**
- **In one of the greatest storms that we have faced in our lifetime, Mark 4:38 gives us some good instruction. Jesus was asleep on a boat and in a storm. And Jesus ministered to the disciples to keep them calm in the storm – and He does the same for us - so that we are not stressed out about the racial divide and the COVID 19 pandemic – wake up in His control and in His command – Here is the closing question: What rest and peace will dwell in your life as you enter 2021 with God favor on your life? See the victory in your life.**

Charles Spurgeon Moment: NOVEMBER 19 MORNING AVOID FOOLISH CONTROVERSIES. TITUS 3:9 Our days are few and are far better spent in doing good than in disputing over matters that are, at best, of minor importance. The old scholars did a world of mischief by their incessant discussion of subjects of no practical importance; and our churches suffer too often from petty wars over obscure points and unimportant questions. After everything has been said that can be said, neither party is any the wiser, and therefore the discussion promotes neither knowledge nor love, and it is foolish to sow in so barren a field. Questions about issues on which Scripture is silent, on mysteries that belong to God alone, on prophecies of doubtful interpretation, and on mere modes of observing human ceremonials are all foolish, and wise men avoid them. Our business is neither to ask nor answer foolish questions, but to avoid them altogether; and if we observe the apostle's precept (Titus 3:8) to be careful to maintain good works, we will find ourselves occupied with so much profitable business that we will have no time to take much interest in unworthy, contentious, and needless strivings. Do I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Am I renewed in the spirit of my mind? Am I walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit? Am I growing in grace? Does my behavior adorn the doctrine of God my Savior? Am I looking for the coming of the Lord and watching as a servant should who expects his master? What more can I do for Jesus? Such inquiries as these demand our urgent attention; and if we have been given at all to

frivolous arguments, let us now turn our critical abilities to a much more profitable service. Let us be peacemakers and endeavor to lead others both by our precept and example to “avoid foolish controversies.”