

Hi-lites from last week – “Death by Echo:”

- “One highlight I took away from today was that sometimes when we're in the cave season, it leads us to isolation and we anchor on listening to our own voice instead of God's voice. What are you doing here in these destructive patterns that promise you safety, but only make you ashamed and the shame leads to the same behavior? What are you doing in this cave? Sometimes my business is, you know, it's a lot of pressure.
- Sometimes I will go without praying, but God always shows up. I want you to thank God for the times you didn't even really pray, but he came. The times where you thought, what if I got it wrong? But God said, what if I got it right? The threats are empty unless you let it echo. So I got to stop caving in on all these voices inside of my head. We can be so focused on like, hearing like the echoes back and forth, like the voices that we can even hear God like speaking to us. Because when you start with, I have had enough, and I, I, see how it's filling the cage, see how it's filling the room, and now I can hear the whisper.
- All I have to do is run it back, I could have gotten up and run out of that church at that moment. Run back the time that he fed you. Run back the time that he led you. Run back the time that he did come through. Run back the ones who put their arm around you.
- You've been replaying the wrong things, haven't you? You've been replaying stuff that the devil can't even bring up against you because it's nailed to the cross. If you just got to replay something, replay the resurrection and remember that nothing is dead till God is done with it. Nothing is over till God says so. Dry bones hear the word of the Lord. Run it back. He's been good to you. Run it back. He's more than enough. Run it back. Jehovah Jireh. He always provides. Run it back. You're not alone.”

Charles Spurgeon Moment (CSM) – What does CS have to say about Echo Chambers: “It is the extreme of unwisdom for a young man fresh from college, or from another charge, to suffer himself to be earwigged by a clique, and to be bribed by kindness and flattery to become a partisan... Know nothing of parties and cliques, but be the pastor of all the flock, and care for all alike.” Twisting Truth to Fit Bias: “Men who might have been wise have remained fools because they thought they were wise... They do not come to the Bible to obtain their views of religion, but they open that Book to find texts to suit the opinions which they bring to it.” Additional commentary: Echo chambers thrive on mutual praise and the exclusion of dissent. Spurgeon urged believers to welcome criticism rather than insulation.”

General Church stuff:

- Interested in serving at Elevation Church: See: www.elevationchurch.org
- Please consider joining an eGroup (small group) so you don't have to walk this walk alone – See www.elevationchurch.org. The “e” stands for empowerment - because getting the instructions from God without having the empowerment to live them out will frustrate you. These groups are our way of putting some very wonderful people in front of you feed you spiritually.
- Stay out of “isolation silos” - you are an easy target for the enemy – and you don't have the benefit of friends to support you. Embrace the power of numbers.
- Interested in leading an eGroup? See: www.elevationchurch.org
- Don't over-think it – Invite someone to church – “Who do you know that is close to you that is far from God?”
- What are your Gr8ful eight?
- Elevation Nights Tour: October 9–18, 2026 — Lubbock (TX), Dallas (TX), Oklahoma City (OK), Houston (TX), then home. Described as a full worship, preaching, prayer, and breakthrough experience. Details: elevationknights.com.
- Elevation College launching! See: <https://www.elevationcollege.com/>

- **Reflect 2026 at Elevation** – see <https://www.elevationchurch.org> › reflect - Sep 25, 2025 — 7:00P M ET. Reflect is a time where women across our church join together to deepen our faith and celebrate the goodness of God.
- **Elevation Worship just released a new instrumental album!**

Elevation Church Sermon notes – “Filled By Faith!” - by Pastor Steven Furtick - August 23, 2026

Sermon Summary: You don't have to feel ready to move forward in faith. Sometimes growth looks like grieving what was, trusting God with what's missing, and still choosing to take the next best step. If you're carrying both blessings and burdens right now, just look at the prophet Samuel's difficult step of obedience in 1 Samuel 16 to discover how God can lead you forward even when life feels mixed.

Sermon Highlights

- You can fill it even when you don't feel it.
- When God fulfills His promise to you, it may not feel like you think it will.
- You are not forsaken. You are filled with the Spirit of God.
- What do you call it when you're grieving and you're going? Growing.
- The fact that you are asking God what He wants you to do means you're growing.
- Nobody can fill your horn for you.
- I've got some blessings, I've got some burdens. It's mixed.
- Any time you don't feel it but you fill it anyway, your faith grows.
- Even when God removes something in your life that you don't like — let alone something that you love — it leaves a hole. But God can fill it.
- You keep waiting for a feeling, but God is waiting for a filling.
- When you fill your horn, God fills the empty seat.
- God will find you in the field. Keep showing up.

Scriptures

1 Samuel 16:1-13: Samuel Anoints David - 16 The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.” 2 But Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.” The Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’ 3 Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.” 4 Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, “Do you come in peace?” 5 Samuel replied, “Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.” Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. 6 When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord.” 7 But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” 8 Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, “The Lord has not chosen this one either.” 9 Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, “Nor has the Lord chosen this one.” 10 Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, “The Lord has not chosen these.” 11 So he asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?” “There is still the youngest,” Jesse answered. “He is tending the sheep.” Samuel said, “Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.” 12 So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then

the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; this is the one." 13 So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.

1 Samuel 3:4-5: The Lord Calls Samuel - 3 The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions. 2 One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. 3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord, where the ark of God was. 4 Then the Lord called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am." 5 And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

Sermon Discussion

- "You can fill it even when you don't feel it." How do you fill yourself even when you're not feeling it?
- "What do you call it when you're grieving and you're going? Growing." What's something you've grieved in your life that God used for your growth?
- "God will find you in the field." What field is God calling you to be faithful in right now?
- "When God fulfills His promise to you, it may not feel like you think it will." Where might your expectations be making it harder to recognize what God's doing in your life right now?
- "I've got some blessings, I've got some burdens. It's mixed." What's one blessing and one burden you're holding in this season? How can you keep moving forward while making room for both?

