

Elevation Church Sermon notes

Elevation Ballantyne – Saturday, Dec. 7, 2019 – Commitment Sunday

Pastor Steven Furtick

Sermon Title: "I'm The One"

Elevation Worship:

- Oh Come Let Us Adore Him
- Hallelujah Here Below - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWpSa_fKt84
- Available - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyTEoliVwUk>

Scripture:

Acts 10:21 Acts 10 New International Version (NIV) - Cornelius Calls for Peter: 10 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. 2 He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. 3 One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!" 4 Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. 5 Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. 6 He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea." 7 When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. 8 He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa. Peter's Vision 9 About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. 10 He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. 11 He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. 12 It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. 13 Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." 14 "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." 15 The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." 16 This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven. 17 While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. 18 They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there. 19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. 20 So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them." **21 Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?"** 22 The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say." 23 Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests. Peter at Cornelius's House: The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along. 24 The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25 As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. 26 But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself." 27 While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. 28 He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. 29 So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?" 30 Cornelius answered: "Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me 31 and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. 32 Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' 33 So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

34 Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism 35 but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. 36 You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. 37 You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. 39 “We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, 40 but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. 41 He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. 43 All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.” 44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. 45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. 46 For they heard them speaking in tongues[b] and praising God. Then Peter said, 47 “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” 48 So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Sermon Notes – “I am the One” and “Your Why” - by Pastor Furtick

- Opening prayer: “Lord, regardless of anything that distracts our minds, our spirit intends to worship you and be found in your presence - to give you honor - to give you thanks - to come before you with a hymn of thanksgiving - just to tell you that we appreciate all that you have done for us. We appreciate your friendship and your fatherhood. We appreciate that you always have the time for us when we pray. We thank you for the fact that you keep giving us grace - sometimes we coming back to the same old medicine cabinet - but you keep giving us the grace that we need for another breath for another day - for another year that you brought us through - for another decade that you allowed us to see – to give you glory, honor, and praise. Lord, thank you for the brother to my right in the sister to my left. Not only do I thank you for what you doing in my life - but what you are doing in their lives - I give you praise, glory, and honor - as faith is released through your people - where miracles are in progress – and I believe this to be true. We receive it and we establish it. Amen
- This week is are culminating a series called “Available”
- We do not apologize for our love of God and our extreme sense of excitement.
- **In this season we celebrate appreciation, love, gratitude, and service.**
- And we are excited about it - and I’m so thankful that God brought you here today.
- At the end of the sermon today, people will be afforded the opportunity to participate in an end of year expansion offering.
- Some people travelled internationally in order to be here to provide their expansion offering in person.
- We all came here for one purpose – to glorify and magnify our God.
- See Acts 10:21
- This will be my 14th year as a pastor to provide an end of year expansion offering.
- Today I want to recap all the themes that I have been sharing with you during this “Available” series.
- I pray that God creates an atmosphere of faith - where people can receive what they need from the Lord - this means that for anyone that is not able to give - that they receive oxygen – and encouragement - I also pray for acid reflux from the Lord to motivate some to stretch in their giving given (Pastor Steven sarcasm)

