

Welcome to Kev's on-line eGroup

The e-Glue that helps with the glitter

Part 1: Detailed sermon notes

Part 2: eGroup study questions

Here Comes Church – “In the know”

- Interested in serving at Elevation Church: See: www.elevationchurch.cc
- Please consider joining an eGroup (small group) so you don't have to walk this walk alone – See www.elevationchurch.cc. 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.cc
- 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?
- K-Love and Elevation Workshop at Red Rocks in CO in August 2025
- Elevation Nights is back: Elevation Nights is hitting the road again and we're coming to a city near you from October 21st through the 30th, 2025 - we're going to be in St. Paul, Omaha, St Louis, Louisville, Duluth, Tampa, Miami, and Orlando.
- Love week 3rd week in July 2025 - <https://www.elevationchurch.org/love-week>

Message from Elevation Church:

“This year, as we celebrate two decades of ministry, we are more aware than ever that it’s been the faith and generosity of people that have made it possible.”

Already in 2025:

- Over 9,546 people have made a decision for Christ.
- 2,033 have gone public with their faith through baptism.
- We released the song, “I Know A Name.”
- We released 2 new albums: Sons of Sunday and Victory Lap .
- We had our biggest Elevation Nights to date in the spring, and we’re headed back out this fall.
- Our Uptown and Greenville campuses are both set to move into their permanent facilities by year-end.
- We broke ground on our Raleigh location and are expected to launch early next year.

Psalm 139:7-17.

"Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol..." Some translations say hell. "If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,' even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you. For you formed my inward parts..." - "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them." "How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!"

Jonah 1:1-6 ESV - The Word of the Lord came to Jonah

Jonah 1:12-17 ESV - Jonah had a thought

Jonah 2:1-2 ESV - - Then Jonah prayed to God

Jonah Flees From the Lord

1 The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: 2 “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.”

3 But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.

4 Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. 5 All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. 6 The captain went to him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.”

Jonah 1:1-6 ESV - The Word of the Lord came to Jonah

Jonah 1:12-17 ESV - Jonah had a thought

Jonah 2:1-2 ESV - - Then Jonah prayed to God

12 "Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you."

13 Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. 14 Then they cried out to the Lord, "Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, Lord, have done as you pleased." 15 Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. 16 At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.

Jonah's Prayer

17 Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah 1:1-6 ESV - The Word of the Lord came to Jonah

Jonah 1:12-17 ESV - Jonah had a thought

Jonah 2:1-2 ESV - - Then Jonah prayed to God

2 1 From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. 2 He said:

“In my distress I called to the Lord,
and he answered me.

From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help,
and you listened to my cry.

3 You hurled me into the depths,
into the very heart of the seas,
and the currents swirled about me;

all your waves and breakers
swept over me.

4 I said, ‘I have been banished
from your sight;

yet I will look again
toward your holy temple.’

5 The engulfing waters threatened me,[b]
the deep surrounded me;
seaweed was wrapped around my head.

6 To the roots of the mountains I sank down;
the earth beneath barred me in forever.

But you, Lord my God,
brought my life up from the pit.

Mark 4:35-39 ESV - - Jesus calms the storm

Jesus Calms the Storm

35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

40 He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Kev's guys on-line eGroup study notes

Elevation Church Sermon Notes – “The Power To Change Your Mind” - Bishop T.D. Jakes - July 13, 2025

Prayer Prompt by Elevation eGroup staff:

Pastor Steven reminded us this week: “It’s not about the storm you’re going through; it’s the thoughts you're having about the storm.” What’s coming up this week that may feel like a storm, and what wrong thoughts need to be traded in advance for a God thought? Thank God for the message this week and the reminder that our thoughts about life are not the same ones that God has about our lives. Pray that we pursue God-thoughts this week, the Lord will meet them in our pursuit. We pray that God will give us fresh thoughts that will bring about new perspectives on how to work through them.”

Part 1: Detailed sermon notes

Kev's guys on-line eGroup study notes

Elevation Sermon notes – “When God Gives You A Thought” - Pastor Furtick - July 27, 2025

Sermon Highlights

- God's thoughts are valuable, and they are vast.
- You don't have to wait for the Word of the Lord to come to you; you can come to the Word of the Lord.
- 3 ways that God speaks: impressions, instructions, and interruptions.
- God will never give you an impression that violates His clear instruction.
- You can't fix chaos by losing cargo.
- Some things you can pray before you get in the belly.
- You can call on God in your distress, or you can bring Him into the decisions. God will hear you cry from the depths, but you do not have to go to the depths for Him to hear you.
- You can skip the fish. Pray, “God, give a thought to me.”
- When God gives a thought to you, expect the enemy to give an opposite thought.
- It's not about the storm you're going through; it's the thoughts you're having about the storm.

Scriptures

- Psalms 139:7-17 ESV - - God's thoughts are valuable and vast
- Jonah 1:1-6 ESV - The Word of the Lord came to Jonah
- Jonah 1:12-17 ESV - Jonah had a thought
- Jonah 2:1-2 ESV - - Then Jonah prayed to God
- Mark 4:35-39 ESV - - Jesus calms the storm

Sermon Discussion

- “You can call on God in your distress, or you can bring Him into the decisions. Pray, ‘God, give a thought to me.’” Share a time God responded while you were in distress. How did that moment teach you about bringing God in earlier?
- “You don't have to wait for the Word of the Lord to come to you; you can come to the Word of the Lord.” Share with your group different ways you can actively pursue the Word of God.
- “God will never give you an impression that violates His clear instruction.” What's something you already know God has told you to do, but you've been waiting to feel ready? What's been holding you back from starting?
- “When God gives a thought to you, expect the enemy to give an opposite thought.” Share some of your wrong thoughts. What God-thoughts are they trying to keep you from believing?

