

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?
- Elevation Nights tour: Feb 24–Mar 5 in Hershey (PA), Brooklyn (NY), Indianapolis (IN), Milwaukee (WI), Grand Rapids (MI), Knoxville (TN), Columbus (OH), Rosemont (IL). Tickets: elevationnights.com.

Matthew 13:24-30 – Parable of the Seeds

24 Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. 26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

27 “The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’

28 “‘An enemy did this,’ he replied.

“The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’

29 “‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”

Kev's guys on-line eGroup study notes

Matthew 13:36-43 - Parable of the Seeds explained

36 Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

37 He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

40 "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. 42 They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

Opening Prayer by Pastor Furtick on 12/7/2025: “I call you worthy, worthy you are, worthy you were, worthy you will be forever Yahweh. Father, I thank you so much that you reign and you rule. Not a little God, not a tiny God, not a baby stuck in a manger, but a reigning, present King. There is no other beside you. Every emotional malady fears the name of Jesus. It is the only name that can stand up against the things that bind us. Father, how I thank you for your presence in this place today. Open your hands to the Lord. I pray that you would fill our hands today. Hallelujah. They're not leaving here empty today. Not going into this Christmas season empty. Not going into this Christmas season afraid. Not going into this Christmas season, just dragging, so exhausted. No, God, we are more than conquerors. We have an inheritance. We have a father. We have a wonderful counselor, a mighty God. God, I thank you that today whatever they need, you already know it. They don't have to put it on a list or sit on your lap. You're greater than that. You know the need beneath the need beneath the need beneath the need. So when I ask you to meet their need, I'm not asking you just to do what they want you to do. I'm asking you to do what you need to do. To make them who they're supposed to be. And now God to that end. We ask that you would speak a word into our lives.”

Part 1: Detailed sermon notes

Kev's guys on-line eGroup study notes

Elevation Church Sermon Notes – “Don't Let The Attack Distract You” by Pastor Steven Furtick - January 12, 2026

Sermon Summary

Right when you start to feel some positive momentum in your life, an attack comes out of nowhere. Sound familiar? Pastor Steven uses the parable of the seeds to illustrate what to do when the enemy attacks and how to persevere in your purpose.

Sermon Highlights

- Where there is wheat, there will always be weeds.
- When we start to advance, the enemy attacks, and then we get distracted.
- What God plants, God protects.
- Don't judge it before God's done with it.
- Don't let the attack discourage you.
- If it started with God, it will be sustained by God, and there is nothing the enemy can plant to stop Him.
- No matter what the enemy plants, God got there first.
- Don't fall for the lie that you have to get rid of the weeds before you can enjoy the wheat.
- This week, think less about the weeds and more about the wheat.
- If you don't let it distract you, it can't destroy you.
- Don't give up on what it can be because of what it looks like right now.

Scriptures:

- Matthew 13:24-30 – Parable of the Seeds
- Matthew 13:36-43 - Parable of the Seeds explained

Sermon Discussion

- “Don't judge it before God's done with it.” When have you misjudged something that turned out for your good?
- “This week, think less about the weeds and more about the wheat.” Where do you need to focus on what God is planting in your life?
- “If you don't let it distract you, it can't destroy you.” What's been distracting you lately from the work God is trying to do?
- “Don't fall for the lie that you have to get rid of the weeds before you can enjoy the wheat.” Make a list of the “wheat,” the good things God is growing in your life right now.
- “If it started with God, it will be sustained by God, and there is nothing the enemy can plant to stop Him.” What has God started in your life that you can trust Him to sustain?

Kev's guys on-line eGroup study notes

Elevation Church Sermon Notes – “Don't Let The Attack Distract You” by Pastor Steven Furtick - January 12, 2026

AI enabled sermon summary

Overview: A worship-filled service transitions into announcements and a sermon centered on Matthew 13's parable of the weeds among the wheat. The core message: “Don't let the attack distract you.” The speaker urges believers to expect mixed seasons (wheat and weeds), avoid premature judgments, and focus on God's planting and purpose rather than the enemy's distractions. He shares a personal ministry attack that refined his perspective, exhorts practical resilience, and invites responses in worship, service, and faith.

Worship, Affirmations, and Prayer

- Corporate recitation of the Lord's Prayer followed by an emphatic unpacking of “Amen” as active agreement with God's plan, promises, and final authority; calls to declare identity and trust in Jesus (“The Lord is my shepherd... He is my risen, resurrected king”).
- Pastoral prayer over the church's year: requests for God's word to bring “salvation, deliverance, miracles, correction, comfort,” and to use the preacher “like a woodwind instrument” to deliver a healing melody.
- Announcements and Updates
- Celebrations: “Happy New Year” to the church and “our EFAM around the world” (acronym not defined in the transcript). Launch of the 20th location: Elevation Somerville.
- Year-end offering: \$11,463,000 given “for the building of his kingdom,” helping the poor, reaching the lost, and serving the world.
- Charge for “another year” of ministry: preaching, releasing worship to heal hearts, mentoring fatherless children, bringing coats and blankets, outreach in prisons and recovery centers, and inviting those told “God will never accept you.”
- Elevation Nights tour: Feb 24–Mar 5 in Hershey (PA), Brooklyn (NY), Indianapolis (IN), Milwaukee (WI), Grand Rapids (MI), Knoxville (TN), Columbus (OH), Rosemont (IL). Tickets: elevationnights.com. Invite friends and family.
- Sermon Text and Framing

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AI enabled sermon summary

Main passage:

- Matthew 13:24–30 (parable of the weeds among the wheat) and Jesus' private explanation to the disciples later in the chapter.
- Context aside: Parable of the soils (seed snatched, scorched, or strangled; one seed yields 30/60/100-fold). Theme: “If one does” receive God's word, it can change a life, generation, and bloodline.
- Main Message: Don't Let the Attack Distract You
- Good seed is planted in “his field,” but an enemy sows weeds while people sleep. The enemy cannot destroy God's seed; he aims to distract the harvesters so they harm the harvest themselves. Instruction: “Let both grow together until the harvest.”
- Growth–attack–distraction–destruction cycle: When you advance, expect attack. The danger is distraction, not the attack itself. Focus disrupts the enemy's strategy.
- Judgment belongs to God: The furnace is the Father's, not the children's. Warning against labeling others as weeds; “you suck at judging” is illustrated with examples (misreads of leaders and songs like “Graves into Gardens”).
- Accept mixed seasons: “It's going to be mixed in 26.” Life will hold wheat and weeds, joy and mourning, friends and enemies. Aim to be Spirit-filled, not weed-free.
- Illustrations and Applications
- “If one does” principle: Despite many seeds failing, one fruitful response can outweigh failures. Personal aside: “Most didn't, but one did” (marriage to Holly).
- Weed type: Darnell resembles wheat until maturity—don't judge too early. What looks like wheat can later prove a weed; growth reveals.
- “Let Them/Let Him” stance: Critics will curse; let them. David's restraint with Shimei while fleeing Absalom shows trust in God to restore blessing rather than retaliating.
- Personal attack narrative: News stories accused Elevation of “fake baptisms.” Prayer: “God, make it stop.” Perceived response: “I can stop the attack, but if I stop the attack, I have to stop the impact that created it.” The church chose impact over comfort. Outcome: a staff member (Justin) first came to church after hearing that attack, later serving weekly to run scriptures.
- Practical reframes: Soreness after workouts signals growth; perfectionism fixates on weeds and blinds to wheat. Don't obsess over the one problem and miss many blessings.
- Mantras: “Don't pluck it up” and “Don't burn your bread” (wheat's potential becomes bread if not destroyed prematurely).
- Identity and assurance: “I'm good seed.” What God plants, God protects. “He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it.”
- Confidence amid opposition: “No weapon formed against you shall prosper.” God prepares a table “in the presence of your enemies.” “It won't work.”
- Focus shift: Think less about weeds and more about wheat. In the end, weeds are burned; wheat is gathered into the barn.

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Faith Invitation and Community Engagement: Salvation call: Confess “Jesus is Lord” and believe God raised him from the dead to be saved by grace through faith. Corporate prayer for those choosing Christ; in-person hand raise on count of three; online comment “I receive Jesus.” Worship posture: Hand over heart—“This is good soil.” Persist in praise even with weeds.

Upcoming Steps and Actions

- Attend or invite to Elevation Nights (Feb 24–Mar 5) in Hershey, Brooklyn, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Grand Rapids, Knoxville, Columbus, and Rosemont; tickets at elevationknights.com.
- Engage with the new Elevation Somerville campus (20th location).
- Support “another year” of ministry: worship, preaching, mentoring, serving the poor, outreach to prisons and recovery centers, inviting those far from God.
- Weekly focus: Resist distractions after attacks; refrain from premature judgments; intentionally notice and cultivate wheat (blessings, growth).
- Online: Subscribe, comment where you’re watching from and prayer needs, and consider financial support to extend global reach.

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- Opening prayer: Your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us. Jesus is in this place. Deliver us. From evil. For thine. Is the kingdom. Power. And the glory. Forever. And ever. Not for five minutes. Forever. And ever. And right here I want the whole church to say amen.
- Amen means so be it. Amen means I'm coming into agreement with God's plan for my life. Amen means that no word from God returns void. Amen means that my father has the final say. Amen means that I read through the back of the book and I know how this ends. Heaven wins. Amen means I'm born again. Amen means no weapon formed against me will prosper. Amen means I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. You didn't know amen meant all that, did you? Say it again, amen. If he says I'm blessed, I'm blessed. Say amen. If he says my family will be saved, my family will be saved. Say amen. If he said I'm more than a conqueror, I'm more than a conqueror. Say amen. Come on, everybody in the comments right now, even watching this on social media, put an amen in the comments. Let the devil know I agree with God. I belong to Jesus. He's the one who never lets go.
- On every mountain I belong to him. In every valley I belong to him. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. I'm guided. I got a good shepherd. I'm guarded. He's the gate. He's the light of the world. He is my risen, resurrected king. And I'm getting up out of this situation. And I came to praise the Lord. I did not come to feel sorry for myself.
- I came to praise the Lord. I did not come to impress my neighbors with proper church behavior. I came to praise the Lord. If you knew what he brought me through, you wouldn't call me crazy. You would lift your hands and praise him too. I say amen. What are we gonna do? How are we gonna get out of this? We can't get out. What are we gonna do? What are we gonna do? That's what we're gonna do. Bless the name of the Lord. For he is worthy to be praised.
- Every season of my life, he's been a friend to me. And he's worthy to be praised. I don't know what I would do without God. I don't know where I'd be without Jesus. I have a kind of idea and it doesn't look good.
- Let's celebrate our brand new campus, our 20th location, Elevation Somerville. Happy new year, happy new campus. So many things to tell you. We've got so much to catch up on. God has been so good. The last time that I stood in the pulpit, we were taking our year-end offering. And you stepped up big this year. And I told them to wait until I got back so I could announce to you that you gave to the Lord and the gospel of Jesus Christ for the building of his kingdom and helping the poor and reaching the lost and serving the world. \$11,463,000. Give God a shout of praise, all right? We did that together. So every year, every year I come before you and just say, let's do another one. Y'all want to do another one?