Prayer Prompt: Lord, You see all the feelings we're carrying. The disappointment, the hope, the grief, the gratitude, the excitement, the anxiety, and everything in between. Thank You for remaining faithful to us and blessing us with purpose when life feels mixed. Please fill the empty seats in our lives with the provision and people that You know we need. In Jesus' name, amen.

AI generated sermon recap:

Filled by Faith in Calling amid Mixed Emotions

Aug 24, 2026 • 11:05 PM • 1 hour

Overview: The gathering centers on a sermon titled "Filled by Faith," drawing from 1 Samuel 16 to contrast feelings with faith-filled obedience, illustrate how God fills "empty seats" in our lives, and encourage forward movement despite grief, anxiety, and ambiguity.

Series Context and Recap

- Brief video highlights from the prior week emphasize replacing destructive inner "echoes" with God's voice and "running it back" to remember God's past faithfulness (e.g., provision, leadership, resurrection hope).
- Core idea carried forward: threats, shame, and self-condemnation lose power when not allowed to echo; rehearse God's goodness rather than past failures "nailed to the cross."

Primary Text and Theme (1 Samuel 16:1–13; 1 Samuel 3)

- God to Samuel: "How long will you mourn for Saul...? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way... I will show you what to do."
- Samuel arrives in Bethlehem; Jesse's older sons pass by. God rejects outward criteria: "People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."
- David, the youngest, is called in from the field and anointed; "from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David."

- Parallel with Samuel's early years (1 Samuel 3): young Samuel first learned who was speaking; older Samuel now knows who but asks "How?"—revealing mature faith often wrestles with "how" while obeying anyway.

Feelings vs. Filling

- **Key distinction: it's not your feelings that matter most; it's your filling (with God's Spirit) that matters.**
- **Obedience may not feel like expected elation; fulfillment can arrive with complex emotions. Example:**
- **A prominent media figure mistook anxiety for ingratitude under success pressure.**
- A champion athlete described his supposed "highlight" night as the worst due to relational turmoil.
- **Toothpaste image: being "used by God" can feel like being squeezed to release what's inside.**
- Gray, Green, and Greater: Samuel is gray (seasoned, grieving); David is green (inexperienced). God is greater than both, using the old and the young.
- Encouragement: neither age nor inexperience disqualifies; God can fill and use anyone in any season.

Mixed Oil, Mixed Life

- Anointing oil blended celebratory cinnamon and funeral myrrh—symbolizing life's "mixed" seasons.
- Application: blessings and burdens often coexist—family wins and struggles, energy without wisdom or wisdom without energy. Faith moves forward even when life is mixed.

From Mourning to Moving: The Empty Seat

- Visual of an empty front-row seat pictured grief over what's gone (Saul's throne; personal losses of people, provision, or purpose).
- God's word to Samuel: keep moving; show up where God sends you ("Bethlehem") so He can "show you what to do."
- **God is the "seat-filler": our job is to fill our horn; God fills the seat in His timing—choosing even those "in the field" and overlooked. Grieving and Going = Growing. You can be anxious and excited; thankful and exhausted ("thanks-austed"); grieving yet going—this tension is often called "growing."**
- Growth often develops in the dark and may be noticeable only in hindsight. Choosing faith-informed action over emotion-driven inaction signals maturity.

"Who" vs. "How"

- Samuel knew Who was speaking but asked "How?" Faith steps forward without all the steps revealed.
- Prayer focus echoed repeatedly: "Show me what to do" about diet, debt, dysfunction, disease, or divorce—trusting God's guidance while moving.

Personal Reconciliation Example

- Story of estrangement with the speaker's father (ill with ALS) and a Spirit-prompted step toward reconciliation: making a year-by-year memory list.
- First entry "bunt" (baseball), followed by "punk rock show in Ladson," and the inside line "let the wild hog eat."
- Hand-delivering the list began a healing process that emotion alone had delayed; later, the speaker read Charles Spurgeon's "The peaceful sleep of the beloved" at his father's bedside.

Field by Faith

- Play on the title "Filled by Faith": David was found "in the field." Being outside the house doesn't mean God forgot you; He knows where to find and seat you.
- Declaration from 1 Samuel 16:11: "Send for him... we will not sit down until he arrives." God reserves seats in His timing; our part is faithful presence and preparation.

Exhortations and Worship Call

Stop replaying shame; “run back” God’s faithfulness.

Fill your horn (receive the Spirit; ready your calling) even when you don’t feel it; keep moving though life is mixed. Follow Jesus (He said “Follow me,” not “Feel me”). Quit stressing over what God has already selected and grieving over what He has rejected.

Actions and Next Steps

- Ask specifically: “God, show me what to do” about current challenges, then take the next obedient step.
- Show up where God sends you (“Bethlehem”) so He can “show you what to do.”
- Keep attending, worshipping, and serving even when you don’t feel like it.
- Fill your “horn” daily (prayer, Scripture, consecration); do not wait for perfect feelings.
- “Run it back”: intentionally recall and rehearse God’s past provisions and rescues.
- Move though it’s mixed: acknowledge grief or exhaustion, yet keep moving in faith.