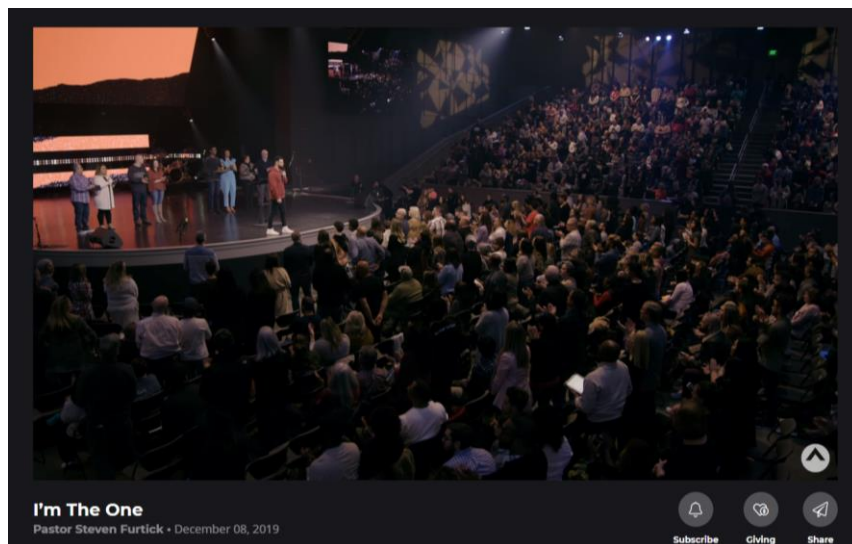
- I have a weird process of sermon preparation.
- I will think of 20 sermons to preach - and then decide which sermon is most appropriate.
- One sermon concept was centered around Mary - if anyone understood about being available it was her.
- Another sermon concept was centered around 2nd Kings 4 - were a woman had a little bit of oil and she had to borrow jars from neighbors - and every time someone provided a new vessel, the oil flowed - but when she called for the next vessel – and there wasn't one, the oil stopped flowing. This represents what happens when we stop saying "yes" to God. When we stop saying "yes" to God, it stops the flow.
- Some say that scripture "leaps" off the page.
- This did not happen to me.
- When I opened my old bible to Acts 10, the page literally came out of the Bible. I'm not sure how the Holy Spirit works but I'll take that as a sign.
- Not only to the Scripture jump off the page - it leapt out of my old Billy Graham signed Bible.
- There are many references in Scripture where Jesus leaves the 99 to find the 1.
- We will bypass the religious establishment to pick a sinner up and pull them out of their sin - even if it means he had to heal on the Sabbath or break certain customs - or turn the tables over in the middle of a temple.
- Recall Jesus healed 10 lepers from their leprosy - and out of the 10 that God healed, only one came back to give thanks.
- Say this: "I am the one."
- I'm not going to be one of these Christians who pulls up to the table of mercy to consume and leave.
- We see Peter so bold - as you normally is.
- This is very much like Peter.
- **Peter prepares to respond to the obedience of God - even though God is not given him details.**
- **Similar to our offering today – our faith it is more about obedience than obligation. This is why a church is very different from a country club. If you go anywhere else, you'll have to pay as an obligation in order to receive some particular service.**
- **Today were not giving out of obligation - because no one is making us do it - we are giving not out of a sense of obligation but out of obedience.**
- And we don't have to use guilt or manipulation to achieve what we are trying to do.
- **Because the more the Holy Spirit takes control of our lives - from the inside out – we realize that we are not operating out of a sense of obligation - but out of a sense of opportunity.**
- **Every time you obey God – we move in His direction - God is always providing us direction - but he does not always promise to give us details.**
- **Faith is about allowing God to set the direction of your life - even when you don't know the details.**
- We can go all the way back to Abraham in Genesis Chapter 12 to see this pattern established.
- God told Abraham that He was going to bless him - so that Abraham could be a blessing. However, in order to do this - God needed to set the direction for Abraham without providing a lot of the details.
- **We tend to trust our GPS navigation system more than we trust God – where we set an address and totally trust the wireless provider in their ability to get us there safely - and provide the best route.**
- We don't trust God at this level.
- God does not promise to give us details - he promises to give us direction - and when we understand that - where Peter can say in chapter 10 - I am the one you're looking for!
- After Peter proclaims "I am the one" the man replies "why have you come?" After so much certainty in Peter, it is ironic that the man had so much doubt.
- I'm here and I'm the one you're looking for! And the answer is an unmotivated: "oh ya – what is up?"
- Recall from Pastor Levi - God called Peter to go to Joppa - where he went to raise Dorcas from the dead.

- Where Dorcas was doing good - and then she died. Her good works were resurrected - and after she was resurrected in the name of the Lord - Peter went on the roof to pray.
- While Peter is praying in Joppa, he is told by visitors that he needs to go to Caesarea - however he does not know any more information - because God gives Peter direction and not details.
- **And if you want to treat God like a map will never follow Christ. You will not see it all at once - in fact you will not know why you are going through what you're going through until after you have gone through it.**
- We will not know why certain people leave your life - or come into your life - until after you have experienced certain seasons - with some seasons of weeping in some seasons of joy.
- **One thing that I have learned is this: We learn "the why" along the way.**
- While Peter is praying on the roof like any good observant Jew, God calls him to visit Cornelius.
- Joppa is a port city of Jerusalem and Peter is fresh off of a resurrection miracle.
- The Bible says that Peter went into a trance while hungry and tired - where he sees a sheet with animals - even those animals that Peter was not supposed to eat as in observant Jew.



