10/09/2016 - Elevation Ballantyne Campus – Sermon notes from KH
Pastor Larry Brey from Elevation University City
Sermon Title: Finding Your Why
Scripture: Nehemiah: 1:1 to 1:4

Pre-sermon notes:
Are you leaning forward? If you are leaning forward as your heaven is leaning downward, there will be collision of hope.
What Pastor Steven has brought to me and what I am grateful for: Perspective, Adaptability – being on the bus is more important that the seat that you are on, Sacrifice, Truth – easy to say and hard to live in truth, Orange – representing Code Orange – created a space and unity around the color, Rewards – the rewards of falling in love with Jesus Christ

Sermon: Your Why
• The automated response from a child: Why
• The automated response from a parent: Because I said so.
• The bible says we are to have child like faith.
• When we got older we stop asking why.
• Adult man ask what do you do? Yet we never ask why do you do? The what is easier to ask than the why.
• Where are worth is tied to our work.
• Success is defined in the what – what we earn, what we do.
• Significance is found in the why.
• We are going to look at three things: Who, Why, and Where?
• Nehemiah lost all strength and had to sit down.
• Nehemiah has everything that he wants.
• 70 years before, Jewish people has their own city. Now they are taken captive by the Babylonians. Sometime being free does not mean living an freedom. So 3 million people are now back into slavery.
• Only about 50,000 people moved back to Jerusalem to rebuild their city and their walls. However, the waves of shame continue to wash way walls.
• Nehemiah is connecting the pain of the people to the joy of heaven.
• Here the enemy is stealing the peoples joy.
• You are in a position to re-discover your why
• Because if not, the pain of your past will only be a what and you never realize the conduit of hope.
• Some of us have a lot to learn from Nehemiah.
• For some it is a lesson to sit down
Sermon: Your Why

• For some it is a lesson to get up and get moving.
• Nehemiah sat down for three days.
• A great why is about taking a who to a where.
• For five years, I taught sport medicine as a college professor. Here my value was packed in my work and I was so full of myself. My vision is what My whole life was based on how impressive I was.
• Marriage is a neat refining process. Are you merely looking for marriage to fit into your present what?
• You do not need a new what. You need understand and discover the why. When you know the why, your what does not even matter.
• Year 3 of a college professor, my brother Lonie gets cancer. As I was talking to my brother, I learned that I was not believing what I was smoking.
• After steady prayer, his brother was cured and the cancer disappeared.
• In search of better meaning, I quit my job.
• Then his brother called to report that his cancer came back and he has a week to live.
• This is the same brother that looked after me when I was young.
• When cutting my brother’s hair, the lord told me my why – serve my church and serve people.
• With my brother, the why is to introduce Jesus to my brother so that he can get to heaven (the where).
• 13 years ago, I was serving a small church where we hired a young pastor from Greenville, SC seminary.
• What is the power of the why
• What is your why?
• It is not about the finish-line, it is about how we glorify God in our journey.
• God will never let go of you.
• Serving is how you show the love of Jesus.
• When you know your why, you learn that you are not alone and you discover God’s favor.
• Nehemiah discovered his why while sitting down.
• However, there is a time to get up.
• Once you discover your why, it is time to get up.
• Getup out of a life of mediocrity and into real truth.
• The why is an anchor that will sustain you in times of trouble.
• Now think about someone in your life that needs to find a why so they can connect a who to a where.
Share someone in your life that needs to find a why so they can connect a who to a where.
Read the attached sermon notes from Dr. Tim Keller
Dr. Timothy Keller – Message to his church (Redeemer Church in NYC) just after the 9/11 attached in NYC:

• Opening prayer: “Almighty and merciful God, you are the consolation for the sorrowful. You are the support of the weary. Look down on us with tender love and pity – who’s joy has been turned to mourning - so that while we morn and grieve, we may not have our hearts darkened and that might learn wisdom and grow strong in hope – and might resign ourselves into your hands to be taught and comforted – remembering all of your mercies, promises, and love in Jesus Christ – who brings life out of death – and turns all grief into eternal joy. Please pray for the people in our church – for in our mist today we have many who’s hearts are broken, who’s arms are broken, who’s bodies are broken, who’s buildings are broken – only you can heal the broken souls, the fears, the grief, the rage, the despondency, and the death. Bind us up Lord. Father bind us up as individuals and make us who we need to be – for this city. Oh Father, to a great degree we have been participating in a self absorption of the great cities of our world – where people come to these cities to take, to get, and to build themselves up – to build up their resumes – to consume – but Father we ask that you direct us to stop that – to humble us – we ask that you get ourselves out of that state of mind. We ask that you purify us – wake us up and make us useful to our neighbors. Make us who we need to be to show that we are the love of Jesus. Help us to be what the city needs us to be right now.”