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- Another year of preaching God's word. Another year of releasing worship into the earth that can heal broken hearts. Another year of standing beside children who don't have fathers and mentoring them. Another year of showing up with coats and blankets for people who are cold. Another year of reaching into prisons and recovery centers and telling people that their life matters. And don't throw it away. And God is not done with you yet. Another year to invite people. Who have been told for years that God will never accept you. That it's not too late for him to change your life. If you're not dead, God's not done. And God is not done with this church yet. I'm getting ready for the next 20 years. God is with me with this gray hair. God is with me.
- And I'm just going to take a moment right now. If you'd stretch your hands toward this pulpit. Lord, let every word that goes forth from this church this year. Bring salvation, deliverance, miracles, correction, comfort, everything you want to do. God, it's all about you. I pray that even today as I preach, that you would see fit to use me like a woodwind instrument. Something that your breath could use to produce a sound that would produce a melody from heaven. That would be medicine to someone's heart. Lord, I bring before you every person that's in this room, the 19 other rooms where we physically gather, every place where somebody couldn't go to church or they were just too lazy. Speak your word.
- One time a man said, "I don't even need to have you come in my house, Jesus, "if you just speak your word, it's enough to heal." Today, Lord, we just ask for a word from you, our daily bread. Not enough so we can come to church once at the beginning of the year, check it off the list, and then spend the rest of the year asking God why he didn't show up. But enough word to nourish us for the needs of this moment. You are Jehovah Jireh, and you're in this place. And I give you the praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Clap your hands, everybody.
- I'm going to have you seated before I read my scripture, which I don't normally do. But before I do, give out about 26 hugs divided by two. Give five hugs and tell somebody I'm glad you're here today. And we're sending you a big hug online to our eFam all around the world. Just remember, God is speaking this message exactly where you need it to be. He's not limited by time or by space or by location. May this message speak to your heart today. I prayed about what to share with you for my first sermon of the year. And the Lord led and directed me in a powerful way. Let's thank our band, our worship team, for leading us so well in the presence of God today. Make sure you get the new music from Elevation Rhythm. Thank God I'm free. Play it everywhere that the devil has been trying to keep you bound and let him know it won't work. This year I'm coming out of these chains.
- Also make sure that you get the opportunity to be a part of Elevation Nights. Now I know that for most of you who are here locally, you probably won't be getting on a plane. But we're going to be visiting eight cities. And these nights are powerful and these nights are miraculous and these nights are unforgettable. We're going to be in Hershey, Pennsylvania, Brooklyn, New York, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Knoxville, Tennessee, Columbus, Ohio, and Rosemont, Illinois. If you have any friends or family, especially the ones who really need Jesus and smell like cigarettes and other stuff like that, send them over. We'll see what we can do for them. Elevationknights.com where you can get your tickets February 24th through March the 5th.

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Elevation Church Sermon Notes – “Don't Let The Attack Distract You” by Pastor Steven Furtick - January 12, 2026

- I thank you for the privilege of being able to minister God's word to you another year. What an honor. I'll be sharing today from the parable of the seed in Matthew chapter 13, verses 24 through 30. Matthew chapter 14, verses 24 through 30. Now, this is not the parable that's normally called the parable of the seeds. The parable of the seeds that we hear more about is actually the parable of the soils. Okay, because Jesus taught these parables. He would go out and he would give a teaching. And on one level, it would sound simple. But you reflect on it and you pray about it. And it really helps you to see what the kingdom of God is like. And it helps you to see what you're like.
- And one of those parables that has helped me so much through the year, he talks about a seed that was sown in four different places. One was sown on rocky soil. So because the soil was too rocky, the bird came and snatched it up. So that seed got sown. it was supposed to do. And then there was one seed that was sown in a place where it was scorched by the sun, which represents the trials of life. So since it didn't have a root or a foundation, the sun was too strong for it. And it got cooked up before it could come forth. I said, it got cooked up before it could come forth. Some promises that God speaks to you. the affliction, the heat of trial. It tests that seed before it has had the chance to develop and you don't pass the test. The third type of seed that he talks about is one that gets choked out or we could say strangled by the cares of this life, just getting busy. And in each of these instances, the seed represents the word of God and the sower is God.
- And the seed is good in each of those instances, but it is not successful because of the soil that it lands in. One of the soils that Jesus mentions in that parable is the good soil, which produces a harvest 30, 60 and 100 fold. And this always encouraged me as a preacher, because one time I realized most of the people that I preach to won't remember the sermon 24 hours after I preach it. And most of the people that I preach to about a specific topic aren't going to really do what I challenge them to do, even if I give them scripture behind it. Because the seed often gets snatched, scorched, or strangled. But the one seed that produced a harvest, watch what it did. It produced 30, 60, or 100 fold. So the one seed that was successful made up for all the ones that weren't. God can bless you with one blessing in your life. that will make every failure irrelevant. And I came to preach that even though most people won't receive this word, if one does, it will have been worth it.
- That's what I believe these days that most won't. Fine. But if one does, it could branch out and touch the world. If one does, what is one soul worth? What is one life worth? What is one grandmother's prayers getting answered worth? If one does. And I just want to kind of encourage you on the way to my main text today. I'm not preaching about that one. Believe it or not. I studied it, but I'm not going to preach it. Because you may be encouraging your kids right now or instructing your kids right now or working on something in your life. And most of the things that you try and most of the things that you say won't get through to them. But if one does. Somebody say, if one does. If one does, it can change a life. If one does, it can change a generation. If one does, it can change a bloodline. Most won't.
- Don't be discouraged by the ones that don't work. Don't be discouraged by the ones who don't call you back. Don't be discouraged by the ones who don't say yes. Don't be discouraged by the ones who don't get you. Because if one does. Look, I asked a lot of girls to be my girlfriend before Holly. Most didn't, but one did. Look at me now. Look at what the Lord has done. If one does.