Kev's guys on-line eGroup study notes

Elevation Sermon notes – “When God Gives You A Thought” - Pastor Furtick - July 27, 2025

- Well, it's time. It's time for a word from God, and it's time for Elevation Nights. October 21-30, we are headed your way. If you're in the following areas...Saint Paul, Minnesota; Omaha; St. Louis; Louisville; Atlanta; or somewhere in Florida, maybe around Tampa, Miami, or Orlando...you can go to elevationnights.com now. These nights are amazing. I want to see you there. I believe God is going to meet us in a powerful way...me, Holly, Elevation Worship, Elevation Rhythm, and you. Go to elevationnights.com. But right now, get ready for the Word of God. God bless you.
- I'm working on a sermon series, and I'm going to pick up this week with the momentum we had last week. Now, last week was so good that if the person you're sitting next to wasn't here, tell them, "I'm sorry." Were you here last week?
- The title of the series...listen to this...is “That's What I Thought.” That's the title of the series.
- However you say that, with whatever attitude you say it with... You might say it like one of your kids was talking back to you, and you give them a look, and then they shut up, and then you say, "That's what I thought." Maybe like that. Or maybe you're just confirming some things in your life right now. Just checking, you know. "Oh, that's what I thought. I just wanted to be sure."
- **Really, the heart of what I want to teach about, as you'll see today, is tracking back the actions in our life to the thoughts that produce them, and then bringing God into those thought processes, so that rather than just always giving God our problems, we bring him into our thoughts. This series doesn't say that we can always avoid the problems of life, but I want to show you something today that I think is really, really easy to understand but so difficult to apply.**
- I'm going to be reading from Psalm 139:7-17. This will be the foundation, and then I'll share a story from the Old Testament to illustrate this thought today that God gave me.
- Every sermon starts as a thought.
- So, I want to talk to you about thoughts from a thought that God gave me, which is, by the way, why I keep stacks of notebook paper all around my house. In case God gives me a thought, I need to be ready to catch it, just in case I can give it to you. And this is so powerful.
- If you look at Psalm 139, David is speaking about the wonder of God. I was going to read only verse 17 to set up my thought, but I feel like it'll be so much more effective if I start at verse 7.

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- So listen to this. Everyone standing, please, for the Word of God, if you're physically able. Thank you. *"Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol..." Some translations say hell. "If I make my bed in [hell], you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,' even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you. For you formed my inward parts..." - "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them." Verse 17 is our key today. "How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!"*
- Let's read that together. Repeat after me. "How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!" Today I want to talk to you on this subject: When God Gives a Thought to You.
- When God Gives A Thought To You Could that be possible? The Holy One of heaven would condescend and give a thought to little old me, little old you? We're going to talk about that today. When God Gives a Thought to You. "This I recall to my mind; therefore I have hope. It is because of your mercies that we are not consumed, because your compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness."
- Faithful God, I thank you that your Word has spoken through generations to land at our doorstep today. We receive it. We want it. We need it. It is our necessary bread. It is our living water. Come now like a flood. Come now like a fountain. Quench every soul. Give a thought to us. In Jesus' name, amen.
- Put the title in the comments, please, if you're watching online. When God Gives a Thought to You.
- Lately, I've been saying things in rooms full of people that are younger than me, and they don't know what I'm talking about, and it's making me feel awkward and uncomfortable. Why, just the other day, I walked into a songwriting session with some of our very own in-house songwriters, and I said, "Last night, I took Holly to a concert. We went to see Counting Crows."

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- They all just looked at me. I realized something very sad in that moment. They had not heard of the Counting Crows. How do you not hear of the Counting Crows? How many of you have not heard of the Counting Crows? See, now I just feel ostracized, abandoned, betrayed. Never heard of the Counting Crows. I had to tell them about "Mr. Jones" and "Round Here," and they didn't want to know about Counting Crows, so we just wrote a song. The other day, I was riding in the car with Abbey. Now, she's 14, right? So, she was kind of quiet, kind of doing that 14-year-old thing that 14-year-old girls can sometimes do. Unless she's talking 60 miles a minute, she's totally quiet, and she was totally quiet. I looked over at her and said something I thought she would understand. I said, "A penny for your thoughts." Well, she looked at me just as confused as if the Counting Crows just walked in the room. She said, "A what?" I said, "A penny for your thoughts." She said, "What's that?" I said, "It's a colloquialism. It's an idiom. I think it has its roots somewhere in British origins. It's just a way of saying, 'Tell me what you're thinking.' Like, you're kind of quiet. I can tell you're thinking about something. The wheels seem to be turning. A penny for your thoughts." She goes, "That's weird." She's quiet for about 10 more seconds, and then she goes, "A penny? That's all?" I thought, "Yeah, you're right. That's kind of cheap, isn't it?" "A penny for your thoughts." She's like, "You've at least got to adjust this for inflation."
- **If I'm going to give you a whole thought or plural thoughts, multiple thoughts, it needs to be multiple pennies, at least a dime for your thoughts. It probably needs to be about \$5 for your thoughts." But just to set it up as an illustration, and not to be silly... I knew God wanted me to use this illustration because I thought of it last minute and there was a penny sitting by my door today. So, I want to hold it up and talk about how sometimes we think too cheap. Sometimes we undervalue our thoughts, because we live in a world that values things more than thoughts. Things more than thoughts. If you have a nice pair of sneakers, you would not dare wear them to a dirty LOVE Week event. You would never wear your clean sneakers through a dirty atmosphere.**
- **But let's talk about where your mind goes on a daily basis. The fact of the matter is some of the places that we take our minds are places that we would never take our shoes, because we value things over thoughts. I did have a small victory the other day. Usually I'm a catastrophizer. I think of the worst scenarios. This is why I wanted to preach a series called "That's What I Thought", because God has helped me so much to begin to label and identify the ways of thinking that don't come from him. I'm still a work in progress, but I try to share with you everytime I get it wrong so I can occasionally share with you when I get it right. I lead mostly by failing forward.**
- The other day I was proud. I had ordered a new guitar online. I went to the post office to pick it up. It didn't quite fit in the back seat. I put it in my Jeep with the roof down. I was talking to Abbey, because she was in the front seat, and she had Bo on her lap. Bo was kind of hanging out the window, because he enjoys that. I had this vision right as we were pulling down the driveway of Bo tumbling out the window, and I didn't want him to, so I've come a long way since we first got the dog. I didn't want him to. I said, "Have you got him securely?" She said, "I got him."