AI generated sermon transcript:

- Opening prayer: To prepare your heart for what God wants to say this week, I want to show you a highlight video of how he spoke to some people. last week. Last week, we had a powerful encounter in the presence of God in this place, and I was so encouraged as I saw some of the takeaways. I thought it would set the tone for what God wants to do.
- **Check out the clip: “One highlight I took away from today was that sometimes when we're in the cave season, it leads us to isolation and we anchor on listening to our own voice instead of God's voice. What are you doing here in these destructive patterns that promise you safety, but only make you ashamed and the shame leads to the same behavior? What are you doing in this cave? Sometimes my business is, you know, it's a lot of pressure. Sometimes I will go without praying, but God always shows up. I want you to thank God for the times you didn't even really pray, but he came. The times where you thought, what if I got it wrong? But God said, what if I got it right? The threats are empty unless you let it echo. So I got to stop caving in on all these voices inside of my head. We can be so focused on like, hearing like the echoes back and forth, like the voices that we can even hear God like speaking to us. Because when you start with, I have had enough, and I, I, see how it's filling the cage, see how it's filling the room, and now I can hear the whisper. When Pastor Stephen told me all I have to do is run it back, I could have gotten up and run out of that church at that moment. Run back the time that he fed you. Run back the time that he led you. Run back the time that he did come through. Run back the ones who put their arm around you. You've been replaying the wrong things, haven't you? You've been replaying stuff that the devil can't even bring up against you because it's nailed to the cross. If you just got to replay something, replay the resurrection and remember that nothing is dead till God is done with it. Nothing is over till God says so. Dry bones hear the word of the Lord. Run it back. He's been good to you. Run it back. He's more than enough. Run it back. Jehovah Jireh. He always provides. Run it back. You're not alone.”**
- All right. All right. A touch of ten people say, run it back. Run it back. Run it back. Thanks, y'all.
- We are going to run it back all the way to the first Scripture that we started this series with in 1 Samuel 16. Please open your Bibles, and we're going to bring this full circle. I know that voice. One of the things I've most enjoyed about teaching you this series is that hopefully we have broadened the way that you expect to hear God in your life. We found out that God can speak not only to people, but he can speak to storms. And so if he's not speaking to you right now in your life in a way that you can discern, maybe he's speaking to your situation, doing things that only he can do in ways that only he can understand. We've understood through this series that Jesus not only speaks to storms, but sometimes he speaks to stones, the condemnation that is in our life. We talked about a woman who was caught in the act of adultery. And Jesus said, I don't condemn you. Go and sin no more.

- And this whole thing started with a prophet named Samuel. So 1 Samuel 16, we're going to do a little 1 Samuel 16 sandwich. The first week of the series and the last week of the series will come from this passage. Not because I ran out of Bible passages and stories to talk about God speaking. But as we revisit it today, I want you to take note. Every time you hear the word of God, an opportunity for faith to be born presents itself to you. Faith comes by hearing. Hearing comes by the word of God.
- The title of this message today is "Filled by Faith." That's how I want you going back to school this year, students. Filled by faith. That's how I want you to deal with these doctor bills you got to pay. Filled by faith. That's how I want you approaching this next challenge in your business. Filled by faith. This employee you got to go fire this week. I want you filled by faith. This boss that's about to fire you this week. Filled by faith. You know there's both in the room, right? It's a big church.
- 1 Samuel 16 says, Verses one through 13, epic scripture with an everyday application. I never want my sermons to be image rich and principle poor, meaning that I just give you a lot of symbols, abstractions, but never to get to the application. Today, we're going to talk very plainly about your feelings. And we're only going to talk about for a little while, because the main thing is not your feelings, it's your feeling. 1 Samuel 16 verse 1. The Lord said to Samuel, How long will you mourn for Saul since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king in Bethlehem. This will not be the last king to be found in Bethlehem, by the way. I said keep an eye on Bethlehem. Unexpected kings come from Bethlehem. Okay, I'm getting ahead of myself, huh? Verse 2. But Samuel said, how are you going to argue with God? God told you what to do. Just do it. Aren't you a prophet? But Samuel said, how can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me. The Lord said, take a heifer with you and say, I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Invite Jesse to the sacrifice and I will show you what to do. I am claiming that as my verse for the rest of this year. God said, I will show you what to do. Somebody pray and God show me what to do. Show me what to do about this diet. Show me what to do about this debt. Show me what to do about this dysfunction. Show me what to do about this disease. Show me what to do about this divorce. Show me what to do. That's a great verse. God said, I'll show you what to do. But you've got to go to Bethlehem to see it. See, God can't show you if you don't show up. He said, I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate. Well, Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, do you come in peace? Samuel replied, yes, in peace. I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me. Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord. Side note, don't believe everything you think. Don't believe everything you see. Don't believe everything you hear. And don't believe everything you think because he saw the tall son and he thought, because he reminded him of Saul, who was the former king, this is the one. But the Lord said to Samuel, verse 7, do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance. Ain't that the truth? Boy, can I tell you how many times I've preached and somebody came up to me and I thought they were going to compliment my sermon. And they're like, I just wanted to tell you this past Sunday, I love your shoes. Where did you get those boots? I'm like, my shoes? I've got shoes? My shoes? I'm trying to teach you the eternal truth. But I usually just say thank you because it is nice to hear you like my shoes. But one thing you've got to be very careful about is surface interpretations. Because the Lord does not look at the things people look at.
- People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. If you lose weight, people will say, hey, congratulations. You look like you're losing weight. But if you forgive somebody, nobody can see that. So they don't know to compliment you. Hey, you lost resentment. You lost bitterness. Well, Jesse called Abinadab, another one of his sons, and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, the Lord has not chosen this one either. And he had Shammah pass by. But Samuel said, nor has the Lord chosen this one. Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said to him, the Lord has not chosen these, none of them. So he asked Jesse, are these all the sons you have? Now watch this. They're still the youngest, Jesse answered. Well, where is he? He's tending sheep.