• John 14:27: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

• Permit met for you to come today and worship in a quiet and appropriate way.

• In 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul tells us to grieve but to do so with hope. Here Paul says that there are two opposite mistakes that we can make during a time of tragedy: a. We can try to avoid grief and weeping and this makes you hard and inhuman and might even erupt later on. or b. We grieve without hope. The bible states that the love and hope of God has to be rubbed into our grief – the way one has to rub salt into meat in warm climates – or it will go bad.

• Our grief is either going to make us weaker or bleaker. Our grief can make us far more wise and tender depending on what you rub into it – what you put into it.

• And that is what we are hear to do today.

• We are not here merely to weep – but also to rub into our grief.

• See Matthew 14 where John the Baptist Beheaded. John was cut down in an unjust attack. Once Jesus is told that John was killed and buried by his disciples, Jesus withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place and then feeds five thousand. This is a great study for us.

• See John 11: The Death of Lazarus, Jesus Comforts the Sisters of Lazarus, Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead

• In John 11, Mary and Martha have the same problem that we do. They are looking at a tragedy and asking the same questions that we would ask. What is all of this about and where are you Lord? How do we make sense of this?

• Yet Jesus moves through the ruins and welds four things: truth, tears, anger, and finally grace.

• Jesus welds truth to Mary, tears for Martha, anger at the tomb, and grace (as we shall see) for everybody.

• Let’s examine these four because we need these four and we need to know how they all hang together.

• The Tears of Jesus: Mary asks this question: Lord, you could have stopped this – where were you? Jesus responds by weeping.

• Why is this? When Jesus arrived to see Mary, he knows both why it happened (and how he is going to turn the situation into a wonderful manifestation into the glory of God) and he has power to change the situation.

• When you and I go into these tragic situations, we have no idea.

• We say: Boy if we had this kind of knowledge and power, why would we weep?
Dr. Timothy Keller – Message to his church (Redeemer Church in NYC) just after the 9/11 attached in NYC – continued

- The reasons is that Jesus represents perfect love – where Jesus will not close his heart even for 10 minutes.
- He will not refuse to enter into all of this grief with the potential of minimizing the grief of Mary and Martha.

What do we learn from this passage:
- Nothing wrong with weeping during a time of crisis. This is not a sign if weakness or immaturity. Because the better people are those that can’t avoid grief and allow themselves to be pulled into grief that others are feeling. There is something very right about this.
- We think that we need to fix it. The human tendency is to fix things. Jesus does not consider the ministry of fixing things to be sufficient. Jesus says, let’s enter into a relationship with ourselves and our city. Let us weep for those that weep.
- The anger of Jesus: Yes this is a very hard day. In vs. 33, modern and ancient translators are very concerned with what the text says. When Jesus saw Mary and others weeping, he was deeply troubled. The Greek word in the translation equates to rage. Yes, Jesus was filled with rage and was “deeply moved” (Greek translation = to snort and shout in rage like a lion) when we went to the grave site of Lazarus. The best translation is that Jesus come to the tomb bellowing with anger.
- Why is this so relevant to us: First there is shock, followed by weeping. Now fear, anger, and rage take hold.
- What does Jesus do with this range and anger? Now this is important: Here are two things that Jesus does not do: a. He is not a false friend of Job – useless friends during Job’s trials. See book of Job. Jesus does not demonize. b. Jesus is not mad at himself
- Common practice is to take a horrific event and then create a narrative and story line. Politicians are great at this. For example: comments are like: “America asked for it due to chronic social injustice or America is being punishing because God is punishing us.” This is not the correct narrative and story line.
- In Rm 1, Paul says that the worst thing that you can do is to have a good life. This is how one remains independent and selfish – where we do not need God.
- In Luke 13: After two tragic events (a massacre and a tower falling down on people), Jesus takes on the question: Were there people judged? Jesus answer: No of course not. In fact, Jesus appears to be irritated by the question. So how do we know if God is mad at us or pleased with us? The bible says to love God and love your neighbor. If we are doing this, God is pleased with us.
- Jesus suffered not so that we might never suffer. The goal is when we do suffer, we turn to him and be more like him.
- Demonizing another groups is not the answer because this can cause over-reach in the application of justice.
- Quote from a Croatian General speaking at the United Nations prayer breakfast: “Enormous poison comes into my heart and the heart of the world if I forget this: when I exclude my enemy from the community of humans and when I excluded myself from the community of sinners. When I forget that my enemy is not a sub-human monster but a human being and I forget that I am not the perfect good. From this standing, I can now seek a position of justice.”
- What is Jesus doing with his rage? He is proclaiming that he is mad at death and at the tomb of Lazarus.
- Jesus then says: I am going turn this death into a resurrection.
- Jesus says: I am going to bring out of this something that is greater than what was before.
- This is the story of the gospel. Out of the cross comes resurrection. Out of weakness comes real strength. Out of repentance and admitting that you are weak comes real power. Out of giving and serving others comes real strength. Out of generosity comes real wealth.
- This is the story line of the gospel.
Dr. Timothy Keller – Message to his church (Redeemer Church in NYC) just after the 9/11 attack in NYC – continued