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- Just something about the fact of me thinking about him falling out the window and then pulling in the garage with the guitar still sticking out the top of the Jeep and hearing the crunch of a very expensive guitar. Very expensive guitar. Hearing the crunch and not cussing was the victory. I didn't cuss. I didn't cuss! Tell your neighbor I didn't cuss. Now, I didn't speak in tongues. I didn't praise the Lord. I just didn't cuss. Because I had a thought, and here was the thought: "It wasn't the dog; it was just a guitar. I can get another one of those. It's just a thing." Tell your neighbor, because they might be stressed out... Whatever they're stressed about, tell them, "It's just a thing." It's just a thing. When it's just a thing, it's just a thing. If it's a Boston Terrier, it's a Boston Terrier. If my Boston Terrier falls out of the window of my Jeep on my watch, I might be divorced. No, she loves me more than she loves the dog. She would never do that to me. But there was something about the contrast. It wasn't Bo. It wasn't Abbey. I can't get another Abbey. Abbey didn't go decapitated through the garage.
- The Lord is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him, because there was bubble wrap at the top of the box, and the guitar was fine. Thank you, Jesus. Then I did start praising God after I opened the box and didn't cuss, and we were all fine. But there have been so many times in my life, no matter how much of your time I waste telling you what seem to be random stories about guitars and dogs falling out of windows hypothetically, or even telling you about old sayings and old rock stars as I start my sermon... There are times where we do not value God's thoughts enough.
- David, in Psalm 139, gives a different perspective, and he helps us to understand two things. First, the value of a God thought. I want to talk to you about that for a few moments today, and you may want to write some of this down, buddy. God might give you a thought today, and you won't remember it. You'll be thinking about your order at the Pizza Hut. Write it down. The value of a God thought.
- I also want to talk to you about what Abbey said. She said, "Just a penny? That's all?" I want to talk to you about the cost of a wrong thought. He begins by saying, "I can't escape your presence, God, even if I try. I can take wings or scuba gear. Either way I go, you're there."
- After framing us in with that kind of poetic language, which is very different than what we read last week in Psalm 77, which was a psalm of lament, where he thought God had abandoned him... This psalm is the complete opposite. He's saying, "I can't abandon God. He keeps showing up." How many have that testimony in your life, that God keeps showing up in ways you didn't even ask him to? Sometimes God shows up and spoils your whole party. In this psalm, particularly verse 17... Listen to what he says. "How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!" So, he gives us two distinctions. First, God's thoughts are valuable. A God thought is valuable. That's why I keep paper all around my house, because a God thought is valuable. Y'all, what I do with my life for my calling is preach God's Word to you. So, I can go from thinking I have nothing to say, and I don't feel the Holy Spirit, and "How am I going to preach Sunday?" to, like, "Can we gather them together even though it's already Friday? I've got to tell them right now. This thing is on fire, and I don't have a back burner. Can they come over right now?" There are times where I wish I could Bat-Signal you or "Bible-Signal" you and call all of us together to fight the Devil, because the Word comes through a thought, and it can happen that quickly. Therefore, I've learned that the thoughts of God are valuable.

Kev's guys on-line eGroup study notes

Elevation Sermon notes – “When God Gives You A Thought” - Pastor Furtick - July 27, 2025

- **How valuable is a God thought to you? Is it something that if a Bible verse comes into your feed, you might read it, or is it something that you seek out in your life? If the God thoughts are just right there in your scrolling beside all of the other thoughts, they're not very set apart. If the only way I ever hear from God is if I trip over something he says on my way to going somewhere else, I'm missing out on some very valuable God thoughts. God can give you one thought that will help you parent that special-needs child differently. One God thought can show you somebody to reach out to who has already been through what you're going through, and they know stuff they can download on Bluetooth in two minutes that would have taken you two years. One God thought.**
- **I'm telling you the power of what I know. God can flip something on you so fast that you will wonder, "Why didn't I think of that sooner?" It's a God thought. I did not come to church today to have a pep rally. I did not come to church today to have a pep talk. I did not come to church today for a social occasion. I did not come to church today like it's a country club. I did not come to church today for a concert. I did not come to church today for a hand clap. I did not come to church today to show off. I did not come to church today in hopes that I might get a date, although, "Lord, if you want to do that too, you can throw it in. I won't turn anything away for free," you may pray if you're single. But what I came here for, more than a person I might meet, is a God who will meet with me, and in one meeting, one moment, one second, one thought... I'm telling you, you can think a thought, which is what happened to the sons of Asaph last week when he said, "I thought it was through, and then I thought it through," because a God thought is valuable. Not only is it valuable, but it's vast. He says, "How precious are your thoughts to me, God!" Put the verse up again. "How vast is the sum of them!" That means God doesn't just think things about church things. God doesn't just have thoughts to offer you about your spiritual life.**
- His thoughts are vast. God is very well connected. God is very integrated. God is very well versed.
- God is very multifaceted. God is very multilingual. He can help you in areas you haven't even thought to pray to him about. He can help you with parts of you that the therapist can dig at for five years. I'm saying, get the therapist, but take God to the couch with you, because God can whisper something the therapist said in a way that only he could say it, because he knows the inward parts.
- So it's vast. He can speak to me about a situation. He can speak to me about a change. He can speak to me about a physical decision. I do not believe God has to help you pick out every outfit when you get dressed in the morning. I think people who pray about which kind of toothpaste to use are kind of weird, personally.
- But I want to say that God's thoughts are vast. They are valuable, and they are vast.
- **How much do you value the God thought? When he gives you a word, will you sit with it for a minute? Will you seek out a word from him rather than waiting for him to bring you one?**
- Will you have a place that you go to get a word from God or are you going to think the thoughts that are automatic and miss the promises that are attached to the thoughts of God, which the psalmist has already said are precious? To illustrate this for you today about the value of a God thought and the cost of a wrong thought.

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Elevation Sermon notes – “When God Gives You A Thought” - Pastor Furtick - July 27, 2025

- I want to use a person in the Bible that I bet you've heard of before. His name is Jonah, the most unfairly villainized person in the Bible. The Lord told the boy to go preach to terrorists, and he didn't want to do that. We preach to him like, "What's wrong with you, Jonah? Obey God. If God says go, you've got to go, Jonah. Go, Jonah. Go, Jonah. Be obedient. Go, Jonah."
- This is actually, in the Bible, I think, one of the easiest-to-read stories and the hardest to understand as it pertains to us, because in this story is prejudice. In this story is revenge. In this story is self-pity. In this story is assumption. In this story is resentment. In this story is regret. All of that is in the story. But there is one thing I want to show you today in this book of the Bible that you could probably read in eight minutes when you went home.
- In Jonah, chapter 1, the Bible gives us a frame. Please try to pretend like you I have good news for you if you feel like God isn't speaking to you right now, and you're like, "I don't have any God thoughts. I just have all the worry thoughts and the fear thoughts and the 'How am I going to pay for this?' thoughts and, you know, 'I wish they would just leave me alone' thoughts and 'When is this ever going to change?' thoughts. I don't have any God thoughts."
- The Bible says the word of the Lord came to Jonah, but because we have God's Word, you don't have to wait for the word of the Lord to come to you; you can come to the Word of the Lord. Isn't that powerful? I'll try it again.
- **If you are in a situation where you don't know what to do, you don't know where to go, you don't know where to turn, you don't know how it's going to work out... You can't really get your mind around it, and the Enemy is tormenting you. You don't have to wait for the word of the Lord to come to you; you can come to the Word of the Lord.**
- Everybody in church this morning, clap, because that's what you did when you came. Come on, clap. You've got to celebrate sometimes, right? I didn't cuss, and I came to church, because I'm not going to wait for the word of the Lord to come to me. I'm not going to wait for a goose bump. I came to church today because I value the thoughts of God. I value what God thinks about my relationships. I value what God thinks about my possessions. I value what God thinks about my identity. I value what God thinks about my career. I value what God thinks about my emotions. I value the thoughts of God. And the word of the Lord came to Jonah.
- **We may wonder sometimes, "How does God speak to me? Does God speak to me? Is this God speaking to me?" I have discovered three very specific and repeatable ways that God seems to speak. I'll give them to you right now. First, he speaks through impressions. Second, he speaks through instructions. Third, he speaks through interruptions. The word of the Lord came to Jonah. The word of the Lord. The word of the Lord isn't always a preacher preaching. The word of the Lord isn't always at your devotional time. Sometimes the Holy Spirit, if he lives in you, will show you something you shouldn't say, show you something you should say, show you a way you should see the situation that you haven't been seeing the situation. It's an impression. You can't explain it, but it's an impression. But then sometimes we get so heavy on that that I think we just run around following whatever impression we get.**