He's in the field tending sheep. He's not even in the house. He's in the field tending sheep. Samuel said, send for him. We will not sit down until he arrives. So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Tell your neighbor that sounds like you. Did you know you were in the Bible? Then the Lord said, rise and anoint him. The one that wasn't even in the house, the one that was in the field. This is the one. So Samuel took, this is the last verse I want to read. Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers. And from that day on, from that day on, the spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David. It filled him from that day on. And Samuel then went to Ramah.

- Everybody say my title again. Filled by Faith. Now, we've got two main characters, and by the way, put that in the comments too, please, if you're watching online, filled by faith.
- Two main characters in the text, if you don't count God. There's Samuel, the prophet, the priest, the judge and wearing so many different hats. He can't even find his head some days, dealing with the disappointment of a failed king named Saul that he didn't even want Israel to have in the first place. And he's not a little boy anymore. He's not that same little Samuel whose mom Hannah would bring him a robe every year at the temple under Eli, where he first learned to hear the voice of God.
- He's grizzled now. He's gray now. And right alongside Samuel, who is gray, we got David, who is green. He hasn't done anything yet. He's a complete rookie. He's a noob. He doesn't know anything about this king business. And what amazes me about the passage, reading it through another time and going through a second pass, was to realize that Samuel was gray, David was green, but God was greater than both.
- Meaning that Samuel wasn't too old to be used by God. David wasn't too young to be used by God. One is gray, one is green, but God is great. I like that. So how many gray saints do we have in the room today? You consider yourself kind of gray. God can fill you even in this season of your life.
- God can make the rest of your life the best of your life. I'm prophesying now. God can redeem the years that the canker worm has eaten. God can redeem it. How many of you consider yourself a little green right now? I'll tell you how you can know that. If you can do back squats and not feel it the next day, you're green. Raise your hand if you're green right now. If you don't have to calculate anything when you see stairs, you're green right now. Raise your hand if you're green right now. If you don't have to do any math on getting down those stairs and thinking about getting back up, if you don't have to figure any of that out, you just do it and don't even know that you did it. Raise your hand. But you're not too young to be used by God. God will use a student in this room this year to turn Audrey Kell upside down for the glory of God. Get three of your kids off drugs. Hey, there's somebody in this room who is anointed to deliver your friends off of drugs by the power of the Spirit of God on the inside of you.
- Because watch what the Bible said. It said the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David from that day. And he was green. And yet Samuel, who is mourning what was, receives a fresh filling in his gray years, just like David does in his green years. Because God is greater than gray. God is greater than green. God is greater than tired. God is greater than dumb. God is greater.
- **Hey, watch this. God is greater than your former days. Yes. Your ladder will be greater than your past. Somebody say filled by faith. You got to look into your future and start speaking that God is not done with me. You got to realize that every breath that you draw is a down deposit that God is making on the destiny that he still has for your life.**
- This is not in my notes. So who am I saying this for that? You've been saying I'm too old. I'm too young. It's too gone. Saul is gone. And I want you to also notice something. That as Samuel is filling his horn with oil, he is feeling all kinds of things as he does. And this is why I wanted to use the passage again today. So that we can talk about how it's not the feelings that matter. It's the filling that matters. And I know I kind of have a little southern accent. So when I say fill it, you might think I'm saying feel it. Like, you know how when Southern people say "bowl water?" You ever heard that? Holly used to say, my brother-in-law Jody is here, she used to say, he would always talk about bowling water. And she's like, bowling water? You're using it incorrectly. You put water in a bowl. But he wasn't saying bowl, he was saying boil. But he said it like bowl. We bowl water, bowl peanuts.

- If you don't know about bowl peanuts, I want to have a membership class after church and talk with you. We're going to teach that in the college because this is the South now. Now, I understand you might not understand in translation, but when I say fill it, you might hear feel it. One time I was talking to a very successful media personality, has achieved amazing things.
- You know exactly who I'm talking about. And we were visiting the place where he grew up. I said, how does this feel coming back here? He said, it makes me kind of grateful and it also makes me kind of guilty. I said, I understand grateful, but why guilty? He said, I feel guilty because I realize all God has done for me, but I'm not as grateful as I should be about it. I don't appreciate it enough. But I looked at him and I said something that I want to say to you today. I said, I don't think you're ungrateful. I think you're anxious. I think that what you're carrying in this season of your life is something that you've never managed or maintained before. And you feel guilty because you think you're ungrateful. I think you're really just anxious because you feel the pressure to maintain what God gave you. He said, wow, you really helped me. I said, that's what I do. That's the only thing I know how to do is say words.
- That is my only skill in life, so I'm glad it helped. One time I was talking to a big sports athlete. I just told myself a little bit right there. I was talking to an athlete, professional athlete. And he had just won the highest honor in his sport. I said, man, you got to take me back like we're on the post-game interview.
- Tell me, how did it feel when you won that? It was amazing. I saw it on TV and everything. How did it feel? I'm so happy for you. I'm so proud. He said, worst night of my life. You remember? He said, worst night of my life. He said, we got back to the hotel room. Our families were fighting. Everybody started acting crazy. And I thought, isn't that crazy? The moment we saw as your highlight, you were going through heartbreak. So here's what I'm trying to say by giving you an example from sports, an example from media, an example from Samuel.
- You can feel it even when you don't feel it. And let me take it a step further.
- **When God fulfills his promise to you, it may not feel like you think it will. God may do everything he promised in your life and you not even notice that he did it because it does not feel like you think it will. What does it feel like to be used by God? You feel used. Have you ever seen a tube of toothpaste that you use? What does it look like? That's what it feels like when God squeezes what he put inside of you. A full tube of toothpaste is pretty. But once God starts squeezing your life to release the oil that he put inside of you for the purpose that he's called you to.**
- And I'm still not on my notes. But I'm looking for somebody who's been like, why does it feel like this in my life? Now, you think it feels like this because you're forsaken.
- You are not forsaken. You are filled with the spirit of God. And when you are filled with the spirit of God, you will almost certainly feel other things at the same time.
- Enter Samuel. He's filling the horn with oil, but he's feeling disappointed. He's filling the horn with oil and he's going forward, but he is feeling a sense of regret. He is filling the horn with oil because God is speaking to him. I want to show you something. Okay, this is so cool to me. He's gray now.
- So go back to 1 Samuel 3. When Samuel first heard the voice of God, when he first learned to hear God, the Lord spoke to him. I'm going to show you in 1 Samuel 3 what he said in verse 4. Yeah, it says, then the Lord called Samuel. He's just a little boy. He's green, not gray. And Samuel answered, here I am. And then verse five, he ran to Eli, who was his supervisor in the temple, who was an old washed up priest who didn't even care about the people. And the lamp in the temple had almost gone out. And he runs to Eli, whose light is fading, and says, here I am. You called me. But Eli said, I didn't call you. Go back and lie down. So he went and lay down. God did it three times. And finally, he realized, this is the Lord calling me. And he said, speak, Lord. Your servant is listening. That's when he was green. He had to learn who was talking to him.
- Go to 1 Samuel 16. Verse 1, the Lord said to Samuel, how long will you mourn for Saul? Since I've rejected him as king over Israel, fill your horn with oil and be on your way. I'm sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I've chosen one of his sons to be king. And Samuel knows who's talking now. But watch what he said. Verse 2, how? Because I know who's talking to me, but I don't know how. Isn't it a challenge at the point in your life when you know God is speaking to you about something, but you don't know how?