- Effective leaders say: out of this death, we can bring something much better.
- Do you now want to be part of NYC – now that we have all of this death and destruction? Typically NYC is something you take for yourself.
- What if we were focused recognizing the need for change, humbling yourself, and doing justice vs. what is in it for me?
- Here is the point: Unless you know how to handle your anger and place your anger into the correct story line - so that it circulates inside of you, you will be railing with anger against God, America, and fictitious demons.
- Or are you looking for an opportunity for resurrection?
- The only thing we should rage against is the dying of a light and press forward to make the light brighter.
- So during a cycle of grief, we are to open our hearts and enter into the community and weep for those that weep – but also do not use rage to short circuit this process. Hu? This is very hard.
- But Jesus gives you the ministry of truth.
- Jesus says: I am the resurrection and the life. Hear me.
- If you want a great resources and ultimate power, Jesus says, you have to believe. You have to have truth.
- Without understanding this truth, you will lack this incredible access to power.
- Here is what Jesus offers: Not a conciliation. A resurrection. This means Jesus has come to raise you up to heaven and to bring the power of heaven down to earth and make everything new. Jesus says that I am going to restore all that was lost.
- Jesus says this: I am going to make everything that has happened to you seem like a bad dream – where you wake up and bad things never really happened. Recall that there is a positive side of a bad dream. When you wake up, you come to the realization that it never a happened.
- Resurrection means you wake up from a bad dream and feel better and greater – from once been broken
- Quote from Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky in Brothers Camerousu (written in 1880): “I believe like a child that suffering will be healed and made up for. That all of the humiliating absurdity of human contradictions will be vanish like a pitiful mirage. That in the world’s finality in a world of total harmony, something so precious will come to pass, that it will suffice – and comfort all resentments – it will atone for all of the crimes and blood that has been shed – that it will make it not only possible to forgive, but also justify everything that happened.”
- What Dostoyevsky is saying is that eventually everything we become untrue. Is this true? Jesus says yes. There will be a great morning. If you believe in the gospel, then you believe this to be true.
- Quote from C.S. Lewis: If we let him, he will make the feeblest and filthy among us into the most dazzling radiant immortal creatures pulsating with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine. He will make us into bright stainless mirrors that we reflect back to God – on a smaller scale his boundless power and goodness. That is what we are in for – nothing less.
- Do you believe that? If yes, you can face anything.
- What we have now will be merely a dim echo what we will have in the future.
- Jesus knew that the only way to interrupt Lazarus’ funeral was to create his own. This is why the Pharisees had to now plot to kill Jesus.
- Here is what gospel is: We have a God that is so committed to ending suffering and death that he was willing to come into the world and be involved in that suffering and death himself. God lost his son in an unjust attack.
- This is proof that God cares and Jesus is the perfect counselor. And he will always give his grace in the correct proportions.
Based on the prior reading, what speaks to you the most?

Dangers of dogma and political narratives?
How to direct your anger at the correct things?
Based on the prior reading, what speaks to you the most?

Dangers of dogma and political narratives?
How to direct your anger at the correct things?
Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, chocolate in one hand, latte in the other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming "WOO HOO, what a ride!"