Kev's guys on-line eGroup study notes

Elevation Church Sermon Notes – “Don't Let The Attack Distract You” by Pastor Steven Furtick - January 12, 2026

- Well, this is a scripture that I want to give you today from Matthew chapter 13. A parable of two different types of seed, not different types of soil, which represents the condition of our heart, but two different types of seed. I'm going to read it to you and then we'll talk about it for just a few moments. Jesus is teaching many parables and they're collected here for us to read. And it says Jesus told them another parable. The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. If you are underlining your Bible type, just underline the word good. It was good seed. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did these weeds come from? An enemy did this, he replied. The servants asked him, do you want us to go and pull them up? No, he answered. Because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time, I will tell the harvesters, first collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned. Then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn. I have a simple message from the Lord for your heart today. And the Lord told me to tell you, don't let the attack distract you. That's what it is. It's a distraction. And he told me to tell you, don't let the attack distract you.
- Write it down in your notebook. Type it in the comments. Don't let the attack distract you. And I love preaching the second Sunday of a new year because by now your new year's resolutions have become good intentions, which you have modified to become more realistic. The New Year's energy has been sufficiently tapered and sufficiently adjusted to match the realities of daily life for most people. And now we can really preach about the way life is. New Year's resolution, first Sunday of the year, I'm not cussing anymore. Second week of the year, I'm cutting back on cussing. I'm only going to say these four words this year, but I got to have these four, Lord, and you know I do. I'm fasting this. I'm going to fast the first 21 days. I'm going to fast the first.
- Well, I'm a fast from vegetables. The first 21 days, the Lord will receive it as an offering, you know, because we modify it in real life. You know, one thing that I noticed about this parable that Jesus gave in the passage, and I believe you noticed it, too, is that wherever there is wheat, there will always be wheat. Jesus isn't just giving us a little discourse about how problems creep up in our life here. He's making a bigger point. Specifically, he's letting us know that it is not your job to judge others. It's not your job. It's not your job because you're not God. And if I could say a little more directly, you suck at judging. That's how you bought that timeshare. That's how you bought that vacuum cleaner. Because you suck at judging. Honestly, even when it comes to the work that I create, I've taught myself, it's not my job to judge it. It's just my job to make it. Especially when you write a song.
- You don't know. Chris Brown, y'all know Chris Brown? Formerly an R&B singer, but now the main worship leader at Elevation Worship. Look at what the Lord has done. I always call him the real Chris Brown. He's my favorite worship leader in the world. Always has been, always will be since the first time I heard him. I'm going to tell you something else. He sucks at judging whether a new song is good or not. He called me one Sunday. We had a new song that we wanted to introduce, and I wasn't going to be there to preach, and he was leading it. And he called me after. I said, how'd it go? He said, not too good. I don't think the song is very good. The song was Graves into Gardens. You remember that? Remember that, CB? You suck at judging. You're a great worship leader. You're handsome. You're a great man of God. You're wonderful at being a dad and a husband, but you suck at judging.

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- And I chose to say it that way because some of y'all are so tripping and stumbling over the fact that I said the word suck judging me for that. That you just proved my point. Because if you think if the most important thing is whether I say the word suck or whether I say it more fancy, it's not your job to judge. If you're tripping over what I'm saying, you're making the very mistake that I'm warning you about, thereby validating the wisdom of my point and the way I phrased it. Now, every once in a while, Jesus would explain his parables to his disciples after everybody else was gone. Almost like y'all can get it at a deep level, the disciples, but the crowds couldn't consume it. And that's why he taught in parables, so that he could have the privilege of pulling aside his disciples and giving them the deeper meaning.
- We're going to look at the deeper meaning of this parable that Jesus shared a little bit further in Matthew chapter 13. Put it on the screen, please. He let the crowd go and he went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field. He answered, well, the one who sowed the good seed is the son of man. That's Jesus. The field is the world. The good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one. And the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age and the harvesters are the angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The son of man will send out his angels and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father. Whoever has ears, let them hear. And we read this and we are so quick to say, that's right. Those evil people, those sinners, those terrible. Democrats, Republicans, independents, whatever category that you wanted to put right there, it exposed something about your heart.
- **Whatever you wanted to see the weeds as tells me something about what you see in the mirror. Now let me explain that for a moment. Go back to verse 42. It says that the evil ones will be thrown into the furnace. But watch this verse 43 that comes right after it says the kingdom of their father. So the furnace of judgment belongs to the father, not the children. The furnace of judgment is not yours to put people in. The furnace of judgment is not your place to have a Facebook conversation about what everybody else thinks and why they're so stupid to think it.**
- I shouldn't be preaching like this my first Sunday back in the year. I might run y'all all off from the church. But notice in the parable, it says that it was his field. And I'm learning more and more in my life that if it's his field, that means it's his furnace. That means God has to be the one to decide who's right and who's wrong. God has to be the one to decide who is on his side and who is not. I remember very early in my ministry, there was a pastor that I greatly admired and he was mentoring me in many ways. And he was bringing up examples of the right kind of ministry and the wrong kind of ministry. And he brought up one minister and he said, now this guy, he's arrogant. This guy, he is not doctrinally sound. This guy, he is not theologically correct.
- In fact, you can watch him preach and you can see his pride. He's arrogant and he's self-focused and he's fleshly. And then he brought up another gentleman and he said, now this man is humble. This man has... Has the Greek New Testament practically memorized? He's a serious student. This man, you can tell by watching him, he is meek. He is mild. He is Christ-like. That's who you want to be like. Not this guy over here. That guy right there. Five years later, the guy who knew Greek, the guy who was so humble, was discovered to have been having an affair on foreign mission trips that he was taking, pretending to be spreading the gospel. For 12 years with one woman in Russia while he looked humble. The man who was so prideful and cocky and arrogant is still doing the ministry today that he was doing 20 years ago. What am I trying to say? You suck at judging. And so do I.