- I don't know how to balance all of this. I don't know how to manage this. I don't know how to deal with it. I don't know how to put it behind me exactly because the moment I think I put it behind me, it sucks me back in. The moment I think that I've gotten rid of it, it rears its head. I don't know how.
- And so God speaks and Samuel knows who, but he doesn't know how. Am I preaching to anybody? I know God is speaking to me about some things. I know God is working on me about some things, Libby. I know God is dealing with me. I know who. I know that voice, but I don't know how. And so you hear God speak and you say, Hallelujah. And I hear God speak and I say, How? Hallelujah. Because I know that's God telling me to move on.
- I know that's God telling me to be pure. I know that's God telling me to switch how I deal with this. I know that's God telling me not to depend on this anymore. I know that's God telling me to let this go. I just don't know how. I know who I sense that it's God, but I don't know how to balance doing this and that. I don't know how to balance wearing all these hats. I don't know how. And besides being confused and anxious and fearful. Fearful. Samuel is grieving. How long will you mourn over what I have rejected?
- But look at verse 4. He did what the Lord said, even not knowing how God was going to do what he promised. He went. He decided, I've got to go. Even not knowing, I've got to go. Even unsure, I've got to go. Even turned inside out, I've got to go even though I'm grieving.
- So I have taught you week after week in this series that you can be anxious and excited. That's called anxiety. I make up words while you're doing your real job during the week. Okay, this is what I do. I'm excited. And you can be anxious and excited. And the one that you lean into the most determines where your life leads.
- Somebody say, I'm excited about this giant. I'm excited about this challenge. I'm excited about this school year. I'm excited about this battle. I'm excited about this. I'm anxiety, but I'm choosing the sighted over the angst because I've got to lean into the Lord's voice in this season of my life. I taught you a new word last week called thanks Austin.
- It's when God is doing amazing things in your life and you're too tired to go to the party. It's when you just won the championship and all you want to do is go to bed. It's when you can no sooner make it down the mountain than Jezebel sends a death threat. Now you got to go fight another battle. How are you feeling? I'm thankful. I'm exhausted. I'm thanks-austed.
- We need another word for what Samuel is in this passage. Because he's grieving, but he's going. What do you call it when you're grieving and you're going? Oh. Oh. Maybe we could say it's called growing. I didn't make that one up, but I guarantee you that's what's happening in your life right now.
- Because every time you step forward in faith, when you don't feel it in your situation, somebody shout, I'm growing. I'm growing. Notify your neighbor. Say, I'm growing. I'm growing. I'm growing because I'm still not over it yet, but I don't have to be over it to move forward because I'm too grown to let my emotions tell me what I can and can't do. I'm too grown to let a broken heart become a barricade in my life.
- I'm too grown to let a boy who broke up with me convince me that my life is over. I'm only 16. I'm green, baby. And God is great. And I'm growing even though I'm grieving. Because I'm growing. Let your neighbor say, I think you're growing. I think you're growing. Put it in the chat. Say, I think I'm growing. I think I'm growing. Because I don't know exactly what God is doing. But I came to church anyway. And that's how I know I'm growing. Because I used to check my mood before I came to church. But I'm growing now. When I was a toddler, I used to have a tantrum and lay down and die.
- **But I'm growing now. Even when I feel angry, I don't have to give in to the anger. I'm growing. That's what it's called when you feel fear and you choose faith anyway. Somebody say, I'm growing. The growth doesn't feel like growth So now you're discouraged I'm not growing in my faith. You most certainly are and the reason I know you're growing is because you don't know it.**
- That's why you got to go visit your aunt and your uncle every once in a while when you're a kid My you've gotten so big But you were developing in the dark I And I just want to let you know that even, listen to me, even the fact that you are asking God what he wants you to do means you're growing. Because there was a time you didn't care what

God wanted you to do. You cared what your hormones wanted you to do. I'm going to go back over here and get in this Bible before I get in trouble.