- See verse 14
- "Surely not Lord" – Rhetorical question: How does one say "no" and still call him Lord?
- Here Peter is presented with paradigm that is not normal.
- God is trying to break a barrier within Peter as to how he thinks about faith, and life, and others.
- And I believe God wanted me to bring this message to you - Elevation Church is a church that breaks barriers.
- **I believe that God has positioned this church and our ministry – and at this time - because God wants us to confuse categories - as to how people tend to line-up different groups into nice neat categories - where some like to call out the perceived differences from one another.**
- **I guarantee you this - if you look up and down the aisle that you are in - you'll see somebody that does not look like anyone that you grew up with - and I thank God for that. As a matter of fact - I hope that this church is so confusing to you – so much so - that you can't describe it to your friends. And all you can say is "come to church with me."**
- **Let's experience the power of God together. Let's experience breakthrough together.**
- **Come with me - is it Baptist? Is it Methodist? Is it Catholic? Is it not the non-denominational? Is it Pentecostal? Is it black? Is it white? Yes - it is all of that.**
- **Come here Jesus - and wreck our paradigm!**
- **Breakthrough our prejudices - and our biases as to what is possible.**
- **Say this: I am the one.**
- It is really weird that Peter saw a vision that completely contradicted his understanding of what is normal.
- Peter is asking - What is this all mean? There is a sheet with all of these animals on it?
- God tells Peter to never call anything unclean that God has declared as clean.
- The literal translation of this message is "stop considering the common."

- The four corners of the sheet - represented four corners of the earth – and the vision Peter had was not about food - but rather his first opportunity to bring the gospel to the Gentiles.
- When this was revealed to Peter, he was shown the promise that started with Abraham - and was being fulfilled through Peter - and the three came to get Peter were representatives of the centurion located in Caesarea - located 32 miles away.
- Cornelius was not Jewish but was attracted to some of the things were part of the Jewish tradition – perhaps he was observant in some prayer habits of the Jewish and by his acts of charity.
- See Acts 10:3 to 9.
- **It is not what God speaks that changes your life - it is your response to what God speaks that changes your life. Peter prayed on the roof of Joppa when Cornelius' men arrive to summon Peter to Caesarea. When opportunity meets obedience - miracles happen.**
- Obedience is not a popular word in today's culture.
- To be obedient means that we answer to a higher authority - obedience means "I understand."
- Cornelius understood the power associated with obedience to authority.
- Peter understood this as well.
- **Is the power of obedience that unlocks blessing.**
- **If you operate only to your own understanding, you will be limited to your own strength.**
- **However, if you tap into the voice of God - and take time to listen to the Lord - and allow God to break through our preferences - until we know this - we have not yet grasped the meaning of trust.**
- **A Pastor Steven Classic:** Some of you want me to stop preaching about giving - because you want to hear things like the "Will of God" and maybe the rapture - in the book of revelations - with an S – why - I don't know why revelations is plural - nor do I know why we add an S to Walmarts.
- Every time I preach about giving- I don't enjoy it - because it stretches me.
- **Tithing is not a membership fee - is an act of worship.**
- This week, many are beginning to tithe for the very first time.
- When obedience meets opportunity - miracles happen.
- Think about the value of God in your life.
- As God blesses you, it gets harder to stretch in a year-end commitment offering.
- When you arrive at a point where it doesn't make sense - like Peter did - this is God talking.
- **When God speaks to us, He will always stretch your understanding things - as to what is normal, appropriate, or customary.**
- **When you know your why, you can trust God with the what.**
- **Do we have the why right?**
- Giving to God is not a transactional moment.
- Yes, there are benefits of giving - the gospel will be preached – items will be sent to help the world – the hungry will be fed - in the naked will be clothed.
- As to my why? I want to learn how to obey his voice.
- **If I can learn how to obey his voice - beyond my own understanding – I expand my trust in Him.**
- **And it is better to just show you.**
- **Here are some people that shared there why? See the testimony of five families.**
<https://elevationchurch.org/sermons/im-the-one/>
- Such inspirational testimonies.
- Side note: Over 100,000 orange bibles have been given away at Elevation Church – remarkable.
- It is the faithfulness of thousands of people that has allowed Elevation Church to touch so many lives.



- Closing Prayer: Dear Lord thank you for this opportunity. Thank you for the obedience of the tens of thousands of people that call this church home - to become before to establish this ministry. We want to be the one – the one that you can use. Where not done trusting you - we thank the thousands and will accept Jesus Christ in the future based on what foundations are planted here today - thank you for the thousands that will receive this ministry at a practical level - because of what is done here today. More importantly we thank you for what happened in our hearts because of what is given today - and we worship you - it is our joy and privilege to give to you. And we thank you for what you have given to us - our salvation - our life - and our breath. And we receive this offering in Jesus's name.