

## Podcast 257 God is Our Teacher

Let's pray.

Father, thank You for whether we sleep or don't or when do we get up, thank You that You haven't changed a bit, that You're the same God. Your love is steadfast. You are faithful. You give new hope every morning. Your lovingkindnesses are fresh, and Your mercies never come to an end. Thank You that we have such a God, that when we're all over with our emotions and our experiences and we have tough days and good days, and yet they're all God days. Thank You for being our rock that we can run to and find refuge and find strength and encouragement. And we do that now. Give us ears to hear what Your Spirit has for us today. In Jesus' name, amen.

We're continuing to think about God's attributes and His character. The other night, I dropped off John at his fitness class, which is a special class for adults with disabilities, and it's a half an hour long, which is nice. After I drop him off, I park my car, and then go for a walk, where I practice the three principles of Psalm 100. I began by singing "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" then began giving thanks, which always amazes me. Stopping and taking the time to reflect on what I am thankful for is edifying. Once I begin the thanks start multiplying. It seems like most of every day is devoted to solving problems and checking things off my to-do list. Setting aside a few minutes to stop and be thankful has been transformative. I wish I could hook up my brain to my computer, because I can never remember all the things I'm thankful for when I get back to write them down, but one just leads to another and whew! it changes your whole perspective. I was telling my wife about this, and she said that she practices the habit of thinking of five things which she writes down in her journal every day, five things for which to be thankful for just from that day. Isn't that good?

Scott: That's awesome!

Steve: I've started to do that now. I took her lead, and instead of just doing it while I'm walking or when I'm journaling in the morning, I try to do this when I'm lying in bed at night, just stop and think about, see if I can get just five things throughout the day. It really is a wonderful practice.

After I've sung and given thanks, then I think about God. Oftentimes I pray for the Spirit to help me to see some attribute of God, and recently the attribute that I focused on was God as our teacher. Job 36:22 says, "Behold, God is exalted in His power; who is a teacher like Him?" Great verse.

I'm going to break up "God is Our Teacher" into three sections: Father, Son, and Spirit. Even though there'll be overlap, because the Trinity is individual and separate entities, yet all are obviously one, one God – one Father, one Son, one Spirit, but yet one God. I'm going to start with Father, and then we'll do Son, and then end up with Spirit.

God the Father

God has taught us since creation and in His creation. Romans 1:19 says, “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”

God has clearly revealed His nature, which is invisible, and yet He’s revealed it in the things that have been made. I have enjoyed clouds for a couple years now, and I noticed another verse this morning in my Old Testament reading in Isaiah about God covering His people with a canopy, a cloud, so that they would be under shade. I also read about God leading His people with a pillar of fire. When I am outside I enjoy the clouds, and when the wind blows, I think of His Spirit, and when the sun comes out, I try to remember that Jesus is going to be the light in the book of Revelation. We won’t even need the sun anymore. And when I think of the moon, I think of us who are reflecting the sun. All of this I am reminded of from His creation.

Then I thought of the book of Exodus, where God was revealing His Son. When the blood would be over the lintel or the doorpost speaking of Jesus. When they came through the the Red Sea, this was foreshadowing coming through the waters of baptism later. As God gave them bread from heaven, He was teaching them, and preparing them for that day when Jesus would appeared. When Jesus stood up and said, “I am the Bread of Life” Jews would see the connection. It was as if He is saying, “you have remembered the exodus for generations, and you have remembered the manna. Well, I am the manna.”

Jesus built on the foundation that God had already laid, because God the Father was an excellent teacher. We could spend podcast after podcast just talking about all the wonderful ways that God pointed to Jesus throughout the Old Testament. He was the rock. He was the serpent that was lifted up so when they looked unto Him, they’d be healed. He was the water that flowed from the rock. Jesus said, “If anybody’s thirsty, let him come unto Me.” So God was teaching.