- So the Lord says, you're growing. And even though you don't know how, remember that parable about the man who planted the seed and he didn't know how it grew, but it grew and it grew and it grew. And there's so much to share with you there.
- **About everything that you are feeling while you are filling, fulfilling your responsibility. You have a horn and God wants you to fill it with oil. And I want to give you a little piece of marriage advice while we're out here. Nobody can feel your horn for you. You know how they say don't toot your own horn? Don't brag on yourself. You ever heard that before?**
- That's a southern saying I guess. All kind of southern stuff in this sermon today. Bowling water and tooting horns and all this stuff. No, don't toot your own horn, but you got to feel your own horn. There's something interesting about the oil, Graham, and maybe some of our young preachers would like to learn this because the anointing oil, that sounds so amazing. Oh, I want to be anointed. I want to be anointed. And even if you're not a minister, you want to be anointed, right?
- **I want to be set apart by God and I want to be empowered by God for his specific purpose that he's given me to accomplish in the earth. Even if it's just to raise my children, that's not a small thing. I want to be anointed for that. Even if it's just to carry out my assignment. Even if it's just to build this company. Even if it's just to create what I'm supposed to create and put it forth into the world. I want to be anointed for that. And you are anointed. You can be anointed and annoyed. It's called annyointed.**
- Alright, I'll stop. That's the last one. I promise. That's the last week of the series. I promise. And ain't it true that the anointing oil, what's in Samuel's horn is just like what's in his heart, it's mixed?
- **If you ever study about the oil that made the anointing oil, it had several main ingredients. One of those ingredients was cinnamon. That's a sweet fragrance. It's a celebration fragrance. You would expect it at a wedding. And one of the ingredients was myrrh. And myrrh is a burial spice. And is God trying to show us something about our life? Is God trying to show you that it's going to be mixed? The biggest moments in your life where you hold the trophy is going to be mixed. The biggest moments of your life where God is fulfilling your every dream, it's going to be mixed. The moments when God finally gives you wisdom, you're going to feel too old to have the energy to do anything with it. But you've got to go anyway because it's going to be mixed.**
- When God gives you the energy to do something, you're not going to feel like you have the wisdom to do it, but you have to go anyway. It's going to be mixed. One person in your family is going to be doing good, and another one is going to be doing bad, and it's going to be mixed. You can't wait to smile for the picture until everybody is doing good. You have to put that plastic smile on and smile in that picture and go back home and praise God for your jacked-up family and praise God for the one that's doing good and pray for the one that's doing bad.
- Keep it moving. That's what God told Samuel. I know you're mourning, but keep it moving. I know your heart is broken, but keep it moving. I know you don't see seven steps ahead. You only got to take one at a time. Keep it moving. I know some oil is spilling out of your horn right now. but keep it moving.
- I know you got some mur in your life, but keep it moving. So the message of faith is this. I'm moving even though it's mixed. I'm moving even though it's mixed. My life is mixed right now. I'm happy right now. I'm heavy right now. It's mixed, but I'm moving. I feel God on this message. It's mixed. but I'm moving.
- There are some people who like me. There are some people who hate me. It's mixed, but I'm moving because if God chose me, there's not anything anybody on either side can do to stop what he put inside of me.
- **I got some blessings. I got some burdens. It's mixed, but I'm moving. I got some things I'm ashamed of. I got some things I'm pretty proud of - It's mixed and I'm moving.**

- And the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. And every time you don't feel it, but you feel it anyway, your faith grows. I'm growing. I'm growing. I'm growing. I'm growing. I'm pushing back against the cave. I'm pushing back against the threat. And I'm growing. I'm growing. Mmm-hmm.
- This is your last day to have an empty horn This is your last day to have an empty horn drop by drop. We're gonna fill you back up - Notice Samuel didn't even know who he was filling it for You ever had to pour something out and you don't even know what it's for I I don't even know why I took this job.
- I don't even know why I'm in Charlotte. I'll tell you why you're in Charlotte. It ain't so you can look at my shoes. It's so God can give you this sure word and speak to you and get you up out of your situation. Tell your neighbor, fill your horn, fill your horn, fill your horn, your horn.
- The thing God gave you, your horn, the instrument of your calling. Fill it. Sinai, I gotta show you something. What we don't realize about Samuel as great as he was and as great as he was and what we don't understand about David as great as he was and as green as he was is that when Saul vacated his rightful place as King by his disobedience, it left an empty seat.
- I don't know if they can make the camera where they show it or not. I sure would love that. I really need this demonstration to get my message home. Normally when I get up to preach they fill this seat with someone else and slide everyone down so we don't have an empty seat on the front row. Today I told them I was going to be preaching about filled by faith and I said so when I get up to preach leave the seat empty because it represents something to everyone in this church today.
- And this is the thing that Saul was grieving, the empty seat. It wasn't even that Saul was a good king, but he filled a seat. And even when God removes something in your life that you don't like, it leaves a hole. let alone something that you love, let alone someone that you love.
- Do you know how many people listening to me preach today are grieving the empty seat? It is not the empty throne of a king. Maybe it's a person that you loved very dearly who was taken away too soon. Maybe they weren't even taken away. Maybe it represents a person who chose to walk away. And now you don't even know if they were supposed to be in your life or not. But all I know is I got this seat.
- **And I wanted to leave it empty on purpose because I wanted to talk about grieving the empty seat. It may not represent a person at all. It may represent provision in your life. It may be the fact that there's something that you need God to do for you. And you are not saying hallelujah. You are saying how? How? And I'm in church, but I am still very frustrated waiting for God to show me about this empty seat. I need help, and I don't know who to call.**
- Do you know how many people are saying, I'm going to get in therapy when I figure out who to call? Y'all, I felt the same way. And one day I just had to ask a friend, who did you see? And go see him. And I said, if I don't like him, I can fire them. You can't fire your kids. You can fire a therapist. Let me just do one session. But I could have sat all the next decade of my life knowing that I needed help and telling myself a story.
- How long do you want to sit there? You know, my dad is probably the greatest source of my sermon illustrations these days because now he's in heaven and I can say whatever I want about him. And it's awesome. It's awesome because I can tell all the stories from my side of the story. I waited a long time to do that. And I miss him dearly, but I honor him in every message as I tell these stories about him.
- And there's one I've told over and over again. And I said, I can't share that story in church. Yeah, I've told it so many times. But I think it really reflects what I'm trying to say about the full horn and the empty seat. About the times when you don't feel it, but you choose to feel it anyway. Because there was a time in my dad's life that we weren't speaking. There was a time in his life where I thought he would die and we would not be reconciled. There was a time in his life when he was so violent and disruptive that I didn't know how to make the relationship right. See, I knew what I wanted God to do, reconcile the relationship. I didn't know how. Ain't that a place to be?
- Samuel has been doing this for decades, and he still doesn't know how. And so God says, fill it, fill it, fill it. And after not speaking to my dad, remember, he's dying with ALS. I know he has a short window of time. He won't reconcile