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Elevation Sermon notes – “When God Gives You A Thought” - Pastor Furtick - July 27, 2025

- The problem with my impressions is that sometimes my impressions are imposters. They pretend to be God, but they're really just what I want dressed up as God. That's what we're going to talk about from Jonah. God gives impressions, but he also gives instructions. One thing I love about God is he will never give you an impression that violates his clear instruction.
- I don't care how attracted to her you are. If she is married, you have received an instruction on that situation. I don't care that her name is Cindy and so was your grandmother's. That is irrelevant to this situation. There is an instruction. Sometimes I think we're waiting on God to give us a feeling or a thought because we don't want to obey what we clearly saw that he said. I'm going to stand here and preach this like I've been a pastor for 20 years. Y'all ain't going to intimidate me today.
- Reading all up in the book of Revelation, trying to figure out which one is North Korea, which one is Israel, and which one is Iraq. You're all over there translating that while, meanwhile, the Bible says in 1 Corinthians something you don't really want to read in 1 Corinthians, chapter 6. This is pretty clear. This is an instruction. "Flee from sexual immorality."
- So, we can read all the Revelation we want. Read it, underline it, highlight it, circle it, star it, smell it, sniff it, take it, eat it, whatever you want to do, but you still have to do this, because this is an instruction, and he is God. He is not my buddy. He's not an influencer. He is Alpha and Omega. Y'all don't want me to preach. I need to go back on break.
- Somebody high-five your neighbor and say, "'Cause he said so." 'Cause he said so. 'Cause he said so.
- His definition. His description. "I need a word from the Lord." There's one. Do that all week and check in with me. Take seven days of that. "Well, I don't really struggle with that, so what you got for me?" All right. I looked up some Scriptures, because we said we want a God thought. All right. There's another one in Ephesians 4:32. This one says, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."
- "But I don't feel like forgiving." But this is not about an impression; this is about an instruction, because you have a Father who knows you can never be free until you forgive. So, if he tells me to flee, I've got to go. If he tells me to forgive, I've got to love. It's an instruction. Those are just some of the things God will use to speak to you.
- Then there is like Jonah, where God will give you an interruption...an interruption to the way you think, an interruption to the way you see the world, an interruption to what you think is important, an interruption to the path you laid out for your own life. Jonah is a prophet, and the Bible says the word of the Lord came to Jonah.
- **I've got to say this one more time in case you didn't get it. The word of the Lord can come to you. Do you come to the Word of the Lord? I will ask you that every week. Do you come to the Word of the Lord so that the Word of the Lord can come to you? Because there he will give you instructions that will then mold your impressions so that they are in his image, not yours. Praise the Lord.**

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- "Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying..." Here are the details of the conversation. "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it...". Nobody wants to preach against it. Nobody wants to go to a place that is against them. Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria. They were brutal. They wouldn't just kill you; they would impale you to send a message. "That's what I thought. Come try us again." They were brutal, barbaric, and unrepentant, and they had personally oppressed the people Jonah was identified with. So, when the Lord said, "Go to Nineveh and preach against it, for their evil has come up before me," the Bible says, "But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord." We know, because we just read Psalm 139, that what he is trying to do is impossible. He went to flee from the presence of the Lord. We know, because we have Psalm 139, that if you ascend to the heavens, he's there, and if you descend to hell, he's there, and you can't flee from God, but Jonah thought he could.
- I won't break this all down for you, but Nineveh was 500 miles from the port where he was supposed to go, and Tarshish, where he tried to go, was 2,500 miles. So, it was going to take him five times longer to get where he had decided to go than where God told him to go, but he kind of thought he could get around it. He thought. "That's what I thought."
- **Now, let's talk. There are some ways you have tried to run from some things in your life, and you thought, "Well, if I just move to a different city..." And it's not always bad to move to a different city, as long as you realize you go with you. Get at least a two-bedroom apartment, because there are at least two of you. He tried to go to Tarshish. He thought he would run from the Lord. Every word of this is so instructive, but just for the sake of time, focus in with me on verses 3-5. "He went down to Joppa..." Pastor Mickey used to say, "When you run from God, you always go down."**
- **I like that. "He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish." Pastor Mickey used to always say, "If you ever want to run from God, the Devil will always give you a ride."**
- **Anyway, that's just old preacher stuff I used to hear. "So he paid the fare and went on board." I'm holding up my penny, y'all. "He paid the fare and went on board to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord." Surprise! (Verse 4.) You can't. You can't run from any of it. You can't run from it. Well, you can run from it, just not very long, especially if the Lord really loves you, because those he loves he disciplines. Those he really loves he does what it takes to bring them back. Those he really has a purpose for he will even punish you short-term to prevent you from something in your future that would be worse than the pain of the present.**
- **I am not saying that every bad thing happens so God can teach you a lesson. Please understand that the number of people who I have watched die of cancer, and the number of people I have seen have their lives senselessly taken from a drunk driver, would prohibit me from ever spewing that kind of nonsense from the pulpit. But I need to point out to you that the God who speaks by instructions and impressions also will sometimes come into your situation through an interruption, because the Bible says, "The Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up."**