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Elevation Church Sermon Notes – “Don't Let The Attack Distract You” by Pastor Steven Furtick - January 12, 2026

- We don't know who God is going to be using 10 years from now. We don't know who God is going to raise up. So while y'all are looking at me like you're confused about this, let me break it down a little bit finer. Some of the people that you dated are proof of the fact that you are not very good at getting past the packaging. Let me break it down a little bit further. Some of the people that you put in your phone that you knew you needed to block, but you ignored that little instinct that told you there is something about them. You cannot trust your own judgment this year.
- You cannot trust your fleshly, earthly judgment. When Israel trusted her judgment, she got Saul as king. David was a man after God's own heart. But even David had weeds. Ask Bathsheba. Even the man after God's own heart didn't always do it God's way. And what I'm trying to say, and I'm kind of going all around the barn to say it. So let me just land the plane. We all got weeds. We all got weeds. Say it out loud. I got weeds. Put the S at the end of that, just making sure.
- Talking about the biblical kind of weeds. It's called Darnell. Darnell. It's this type of weed. See, the Bible says, can I preach about this for a moment? The Bible says that the man planted a good seed in his field. Everybody say his field. I'm going to point this out to you over and over again as I preach today. It was his field. It belonged to the farmer. It belonged to the man. He planted the seed in his field. It was his property. It was his territory to do with it as he wished. He planted a good seed in the field. The seed was doing what it was supposed to do. It was growing. And since the seed was doing what it was supposed to do and growing, An enemy noticed the growth of the seed and said, if I don't do something about this seed, my enemy will triumph over me. So the Bible says that overnight, while men slept, an enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat.
- Say it, weeds among the wheat. Notice what he couldn't do. He could not pluck up what God had planted. He could not change what had already been done. He could not cause the seed that was in the ground to stop being what it was meant to be. He could not destroy the seed. The only strategy he had was to distract the harvesters. So here's the progression of growth in our life. We advance a little bit like the seed was doing, and then we get attacked. How many of y'all almost have to laugh at how quickly the devil attacked the very thing you were advancing in this year already? Just wave at me. It's almost comical, right? It's almost like two on the nose, like really devil? Like really, really, like that? You're gonna be that obvious? You're just gonna do it right in my face like that? At
- least in the parable, the man snuck in and did it at night. Some of us, the devil's just doing it in broad daylight, just attacking things that are advancing. So now you're advancing, the seed is growing, and you're attacked. And when the enemy attacks you and what God is doing in you, you get distracted. He can't destroy the seed, it's not his. He can't destroy the seed, it's already planted. He can't destroy the seed, what God put in the seed is still in the seed. He doesn't have permission to do that. But what he can do is distract you so that you will destroy yourself. And some of the things that are attacking you in your life right now, the attack doesn't matter unless it distracts you from what God has called you. I'll break it down for you with a few pastoral examples.

Kev's guys on-line eGroup study notes

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- Thank you so much. Feels good to be wanted. Feels good to be loved. Feels good to be supported. But you know, you have to preach through all kinds of seasons. And there have been seasons in this ministry. I have had to preach what God gave me to preach, even though I felt attacked. And in my earlier years of preaching, I would become hyper-focused on any attack that was coming my way. I don't just mean critics. I mean any attack, like if a staff member resigned, I would call it an attack. Well, no, maybe they just need to move to Florida to take care of their parents. No, it's an attack. I rebuke the devil. Why do you rebuke it? It's not an attack. It's an adjustment. You got to adapt. Life just happens. But there have been seasons, and I remembered one very specifically. I've been looking forward to sharing this with you because it was so fresh and so vivid. What was happening in our church was explosive. And much like the seed in the passage, it was growing, growing, growing.
- God planted this church in Charlotte in 2006. I didn't plant it. He did. And what God plants, God protects. And God was doing all kinds of miracles for us. If we needed a building, he opened a building. If we needed a volunteer, he sent a volunteer. If we needed funds, he would send people with money. God was just providing and protecting. But in one season of our ministry, and it was over 10 years ago, this vicious attack began. If anybody was here at the time, you will remember several phases of the attack. The last phase of the attack was the hardest for me to stomach because they began to imply on news stories that were on the 11 o'clock news that at Elevation Church, we fake baptisms. In other words, they were saying that we have people pretending to be baptized, I guess, just so we could put it on camera.
- Not only was that not true, but it was a direct assault against the most meaningful expression of faith that a person can make to be baptized. And I felt so attacked, not only on my own behalf, but on behalf of everyone who was going to work, who had been baptized at this church. Hearing the lie that had been perpetuated, the attack that had been waged saying, your baptism, was it fake? And I was praying about this one day. And I was asking God very specifically something that you may have been praying about a situation or an attack in your life as well. I pray, God, make it stop. Make it stop. By this point, there had been several attacks against our church, and this one just felt like too much. And I said, God, make it stop. And I will never forget what the Lord said to me in my spirit, not in audible words or not in a physical impression, but in a way that he gave me a thought that I have carried with me to this moment, and I share it with you today.
- **The Lord said, I can stop the attack, but if I stop the attack, I have to stop the impact that created it. So now you have to decide. Do you want the attack to stop bad enough to give up the impact that brought it? Because if you weren't baptizing anybody, they wouldn't be making up stories about your baptisms. But maybe what God was doing in this church was so unbelievable that the enemy saw it and said, if they keep baptizing people like this, there's going to be a water shortage in Charlotte and a people shortage in hell. And so I got to plant a little lie to try to get them to stop doing what God started. But God said, if you want the impact, you got to man up and button your pants and tighten your belt and lace your boots and open your Bible and open your mouth and take your next breath and lift your voice and lift your head and swing your sword in the name of the Lord and realize that you are a man.**