with my mom. He won't reconcile with me. I keep paying for people to come take care of him. He fires people that I'm paying. How am I supposed to help you when you fire the help I send? But see, he had a lot going on in his body too. He had a lot of pain in his body too. He was doing the best he could. And I'm doing the best I can. How are we going to do this?

- And one Father's Day, around about 2011 or 12, I was driving home with my family from vacation. And I thought of an idea. I would be passing nearby Monk's Corner where my dad was living by himself, by his own choice at that point. We couldn't speak on the phone because every time we tried to speak on the phone, it would erupt. Every time we tried to speak on the phone, somebody hang up on somebody. And driving down the road that day, it was as if the Lord said to me, how long are you going to keep playing chicken with this?
- You don't know how long he has left. How long? How long? I said, Lord, how? Well, I got an idea. I don't know if this was the Lord. Usually you don't. When you're doing it, you'd be asking all kinds of crazy questions like, what if I got it wrong? But this seemed harmless enough, so I asked Holly, would she drive? She said, sure. I said, I need to do something. I was too embarrassed to tell her what I was doing, but I pulled out whatever I could find to write with and write on. And I began to make a list. I decided I'd make a list at the time I was 31 or 32 years old of a memory from every year. that I had been alive, that he had been my dad, and I would drive by his house and drop it off.
- Even though we couldn't talk, maybe I could hand him a list. And I want to tell you that picking up my pen to start that list, as mad as I was at him, as confused as I was, the pen weighed 3,000 pounds. like I'm carving into my flesh to try to think of anything good. When you're really good and mad at somebody and the Lord is saying, forgive, and you're going, hell. I wrote one word to start the list. and I thought this is going to take a long time Lord but the first word when I started to fill it even though I didn't feel it I wrote down one word I wrote bunt B-U-N-T, as in baseball, bunting.
- Because when I was 10, he coached my team, the Pirates, and we sucked. And we were so bad, he didn't allow us to swing the bat the entire season. He made us bunt every single at bat. I don't know if that's good parenting or child abuse. I don't know whether to praise the Lord or call Child Protective Services, but he made us bunt.
- So I wrote, bunt. And then Bunt made me remember punk, as in punk rock, as in when he took me to a punk rock show in Ladson, South Carolina, and there were only three people there, me, him, and one other person who I think was with the band, and it was so bad in the room. And I wrote, punk rock show in Ladson.
- And then I wrote, let the wild hog eat. That's an inside joke. I'll tell you about it later. That's when we went to that independent fundamentalist church and that preacher was up there preaching. That little boy on the front row stood up and yelled, let the wild hog eat. And I looked at my dad like, did he just talk about a hog? Who's the hog? Are you the hog? Where's the hog?
- And when we got to the door, I had my list. I filled it, but I still didn't feel it. And I knocked on the door and he answered the door. And I said, here. That's all I have. That's all I have. Because I'm forgiving him, but I'm frustrated.
- **But God doesn't judge you based on what you feel. You can feel it even when you don't feel it. I said, here, here's a list, and it's got bunting and baseball and guitars and punk rock and hogs and everything. And he said, will you come in for a minute? I said, maybe five minutes. And I made it 10 and I had to leave, but it started something. It started something that never would have started if I had waited until I felt it to feel it. And you keep waiting for a feeling, but God is waiting for a filling.**
- See, God's just asking you do what I told you to do. Do the next thing that you can discern move through the fog the best that you can. That's all you can do. And every time you feel it, when you don't, hmm, good faith. is born.
- **Closing Prayer #1: I want to tell you something about the empty seat in your life, whether it's relational, whether it's a resource, whether it's provisional, whether it's a person, whether it's a purpose. Some of you are saying, in this season of my life, I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing. I'm not doing what I used to do. Yes, this message is for empty nesters. It's for the grays. Yes, this message is for the middle school students. It's for the greens. It's a message about God who is greater than any empty seat because I came to declare in the name of the**

Lord, God will fill this seat. God will fill this. God knows what he's doing. God knows what he's planned. God knows what he's purposed.