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- It is not the fact that there was a storm that made me bring this passage up; it was who sent it that made it noteworthy. I am used to God calming storms; I am not used to God sending them. There was something God wanted to do in this situation that was important enough for him to send a storm to stop Jonah somewhere along the way. He thought he was going to Tarshish, but before he could get where he thought he was going to go, a storm was sent upon the sea.
- Now we're ready for verse 5. The Bible says, "Then the mariners [or the sailors] were afraid..." Now, remember, these men don't know God. Not Jonah's God. They call on many gods. They're polytheists. They have gods for everything. They have gods for feasting, gods for fasting, gods for drought, and gods for storms. As they're calling on all their many gods, many little, teeny-weeny gods that can't do anything for you when it really counts, like some of the gods we worship and serve, only to find out they are so small in the face of a great storm... Is this why God has brought you to this point in your life, so you can call out for something bigger? "But the Lord hurled a wind on the sea. Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them.
- But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. So the captain came and said to him, "What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish." "I'm talking about When God Gives a Thought to You. I know what he meant when he said it. "Maybe if you call on God, he'll remember that we're in this situation.
- Maybe if you call on your God, he'll do something our gods can't do." One translation says, "Maybe he'll take notice." Another translation says, "Maybe he'll throw a thought our way." "Maybe he'll give a thought to us." But the phrase was so rich, I couldn't just take it at face value. I realized when he said, "Perhaps your God will give a thought to us and this storm will stop" that your God can give a thought to you that will stop the storm in its tracks. He can do it today, he can do it right now, he can do it even though you're in your 30s, and he can do it even while you're in your teens.
- What the captain said that was so profound... He said, "We need a thought from God. I don't even know if you've got the right one, but we need God in this situation." Is it possible that you are in a storm right now in your life...?
- Not to be overly generic, but everybody in here has some kind of storm or is journeying with someone through a storm. Would it be a good prayer for you to pray right about now, "God, give a thought to me"? See, because God's thoughts are precious. God's works are wonderful, but his thoughts are also precious.
- So, it means that sometimes we're praying, "God, do something," and God is speaking for us to think something, because until we think something different than we've been thinking, he can't do anything different than what he has been allowed to do. For instance, the ship is not going to turn around just because God wants Jonah in Nineveh. God did not turn the ship; God sent the storm. In the middle of the storm, he had a decision to make. Not, "Will God give a thought to me?" God had his eye on this boat from the moment Jonah got on it.
- The whole reason they were in this predicament was because of a sleeping prophet. Now we have some panicked pagans, and now we have a self-pitying prophet, and we have a sovereign God sending a storm on a raging sea. We're used to him calming storms, but the God of the calm is the God of the chaos. Into the chaos, the captain says something that the prophet should have known for sure.

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- **"We need a God thought." "We need God to do something in our family. We need God to do something in this relationship. I need God to do something in my business. I need God to do something in my body. I need God to walk in with me to this doctor. I need God, and I'm not ashamed to cry out to him, and I can't sleep down here." "Get up and call on God, and maybe God will give a thought to us."**
- Jonah said, "Yeah, I'm real sorry about this, because this is all my fault. See, I worship Yahweh. Yahweh told me to go to Nineveh, and I said, 'No way.'" I'm just trying to keep it light, because it's kind of a hard sermon to preach, if you want to know the truth. After he got done explaining and they cast lots, which is kind of like drawing a straw, and they realized it was Jonah's fault that they were in this storm, they realized... Listen to this. You can throw all the cargo overboard that you want, but until you deal with the real thing that's going on, it will stay chaotic. You can't fix chaos by losing cargo. How much more stuff are you going to throw overboard before you realize Jonah has to go? "What do you mean 'Jonah has to go'?" I'm saying anything that is on your boat that is keeping Jesus from being the captain of your peace and your soul has to go. You can rearrange all the deck chairs you want. It's still the Titanic if Jonah doesn't go. You can continue to throw things off and spend money and waste money and buy stuff and buy more square footage so y'all can sleep at opposite ends of the bigger house, but until the attitudes at the root of it change, nothing does until God gives a thought.
- It cost Jonah. Did you see how it said he paid the fare? He paid more than a penny for this. He paid his peace. He almost paid his purpose because of a wrong thought.
- **How much have the wrong thoughts cost you? Because God, your God, the God who speaks by impressions, instructions, and even interruptions, might be using this storm to give a thought to you.**
- Don't try to talk to your neighbor about this sermon after church if they weren't really listening. Don't try to explain it to them when God gives a thought to you.
- I just want to show you how merciful God really is. Not only is he going to forgive the barbaric Ninevites over there in chapter 3 when Jonah preaches... And Jonah is not even that great of a preacher. The only thing he says that they record in the book of Jonah is, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be destroyed." Can you imagine coming to church for that? You know, y'all got it pretty good, man. If Jonah was here, that'd be the whole sermon, and he'd just say it over and over again and say it louder. But God used it. God did something through Jonah.
- He always wanted to do something through Jonah. He wants to do something through you, but the question is... Do you value the God thought? Because the cost of the wrong thought... What you trade with the wrong thought is the God thought that replaces it.
- So, God calls you, but you turn yourself into a castaway. God calls you righteous by the blood of Christ, but you keep hiding in shame from even your own friends and family. It's the cost of a wrong thought. Oh, he paid the fare to get on the ship, but he paid more than that. As a matter of fact, it got so bad that the sailors, after doing everything they could, said, "What do you want us to do?" Look at what he said in verse 12. This is the cost of the wrong thought. "He said to them, "Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you..." I'm going to show you something.