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- But there is a young man on our staff who runs my scriptures every week. And matter of fact, put a scripture up there, Justin, anyone, I don't care which one, just put it up there and just put the we appeared. We're circle the word appeared. Look at that. Why did I tell him to do that? Because he started coming to the church. Because he heard about the baptisms on the news from the attack. Y'all don't want to mess with me. And now he's the one helping me preach the word.
- So God used their words as a weapon of God. And now let's talk about you. No weapon formed against you shall prosper. And every tongue that rises against you, you shall convict. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord. And their righteousness is from me. So one thing the enemy didn't realize when he was planting those weeds is that you can plant all the weeds you want to, devil. And let me just remind you this year, this year there will be weeds. There will be no weed free week in your year this year. Sit back down. You know how we do these little New Year's slogans. Come alive in 25. You know, it's going to be, it's going to, what could we say? It's going to get fixed in 26. No, it's not either. It's going to be mixed in 26.
- It's going to be some wheat. It's going to be some weeds. It's going to be some joy. It's going to be some mourning. It's going to be some weeping. It's going to be some reaping. It's going to be some friends. It's going to be some enemies. It's going to be some frenemies. You can't tell the difference until it's over. But don't judge it before God's done with it. Because God might use some of his stuff. in your life that you are asking him to remove, to reveal who he is in your life. And the only problem is if you start trying to pluck out the weeds, you might mess around and remove the wheat. Y'all got enough or keep going?
- One thing I noticed in the text that was really powerful is that the master didn't panic about the attack. He was so cool about it. Read it again. Sir, now the servants are freaking out like we do. Sir, didn't you so good see it in your field? Where did this come from? Who did this? What's going on? Is this the devil? Whose fault is this? Somebody did this. And the master, because he represents God in the parable, look at this. He's like, an enemy did this. Because that's what an enemy does. That's what an enemy does. That's what a devil does. I read about a book that Mel Robbins wrote called The Let Them Theory. I didn't read the book, but I like the title. It's like people want to talk about you, let them. Your kids want to leave without a coat and it's cold outside, let them. They're not going to die of hypothermia. They will figure it out. Kids are resilient.
- And I wonder if we could write one together today, this year in your life. Called Let Him. Don't let the attack distract you. You give so much focus on how the devil is discouraging you. And now discouragement is all you see everywhere. You got so many things going right in your life, so much wheat, but all you see is weeds. You're a little perfectionist. You're a little type A personality. You're a little Enneagram number one. Just always could be better. Just, oh man, I got to get these weeds out this year. No, you don't. I'll tell you why. If Jesus's field wasn't weed free, what makes you think yours is going to be? Jesus couldn't have a weed-free field, but you can.
- No. It's going to be mixed in 26. It's going to be mixed in 26. It's going to be at 8 a.m. in the morning. This is the day that the Lord has made. It's going to be by 3 p.m. in the afternoon. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? It's going to be weed. It's going to be weeds. And stop judging stuff before God is done with it. Stop judging stuff before the appointed time. Stop telling me graves in the gardens in a good song. Stop telling me I tried it. It didn't work. And I'll just use a physical example because we can all relate to it.

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- When you work out. And you haven't worked out in a while. Not that you would know. The first thing that is going to indicate that you successfully completed the workout. is a feeling of soreness that will feel like Satan himself brought seven spirits to your body and invaded everything. But that just means you're growing. So now you're surprised that you're sore, but you wanted to grow. If there had been no wheat, there would have been no weeds. You're praying for God to use you, but you're surprised that you feel like you're empty on the inside. That's so he can fill you up again. And the promise of this year is not that it will be weed free. I am not trying to keep a weed free.
- In one sense, I am. But I am not trying to keep a weed free. I'm trying to be spirit filled this year. so that whatever is planted around me and you got to know that the master is very very methodical in what he plants and he knew from the moment he planted this seed that the enemy would attack it now the master wasn't surprised the servants were so they said what do you want us to do about it do you want us to pluck it up Do you want us to remove it? Do you want us to do something about that?
- I was reading a passage in 1 Kings, or maybe 2 Samuel last week with Graham. Which scripture did I give you, Justin? 2 Samuel or 1 Kings? We were reading about David. Yeah, one time David was running through his city that he used to rule over from his son, Absalom. And his son was trying to take his crown from him. And the son's name was Absalom. And David actually had to go flee from his own son. And as he was leaving the city, he approached Bahurim. You couldn't pronounce it either. A man from the same clan as Saul's family came out from there. And so this is one of his enemies, right? And his name was Shimei, son of Dara. And he cursed as he came out. Cursing at the king. Well, he pelted David and the king's officials with stones. Now remember, David's pretty good with a stone. So this is a bad idea. Though all the troops in the special guard were on David's right and left. In other words, he could have done something about it.
- And as he cursed, Shimei said, get out, get out, you murderer, you scoundrel. The Lord has repaid you for all the blood you shed in the household of Saul, in whose place you have reigned. God's getting you back. The Lord has given the kingdom into the hands of your son Absalom. You have come to ruin because you are a murderer. He's planting all these seeds of doubt in David's mind. Then Abishai, which one of David's guys, said to the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and cut off his head. But the king, David, said, what does this have to do with you, sons of Zeruah? If he's cursing because the Lord said to him, curse David, who can ask? Why do you do this?
- David then said to Abishai and all his officials, my son, my own flesh and blood is trying to kill me. In other words, I got bigger problems. I got bigger things to deal with than this dude. And I came to remind you, you've got bigger priorities. You've got too much to do to be offended by them. You've got bigger fish to fry than this guy whose name I can't even pronounce. You're David. How much more than this Benjamite? Leave him alone. Let him curse. You want us to do something about it? No. Let him. Let him curse for the Lord has told him to. It may be. Oh, this is an anointed verse. If you've been under attack and the enemy is pelting you with rocks and stones, and it may even be coming at the expense of your own dignity.