- God knows who to bring into your life. God knows who to delete. God knows who to deliver. God knows who to delay. God knows how to do it. And so when you feel your horn, God fills this. This is not your job. And I was by that man's bedside when he died reading him a Charles Spurgeon sermon called "The Peaceful sleep of the beloved." My mom was caring for him even though I didn't feel it. God felt it. I didn't know how he would, but he did it. The most amazing thing to me about God is that he had chosen someone to fill Saul's seat who wasn't even in the house. After all seven sons that Jesse thought would be a good king passed by Samuel, Samuel said, Is that all you've got? Well, he said, There's still one, but he's not in the house. He's in the field.
- Put my title back up again. I want to talk to somebody today who's in the Zoom out, please. Field by faith. You think, God has forgotten me. That's why I'm not in the house. God has forgotten me. That's why they didn't call.
- **Closing prayer #2: It is incorrect to say God has forgotten me. That's why they forsook me. No. God will find you in the field. I said, God will find you in it because he's a seat filler, see, because he's sovereignty, because he knows what he's doing in your life. You keep filling this. You keep filling this, whether you feel it or not. You keep bringing your butt back to this church and put that butt in this seat and God will fill this seat. You keep showing up in his presence. I speak to the spirit of insecurity in your life. The one that makes you think that there's something wrong with you. God said, I'm saving your seat. I know what I'm doing and I'm saving your seat. And all you gotta do is keep slinging your sling. And all you gotta do is keep trusting your God. And all you gotta do is fill your horn with oil and move. Move though terror all around you! Move! And worship him!**
- **Closing Prayer #3: Fill your heart with oil. He hears the prayers you've answered. He knows the needs you cannot name. He does not lack. He does not slumber. and neither does he sleep. And he sits down and inhabits the praises of his people. With your hands lifted, ask your Father, fill me, fill me. Fill me to obey you when I feel it. Fill me to obey you when my emotions say don't. Fill me to obey you when I get a goose bump. Fill me to obey it when I'm grumpy. Fill me. Say it again. Fill me. Jesus didn't say, feel me and I'll make you fishers of men. He said, follow me and I'll make you fishers of men. That's all you've got to do, baby. That's all you've got to do, dude. Quit stressing about stuff that God has already selected. And quit grieving about things that God has rejected. This is the word of the Lord for you today.**

Text of the Charles Spurgeon sermon called "The Peculiar sleep of the beloved"

The Peculiar Sleep of the Beloved

By Rev. C. H. Spurgeon

The sermon is titled "The Peculiar Sleep of the Beloved" (Sermon No. 12, preached on Sunday morning, March 4, 1855, at Exeter Hall, Strand). It is based on Psalm 127:2: "*For so He giveth His beloved sleep.*"

Opening: The Common Mercy of Physical Sleep

"The sleep of the body is the gift of God. Not a man would close his eyes, did not God put His fingers on his eyelids; did not the Almighty send a soft and balmy influence over his frame which lulled his thoughts into quiescence, making him enter into that blissful state of rest which we call sleep.

It is God who steeps the mind in lethe, and bids us slumber, that our bodies may be refreshed, so that for tomorrow's toil we may rise recruited and strengthened. O my friends, how thankful should we be for sleep! Sleep is the best physician that I know of. Sleep hath healed more pains of wearied bones than the most eminent physicians upon

earth. It is the best medicine; the choicest thing of all the names which are written in all the lists of pharmacy. There is nothing like to sleep!

What a mercy it is that it belongs alike to all! God does not make sleep the boon of the rich man, nor give it merely to the noble, but He bestows it upon all. Yea, the sleep of the labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much. While luxurious effeminacy tosses from side to side upon a bed of down, the hard-working labourer throws himself upon his hard couch and sleeps; and waking, thanks God that he has been refreshed."

The Four Dimensions of the "Sleep of the Beloved"

Spurgeon explains that beyond natural bodily rest, there are four special senses in which God grants deep, peaceful sleep to His people:

1. A Quiet Conscience

A quiet conscience is the sweetest music that can lull the soul to sleep. The demon of restlessness does not come to that man's bed who has a quiet conscience—a conscience washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, right with God, and at peace with all mankind. When the Christian lays his head upon his pillow, he can say:

*With the world, myself, and Thee,
I, ere I sleep, at peace shall be.'*

He knows his sins are blotted out; he knows his debt is paid; he knows his soul is accepted in the Beloved. He rests in perfect peace."

2. Contentment and Freedom from Anxious Care

"The beloved of the Lord sleep the sleep of contentment. The worldling rises early, sits up late, and eats the bread of sorrows, fretting over his investments, his barns, and his worldly prospects. But the believer leaves tomorrow with God. He knows that his Heavenly Father feeds the ravens and clothes the lilies of the field.

*What may be my future lot,
High or low concerns me not;
This doth set my heart at rest,
What my God appoints is best.'*

He casts all his care upon the Lord, for He careth for him. Thus, God giveth His beloved sleep in the midst of life's heaviest storms."

3. Confidence in God's Sovereign Protection

"The child of God sleeps securely under the shadow of the Almighty. He knows that the Keeper of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. Whether sickness comes, or danger threatens, or the midnight alarm sounds, he is safe in the everlasting arms.

*He that hath made his refuge God,
Shall find a most secure abode;
Shall walk all day beneath His shade,*

And there at night shall rest his head.'

The Christian can lie down in peace and sleep, for the Lord alone maketh him dwell in safety."

4. The Peaceful Slumber of Death

"Lastly, there is the sleep of the grave—the last, sweet sleep that God gives to His beloved when life's race is done. To the Christian, death is not destruction, nor a dark leap into nothingness; it is called falling asleep in Jesus.

The body is merely laid to rest in its earthly bed, awaiting the glorious morning of the resurrection. The soul enters into everlasting rest, while the weary body sleeps until the trumpet shall sound. Blessed sleep! Where no pain can enter, no sorrow can vex, and no tears can flow. *'So He giveth His beloved sleep.'*"