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- You've been in church all your life, but I don't think you've ever seen this before. God gave it to me fresh. "...the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me..." "I'm the problem. It's me." "I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you. Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land..." They tried everything they could. "...but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them." You're not going to row your way out of this one. There are some situations where you can strain as much as you want to and the storm doesn't stop. Watch this. Verse 14: "Therefore they called out to the Lord, 'O Lord, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O Lord, have done as it pleased you.' So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging." Right about now you're thinking, "Where are you going with this depressing, weird sermon series right now?" Well, the Bible says, "The men feared the Lord exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows." So that's good. Right? They knew he was God.
- "And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights" Now here's my favorite verse: "Then Jonah prayed..." Do you see what I'm saying? I think you know where I'm going with this. You're overstaying your welcome in the belly of the fish, because this didn't have to happen in Jonah, chapter 2, verse 1. This could have happened in Jonah, chapter 1, verse 6. If it had happened in Jonah, chapter 1, verse 6, when the captain came and said, "Wake up, man! What's wrong with you? We're all going to die. Get up! Don't you care?"
- Call on your God. Perhaps he will give a thought to us. Perhaps he'll get us out of this. Perhaps he'll notice us. Perhaps he'll do something. Perhaps he'll give a thought to us..."
- Jonah's thought was, "Throw me overboard." What if his thought had been, "Call on God"? What if he would have done this (chapter 2, verse 1) but didn't wait until he got in the belly of the fish to do it? What if the moment the captain said, Wake up! Call on God. He can stop it," Jonah had prayed to the Lord? I'm trying to say that some things you can pray before you get in the belly. Do you hear me preaching this good word today? Then Jonah prayed...with seaweed around his neck. Then Jonah prayed...smelling like a fish market. Then Jonah prayed...in the belly of the whale. Here's what I noticed.
- It said (verse 1), "[He] prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish, saying, 'I called out to the Lord, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice.'" Leave it right there. God will hear you when you cry to him from the depths, but you also do not have to go to the depths to cry to him. God will hear you if you cry to him from the depths, but you do not have to go all the way down to reach all the way up.

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- The Bible says, "I called to the Lord out of my distress," and there are two choices you have to make. First, you can call on God in your distress or you can bring God into your decisions. The other day, I was praying about a problem, like I mentioned at the beginning of the sermon, and the Lord showed me something that was so kind and merciful. Y'all think when God gives you a thought it's always going to feel like a precious moment, but sometimes it feels like the pain of surgery. As I was praying about this problem, it was as if the Spirit of God said to me... Not out loud, just down in my spirit. He said, "You know, you wouldn't have to bring me into this problem if you would have brought me into those thoughts." Because the problems are the wake of the thoughts. The behaviors are the wake of the thoughts. Sometimes we are so guilty over "That's what I did" that we don't go back to "That's what I thought." Jonah thought he could run to Tarshish. Jonah thought he knew who was worthy of God's love. Jonah thought he knew his calling. But when Jonah prayed, God gave him mercy. When he prayed and made a vow to the Lord, when he prayed and remembered the hand of God, when he prayed and asked God for forgiveness, when he prayed and looked to heaven, and when he prayed and recommitted his life and his calling... When you pray and look to God... The problem isn't "Has God given a thought to you?" Have you given a thought to God? You can give a thought to God before you go into the belly of depression. You can give a thought to God before you are spent. You can give a thought to God before you are splintered. You can give a thought to God before your life is wrecked. You can give a thought to God when you're at your lowest. You can give your thought to God before you go all 2,500 miles. God can interrupt it today with one God thought. With one God thought. Why go all 2,500 miles when God has a fish for you to pray for today?
- But, see, I'm a little different, because I believe the same God who will hear you from the fish... watch this... is also saying, "If you will listen to me right now; if you will obey me right now; if you will put your heart in my hands, not other people's hands right now; if you will guard your heart, for from it flow the issues of life; if you will re-surrender this thing to me, you can skip the fish." In other words (I feel like fighting the Devil today), you don't have to lose everything to look up, and you don't have to keep shedding stuff to turn to God. You can skip the fish
- I'm saying to a teenager, you don't have to drink until you're drunk and it takes you 10 years of rehab to undo it. If God has to come get you in rehab, he'll get you in rehab, but let's try a little "prehab." Why don't you taste and see that the Lord is good? "I don't need that to go numb, because I don't have to pray every prayer from the belly. I can pray before I get in the belly." High-five three people and say, "I'm going to skip the fish." "I'm going to do it different this time. I'm going to pray to the Lord before the pain is great. I'm going to pray to the Lord when I wake up in the morning.

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- I'm going to say stuff like, 'This is the day the Lord has made. Order my steps in your Word, dear God. If I ascend to heaven, you are there.' And the same God that'll send a fish to get me out is the God who will give me wings to get me over.' I'm trying to say that God wants to give a thought to you. Say it. "God, give a thought to me." I thought my thoughts long enough. They cost too much. My thoughts lead to insecurity. My thoughts lead to greed. My thoughts lead to selfishness. My thoughts lead to despair. I thought and I thought and I thought and I thought. I thought if I paid the fare, I could get to Tarshish and I didn't have to do it. "God, I thought I knew what was best for me, but I need you to give a thought to me. I'm not going to compare myself to my neighbor. God, give a thought to me. Tell me how you think of me. Tell me what you see in me. Tell me what you've called me to do. How have you gifted me? How have you anointed me? What is my smooth stone that can bring down a giant? What is my staff that can split a Red Sea? Who have you called me to be?" Say it again. "God, give a thought to me." "How precious to me are your thoughts, O God. Where can I go from your presence? If I go to Tarshish, you are there. You cut me off in the middle of the sea to swallow me up, because you had a fish at the right time to swallow me, and even the fish was mercy. But I realize that if next time, instead of fleeing from you, God, I will lean into you, God, I may not have to go into the fish at all to begin with, because God gave a thought to me." When God gives a thought to you, expect the Enemy to give an opposite thought. Sometimes you can tell what God is speaking by what your mind is saying.
- If over and over again the Enemy is telling you something that's so diabolical, God is saying exactly the opposite. So, if it looks like "Quit," then stay. I can point to so many times in my life... I did not get here overnight, and I am not perfect at it. Next time my guitar almost breaks at the top of the Jeep, I might cuss if Abbey is not in the car. But the number of times... Listen to me. Listen to me. The number of times that "Then Jonah prayed" in my life happened too late taught me to lean into God sooner. I don't want my kids to go through avoidable storms. I don't want to create them. I want them to skip some fish. You know what I mean? I feel like that phrase right there is a God thought. "Nah, I'm going to skip the fish. I know where this goes." The next time you go to throw a little pity party... "Nah, I'm going to skip the fish. I don't like how it smells in there. I don't want to go to my meeting Tuesday smelling like fish. I'm not going to think like this. God, give a thought to me." "Perhaps God will give a thought to us." He already gave a thought to you. Have you given a thought to him or is this just simply still all about you and what you want? The cost is to give your thought for his thought. That's what happens when we come to his Word. How many times did God give me a thought that was greater than anything? I thought if I really wanted the church to shout, I could preach, "When God gives a car to you," and there would be shouts. "When God gives a promotion to you," and there would be shouts. Or I could go to our Young Adults Chapel, "When God gives a spouse to you," and there would be shouts. But the greatest gifts God ever gave me came with thoughts, because if I get the things but not the thoughts of God to undergird them, the things will be a burden, not a blessing. Jonah did what God said, and it worked, and he was miserable. Why? Because you have to have the God thoughts.
- Like the time she said to me after I preached... I was having a pity party, a little preaching pity party, and Holly just wisely says, "I think you think you failed in preaching today, but maybe you didn't fail; maybe you just didn't finish."
- That thought comes up here with me into this pulpit every time I preach ever since she said it.