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- And you are asking yourself, what do I do about this attack? David said, it may be that the Lord will look upon my misery and restore to me his covenant blessing instead of his curse today. In other words, what David is saying is that he cannot curse what God has already blessed. So let him. He cannot destroy what has God's DNA. He cannot steal what God has spoken. He cannot negate what God has established. He cannot cancel out what God has called. How many different ways do you need me to say it to get you to see? It won't work. Let him come. Let the flood rage. God will lift up a standard. It won't work. Don't let the attack distract you. Don't let it get you out of your character. Don't let it get you out of your joy. Don't let it get you out of your peace. Sit there and whistle a worship song if you can't sing one. Lift your toe if you can't lift your hands.
- Do a body weight squat if you can't do a real one. Do something. But whatever you do, remember that if it started with God, it is sustained by God. And there is nothing the enemy can plant. Jeremiah said before I was born. He called me and set me apart. So that means I know the enemy has been busy in your life. He's been speaking to you. He's been sabotaging you. He's been distracting you, trying to get you off your course, trying to get you out of your flow, trying to get you out of your calling, trying to get you out of your nature, trying to get you out of your kindness, trying to bring you back to bitterness. trying to plant weeds where there's wheat, but there's one thing that the enemy should have realized that he didn't realize, and he would have saved his energy and realized that the weeds weren't worth planting because you gotta remember, no matter what the enemy plants in your life, God got there first. And he prepares a table for you in the presence of your enemies. So let the devil try.
- Because it must be that if God isn't removing those weeds, how many can picture some weeds that are in your life as I speak this word? Every weed free person run to this altar right now. Because you have the weed of delusion. Am I right, man? And the one thing about it, Graham, check this out, G. The type of weeds that were growing, you couldn't tell that they weren't wheat until they had grown a little bit. They looked exactly the same until the head came up. And then they're like, oh, no, this is not wheat. This is a weed. Sometimes you don't know. I'm never going back to the way I was. Look at what the Lord has done. I'm never going back to the way. I love the video. All the kids just screaming at the camera. But what if they were singing it like just like just for real though. Like look at what the Lord has done. I'm never going back but I'm still gonna cuss.
- You know what I'm saying? Look at what the Lord has done. I'm never going back, but I still get drunk. Because what we're saying is, look at what the Lord has done. I'm never going back, but I'm still going to lust. You know, just whatever y'all struggle with. The fact is, what's really going on in our hearts sometimes doesn't match what's coming out of our mouths. And we really do want to grow. And we really do want to be free. And we really do want to be more loving, but the enemy isn't going to stand by and watch you grow without attempting to plant something alongside your destiny that will disrupt it. I just want to remind you that the attack is a distraction. And God knew when he planted you that what he gave you was stronger than what would come against you. Look at what the Lord has done in your life.

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- Look how far he has already brought you. How many can say I have a testimony. God has done so much in my life. It's amazing. You would say that. But it came with weeds didn't it. And you have been believing the lie lately that you have got to get rid of all the weeds before you can enjoy the wheat. It's a lie. I come against it. I break the spirit of depression off of your soul that has been telling you that you cannot worship while you still have weeds. We all have weeds. It would surprise you what the person next to you is struggling with. And just because you can't see the weeds doesn't mean they're not real. But have you come to a point in your life where all you are seeing in this season is the weeds? Have you got one kid that is in trouble and you have failed to appreciate the two that are doing good? That means you have become too weed focused.
- Have you got nine things in your body that are working well, but the one thing that is not working right just causes you to obsess, and you are Googling every possible thing that might be wrong with you and taking out every life insurance policy because you got a headache one Thursday? Are you letting one headache really make you stop believing that God is my healer and that God is my sustainer and that God is my source? I'm telling you, whatever the enemy plants in your life is not more powerful than what God planted. Because the Bible said he planted good seed. Somebody say, I'm good seed. I'm good seed. And all things work together for the good of those who love the Lord and are called according to his purpose.
- So this week, I want you to think a little bit less about the weeds and a little bit more about the wheat. Because when the passage starts, we've got wheat and we've got weeds. But at the end of the passage, one is going to be burned and one is going to be in the barn. And I came to declare today, the fire will not burn you. You're going to the barn, baby. You belong to God. You are God's child. You are God's planting. You are God's masterpiece. I belong to God. Try your best, devil. It won't work. As a matter of fact, my God might use the thing that you are using to curse me and bless me even better. God might do something out of this. So go ahead. Hit me with your best shot. But everything you do has to go through the cross of Jesus Christ. And he'll begin a good work. We'll be faithful to complete it. Stop judging stuff before God is done. I asked one parent the other day. They said the kid that gave me the most trouble ended up bringing me the most blessings.
- You can't judge this thing while it's still growing. You can't label this thing while it's still in process. You cannot categorize your life based on the way you feel right now. And you cannot quit 11 days into January just because it's mixed in 26. Nah, baby, the Lord is at my right hand. The Lord stood by my side. Many deserted me. God never did. I got battles. I got blessings. I got wheat. I got weeds. I got goodness. I got mercy. And they follow me all the days of my life. So all I wanted to tell you today is don't let the attack distract you. That's what it is. It's a distraction. You have been growing. You've got what it takes to grow. You've got what it takes to make this decision. You have got what it takes to do the job. You've got what it takes to learn the skills. You've got what it takes to do the inner work and get some healing. You've got what it takes because you've got God. You're in the field he wanted you to be in. And God knew there was going to be a fight when he put you in that field.