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- Every time I think, "Oh man! I didn't say that like I wanted to," the Lord will just remind me, "Then pick it back up next week and say the rest, bozo. Skip the fish and the whole thing of beating up on yourself. You said it better than most of them could have anyway, so tell them to get up there and try. Come on. They'll still need you next week. You have job security."
- One time I was frustrated with some of our staff members. It was in 2020 when everything had totally shifted, and all the staff that had been doing one job started having to do another one, because, obviously, we weren't having in-person church. We were on a Zoom call, and I was like, "It's very important to me that we do this and we do that and we do that." The next week, I got on and checked in, and nobody had done successfully what I asked. I said, "I'm going to say this again. It's very important that we do this and we do that and we do that." There again, one more week goes by, and I checked in, and it still hadn't been done. The third week, I was really angry, and I kind of lost it. I didn't cuss. That's going to be my memoir title: "But I Didn't Cuss."
- Well, I got so mad I kind of lost my cool a little bit (not too bad, but just a little bit) and ended the meeting abruptly. When I was kind of closing the laptop intentionally... Slam the laptop shut. I said, "They don't care. They don't care enough to do what I'm asking them to do. They don't care." The Spirit of the Lord gave me a thought. He said, "They care; they just can't. They don't know how to do what you're asking them to do. This is their first pandemic too." It was a God thought, because it took me from thinking there was something wrong with them and it was me against them to thinking it's us against it. You know, you can have one God thought. That has helped me so much. Even with y'all, there are so many God thoughts that had to replace wrong thoughts. Do you know, when I used to preach and people wouldn't get excited, I would feel like they were... Almost like I would get mad at the people. I'd say something good, and they wouldn't say anything, and I would get mad. Now I pretend to be mad. I'm like, "Y'all ain't saying nothing." I don't care. I always wonder if the crowd could talk back too... You know, "Y'all ain't saying nothing," and they'd go, "You aren't either." But the Lord dropped something in me so profound. It was a download. One day I was frustrated about it, and he said, "They're not here for you; you're here for them. You serve them when you preach. They're not your audience to make you feel good about your amateur hour stand-up comedy. If they don't laugh, you keep preaching. You're here for them. You're here as a servant." It changed my life. What's that? That's the value of a God thought. And God wants to give you one. Stand up, please.
- No one leaving. Pray it out loud. "God, give a thought to my wife." No, no, no, no, no, no. Try it again. Y'all weren't listening. "God, give a thought to me. Show me how you think about me. Show me how you think about others. Put somebody on my mind that I can help, that I can bless" Yes, yes. I want to tell you this too. In 2010, when I started LOVE Week, it was a thought. "What if everybody in this church served an hour? We could serve 5,000 hours." Never would I have thought when God gave me that thought... You have to realize God's thoughts are vast. God's thoughts are vast. So, when I saw 5,000 hours... How many have we served now? Over what? Over what? Over a million hours of service from this church in outreach. Y'all ain't clapping. All right, I'm going to give you a million dollars. Clap like that. Over a million hours to our communities. We're on God's mind. "God, give a thought to me. Show me how to do good. Show me how to make it." Really, sometimes the problem isn't the storm you're going through; it's the thoughts you're having about the storm.

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- In Mark, chapter 4, one time Jesus was on the boat with his disciples, and he said, "Let's go to the other side." The Bible says when evening had come, he told them to cross over to the other side (Mark 4:35). "Come, let us go over to the other side." "And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion." What is Jesus doing acting like Jonah? Only he's not running from God's will; he's rowing into it. "And they woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?'" Here was their thought: "He doesn't care. He's sleeping." "And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, 'Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?'"
- **I want to talk to you, before I close my message, about a sleeping Jesus, not a sleeping Jonah. When the disciples saw Jesus asleep, they thought, "He doesn't care," but they could have thought, "Wait. He is God's Son. If he is sleeping through the storm, maybe it's not that he doesn't care. Maybe we're cool." I came to preach to somebody today. If God is not doing it exactly like you want in your situation, maybe it's not that he doesn't care. Maybe he's so confident, maybe he's so in control, maybe he is so sovereign over the storm that he will wake up when he needs to wake up. It's all in your thoughts. So, God, I pray right now that as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are your ways above our ways and your thoughts above our thoughts. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God. I pray for those who have been having tormenting thoughts, tempting thoughts. I pray that they would be replaced right now with the truth of your Word. I thank you for our Savior Jesus who loved and died for us.**

Part 2: eGroup study questions

“God's path led through the sea and his way through the mighty waters, though his footprints were not seen.” Question: Tie this back to Pastor Furtick’s message “I Thought it was Through”?

Additional commentary but Pastor Furtick:

- And the devil specializes in turning distress into despair to get you so clouded by one conflict that you have forgotten your calling.
- You are not worthy of God's love - the cross made you worthy - what does it have to do with your behavior what did it ever have to do with your behavior - it's about his blood - I call you worthy in the name of Jesus - I call you healed by his stripes - I call you forgiven and his favor is coming to your situation right now.
- Verse 10 is the hinge where everything changes for this Psalmist.
 - Vs 10 Then I thought, “To this I will appeal:
the years when the Most High stretched out his right hand.
 - Vs 11 I will remember the deeds of the Lord;
yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.

I did not come to church today to have a pep rally. I did not come to church today for a social occasion. I did not come to church today like it's a country club. I did not come to church today for a hand clap. I did not come to church today to show off. But what I came here for is a God who will meet with me, and in one meeting, one moment, one second, one thought... I'm telling you, you can think a thought, which is what happened to the sons of Asaph last week when he said, "**I thought it was through, and then I thought it through,**" because a God thought is valuable. Not only is it valuable, but it's vast. He says, "How precious are your thoughts to me, God!" Put the verse up again. "How vast is the sum of them!" That means God doesn't just think things about church things. God doesn't just have thoughts to offer you about your spiritual life.

How valuable is a God thought to you? Is it something that if a Bible verse comes into your feed, you might read it, or is it something that you seek out in your life? If the God thoughts are just right there in your scrolling beside all of the other thoughts, they're not very set apart. If the only way I ever hear from God is if I trip over something he says on my way to going somewhere else, I'm missing out on some very valuable God thoughts. God can give you one thought that will help you parent that special-needs child differently. One God thought can show you somebody to reach out to who has already been through what you're going through, and they know stuff they can download on Bluetooth in two minutes that would have taken you two years. One God thought.

“God will never give you an impression that violates His clear instruction.” What’s something you already know God has told you to do, but you’ve been waiting to feel ready? What’s been holding you back from starting?

How much do you value the God thought? When he gives you a word, will you sit with it for a minute? Will you seek out a word from him rather than waiting for him to bring you one?

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Additional commentary by Pastor Furtick:

““He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish.” Pastor Mickey used to always say, “If you ever want to run from God, the Devil will always give you a ride.”

“If you are in a situation where you don't know what to do, you don't know where to go, you don't know where to turn, you don't know how it's going to work out... You can't really get your mind around it, and the Enemy is tormenting you. You don't have to wait for the word of the Lord to come to you; you can come to the Word of the Lord.” You don't have to wait for the fish – you can skip the fish.”

Sermon Discussion – “When God Gives You A Thought” - Pastor Furtick - July 27, 2025

“How much have the wrong thoughts cost you? Because God, your God, the God who speaks by impressions, instructions, and even interruptions, might be using this storm to give a thought to you.”

"He paid the fare and went on board to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord." Surprise! (Verse 4.) You can't. You can't run from any of it. You can't run from it. Well, you can run from it, just not very long, especially if the Lord really loves you, because those he loves he disciplines. Those he really loves he does what it takes to bring them back. Those he really has a purpose for he will even punish you short-term to prevent you from something in your future that would be worse than the pain of the present.

Sermon Discussion – “When God Gives You A Thought” - Pastor Furtick - July 27, 2025

Why would God hurl a storm at Jonah?

Why would God hurl a storm at Jonah?

“I am not saying that every bad thing happens so God can teach you a lesson. Please understand that the number of people who I have watched die of cancer, and the number of people I have seen have their lives senselessly taken from a drunk driver, would prohibit me from ever spewing that kind of nonsense from the pulpit. But I need to point out to you that the God who speaks by instructions and impressions also will sometimes come into your situation through an interruption, because the Bible says, "The Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up."

Closing Prayer #1: “. "I'm going to do it different this time. I'm going to pray to the Lord before the pain is great. I'm going to pray to the Lord when I wake up in the morning. I'm going to say stuff like, 'This is the day the Lord has made. Order my steps in your Word, dear God. If I ascend to heaven, you are there.' And the same God that'll send a fish to get me out is the God who will give me wings to get me over." "God, give a thought to me." I thought my thoughts long enough. They cost too much. My thoughts lead to insecurity. My thoughts lead to greed. My thoughts lead to selfishness. My thoughts lead to despair. I thought if I paid the fare, I could get to Tarshish and I didn't have to do it. God, Tell me what you've called me to do. How have you gifted me? How have you anointed me? What is my smooth stone that can bring down a giant? What is my staff that can split a Red Sea? Who have you called me to be?" O God. Where can I go from your presence? If I go to Tarshish, you are there. I realize that if next time, instead of fleeing from you, God, I will lean into you, God, I may not have to go into the fish at all to begin with, because God gave a thought to me."

Closing Prayer #2: “I want to talk to you, before I close my message, about a sleeping Jesus, not a sleeping Jonah. When the disciples saw Jesus asleep, they thought, “He doesn't care,” but they could have thought, “Wait. He is God's Son. If he is sleeping through the storm, maybe it's not that he doesn't care. Maybe we're cool.” I came to preach to somebody today. If God is not doing it exactly like you want in your situation, maybe it's not that he doesn't care. Maybe he's so confident, maybe he's so in control, maybe he is so sovereign over the storm that he will wake up when he needs to wake up. It's all in your thoughts. So, God, I pray right now that as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are your ways above our ways and your thoughts above our thoughts. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God. I pray for those who have been having tormenting thoughts, tempting thoughts. I pray that they would be replaced right now with the truth of your Word. I thank you for our Savior Jesus who loved and died for us.”

Back up slides



July 18 – Daily Devotional:

“There is nothing miraculous about the things that we can explain. We command what we are able to explain, consequently it is natural to seek to explain. It is not natural to obey; nor is necessarily sinful to disobey. If one man says to another – You must and you shall, he brakes the human spirit and unfits it for God. Many a soul begins to come to God when he flings off being religious, because, there is only one master of the human heart, and that is not religion but Jesus Christ. But woe be to me if when I see Him I say – I will not. He will never insist that I do, but I have begun to sign the death warrant of the Son of God in my soul. When I stand face to face with Jesus Chris and say – I will not, **He will never insist, but I am backing away form the re-creating power of His redemption.**



Dr. Timothy Keller

total freedom = lack of meaning and significance

What if we found the reason for life? Why we were created? Why we were designed? And conformed to that and then honored that?

If there is a design, there is a designer. And if there is a designer, the logos has come. Not some abstract philosophical principle. **It is a person.**

The designer has punched a hole into the world and he has descended. And you were built not to just honor some philosophical principle. But you were built to know and love this divine person. When you know him and when you serve him and you find out what he built you for, when you comply with it and submit yourself to him, you find out who you are. And you are now able to reach your potential.

Have a good navigational beacon in 2022:

“Life and Leadership at the Highest” A quote from an unknown author and requoted by Pastor Tim Keller in his sermon “This is Jesus” part 4 “Two Grieving Sisters Encounter Jesus” at Oxford University in 2016: “The accounts of Him in the New Testament speak for themselves – He combines qualities that no one has ever seen – despite his incredible claims, we never see him pompous, offended, or standing on his own dignity. Despite being absolutely approachable to the weakest and most broken people, he is completely fearless before the powerful and the corrupt. Despite being weary and lonely, we find him remarkably human - filled with joy, fear, love, and anger. Yet, we never see him Moody. We never see him being inconsistent. We never see Him strong when He should be tender and we never see Him tender when He should be strong. Most interesting of all – Of all his encounters with people - we are continuously surprised – shocking us - but never disappointing us – it is difficult for us to imagine words that Jesus ought to have said or deeds that he ought to have done. Nothing he has done ever falls short - in fact He is always surprising us - because He is incomparably better than what we could imagine for ourselves. Why? These are the surprises of perfection – He has tenderness without weakness – He has strength without harshness – humility without the slightest lack of confidence – unhesitating authority without the slightest sense of self-absorption – Holy and unbending convictions without the slightest lack of approachability – power without insensitivity – passion without prejudice – there is never a false step – there’s never a jarring no – this is life at the highest.”