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- Don't tell me he didn't. He's God. I'm built for it. High five for people who say you're built for it too. Built for it. Yeah, man. Built for it. You know what I almost called the message, bro? I almost called it. Don't burn your bread. Don't burn your bread. The wheat has the potential in it to be bread. If you don't pluck it up and throw it into the fire. If you don't give up on what it can be because of what it is right now and what's against it. Don't burn your bread. I didn't call it that. I almost called the message. This is my other almost called the message. Look at your neighbor. Say, don't pluck it up. But I decided that I would just tell you, stand to your feet. Don't let the attack distract you. Because if you don't let it distract you, it can't destroy you. The word of God is incorruptible seed. You've been born again by imperishable seed. Don't let it distract you. You make an advance, you get attacked.
- You get attacked, you get distracted. You get distracted, you get destroyed. But if you can focus on where God is growing you. Put your hand over your heart. Say this is good soil. Say this is God's soil. There's something that God spoke to you that you haven't really been able to get in touch with lately because you've been so distracted. You have been so distracted. It has been a long, long time since you've been able to have clarity about what God spoke to you. And you found your broken focus leading to a lack of peace now, as it always happens. But if we can get back to the God who put it in you to begin with, you are going to survive whatever attack the enemy. It's not possible that you've been distracted. So now, Lord, our hearts are turned to you. Yes, Lord. Our hearts are yours. Our lives are yours. Our dreams are yours. I thank you for where you planted me as a seed God.
- I thank you for where you planted each and every one of these people. I thank you for the gifts you gave them, the abilities you gave them, the talent you gave them, the personality that you gave them. The unique struggles and challenges that have formed them and forged them in the fire of trials to make them strong and ready for what they're going through now. They will not burn. They'll be like those Hebrew boys who went into the fire and said, even if God doesn't get us out, he'll join us right up in it. Because I'm good seed. I'm good seed. Lord, I want to pray today for the person who has never placed their faith in you. Would you just join me in this prayer as a church? I'm going to pray for someone who needs to give their life to Jesus Christ.
- And right now, it is very possible that the reason God brought you here today or the reason that you joined us online is for this moment. You see, it's not by might nor by power that we become strong in the Lord. No. The seed was good because of who planted it. And it's time for you to stop playing around with your life and waiting on one day when it's more convenient to live for God. No, now is your moment of salvation. Today is your moment of change. And I don't want you to face the fire of judgment. I don't want you to live your life apart from God and neither does God. And that's one who gave his life on the cross and rose again that you could have life.

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- And now in this moment, I want to pray with you. You know, the Bible says that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. It's not by works. It's by grace you are saved through faith. And right now, if you'll pray this prayer and mean it with your heart, God will hear you. God will save you. And you will be born again. This can be your new beginning. We're going to pray out loud, repeating after me, as a church, for the benefit of those who are coming to Christ in this moment. Repeat after me. Heavenly Father, today is my day of salvation. I am a sinner in need of a Savior. And I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of the world. And today I make Jesus the Lord of my life. I believe he died that I would be forgiven and rose again to give me life. I receive this new life. This is my new beginning. I am a child of God. On the count of three, shoot your hand up if you prayed that. One, two, three. I want to celebrate with you. Praise the Lord.
- Come on, let's clap our hands all over the room. Everybody, everybody, everybody. Come on, let's thank God for all the decisions that were made today. God is so good.

Part 2: eGroup study questions

Kev's guys on-line eGroup study notes

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- **“In verse 42. It says that the evil ones will be thrown into the furnace. But watch this verse 43 it says the kingdom of their father.**
- **So the furnace of judgment belongs to the father, not the children.**
- **The furnace of judgment is not yours to put people in.**
- **The furnace of judgment is not your place to have a Facebook conversation about what everybody else thinks and why they're so stupid to think it.”**

- “Don't judge it before God's done with it.”

“If stop the attack, I have to stop the impact that created it.”

“If stop the attack, I have to stop the impact that created it.”

Additional commentary:

So now you have to decide. Do you want the attack to stop bad enough to give up the impact that brought it? Because if you weren't baptizing anybody, they wouldn't be making up stories about your baptisms.

But God said, if you want the impact, you got to man up and button your pants and tighten your belt and lace your boots and open your Bible and open your mouth and take your next breath and lift your voice and lift your head and swing your sword in the name of the Lord and realize that you are a man.

“If it started with God, it will be sustained by God, and there is nothing the enemy can plant to stop Him.” What has God started in your life that you can trust Him to sustain?

Growth–attack–distraction–destruction cycle: When you advance, expect attack. The danger is distraction, not the attack itself. Focus disrupts the enemy's strategy.

Back up slides

In August 2017, Pastor Furtick led a study of David called “Bars and Battles.” I think Pastor Furtick’s sermon this weekend “Not as Long as My Song” builds of this prior series. On August 13, 2017, Pastor Furtick said this while unpacking Psalm 142 and 1 Sam 22 – where Saul is trying to kill David: “We have to learn to trust God and keep our hand on the harp. This means that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (fleshy or bodily), they are mighty through God for the pulling down of strong-holds – so it might not look like much – but our worship is our weapon. If you humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and trust him – no matter what is coming at your head, no matter what is coming at your life – if you trust him and duck – and trust him and pray – the hand of God is on your life. Therefore, if you can win the battle here (your heart) – if you can get down low enough to say God I need you – and realize that the real battle is not with Saul – it is with self. Before David become a king and before God calls us to do what we are supposed to do, we need to learn to do the hardest thing to do – to depend. The easiest thing for David to do was to fight – this came naturally to him – the hardest thing for David to do was to be humble and depend – where David has to depend on the hand of God for the spear to miss him.” Kev note: Dang that is good!



Oswald Chambers

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.**

Kev's guys on-line eGroup study notes

Sermon Discussion: "Allow Joy To Reintroduce Himself" by Tauren Wells on May 25, 2025



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.”