Not only did He teach kind of generally through creation and through His work in Exodus; He also gave the law to His people. After they came out of Egypt, He gave them the law out of Mount Sinai, and He says in Deuteronomy 4, “Never forget the day when you stood before the LORD your God at Mount Sinai, where He told me, ‘Summon the people before Me, and I will personally instruct them. Then they will learn to fear Me as long as they live, and they will teach their children to fear Me also.’”

Teaching has been coming from the throne of God since the beginning, and then, we obviously are to continue that stream and teach our children as well. But He gave us His law on Mount Sinai, which was and is amazing. Whenever I think of the law, I think of Psalm 19 and Psalm 119. “Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to

my path.” Psalm 19 – “The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.” And then David uttered again in Psalm 119, “Oh how I love Your law!” I probably didn’t do that with enough dramatic emphasis. “It is my meditation all the day. Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation.”

Another verse which has always encouraged me is found in Isaiah 54:13: “All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the peace of your children.” As parents, we do our best to teach our children God’s Word, to teach them principles to live by, to teach them principles of character, etc., but it’s really nice to know that we’re not alone in this journey. All of our children will be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of our children. I have witnessed His teaching so many times as God would help me to convey a truth to my sons. There are other times when I didn’t have to present anything for God taught them by Himself. He’s a wonderful teacher.

In Matthew 16, when Simon Peter and the disciples, were in the Galilee region and Jesus asked them who people thought He was. Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “You are blessed, Simon son of John, because My Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being.”

This is another example of how God Himself teaches us. We would not be able to say “Jesus is Lord” except by His Spirit. We would not be able to know that Jesus was the Messiah except that the Father in heaven has revealed Jesus to us, and this is a fact. Those of us that are followers of Jesus, can meditate and marinate on this truth, that God in heaven taught us that “this is My Son.”

Hebrews 1 says, “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son.” God did speak, not only through creation and through His Word – He spoke through His prophets. He was continually sending prophets to teach His people. We could spend a lot of time on this for the whole Old Testament is a record of God teaching us. He also sent David to reveal more of His person and nature in the intimate Psalms and prayers of this man who knew God. Ultimately, God has spoken to us by His Son.  
Jesus

In John 13. Jesus said, “You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” This was as He gave the new commandment to His disciples. Jesus was about to be crucified, and still He was teaching. He was always teaching.

John 3 says, “‘Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with Him.’ Jesus answered, ‘Truly,

truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’” For us to be really good disciples, we need to believe in Jesus, and be born again from above. Then the veil will fall away from our eyes and the scales will drop away. We’re going to see Jesus, and we’re going to understand the things of the kingdom.

I remember when I was in college, when I began to understand the Kingdom. For three years, I did not understand this new Christian president that we had who was hiring Christian professors, because I did not understand his vision. I wondered why couldn’t we just have things the way they’d always been? Even though I’d received Jesus as my Savior before I went to college, it was after my junior year, when I turned to God in a new way, and I understood what the president was doing. I understood his direction. I understood his vision, and he and I became lifelong friends. Before he passed, I was driving across an interstate in Pennsylvania praying with that man that I grew to love. He was like a spiritual dad to me. But I didn’t understand the kingdom until I was born from above in a special way.

Jesus also tells us, “Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me.” (Matthew 11) since Jesus is our rabbi, He is our teacher.

When I think about Jesus, I also think about Deuteronomy 6. “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.” And “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart with all your soul with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.” Nobody loved God more than Jesus. It’s interesting. I mean, He was God, but He loved His Dad. They had a tremendous relationship, and He loved the Word of God. In fact, He was the Word of God. He was the Word made flesh. Jesus perfectly fulfills the fifth and sixth verses of Deuteronomy 6.

Then He says to parents, “You shall teach them diligently to your children, and talk of them when you sit in your house, walk by the way, lie down, etc.” Well, that’s what Jesus did. I mean, He diligently and intentionally taught us in the Sermon on the Mount. He taught on the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 5–7, on the side of a hillside possibly overlooking the Sea of Galilee.

We also see Him teaching in people’s homes in Luke 10: “As they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to His teaching.” Jesus was a teacher, and He taught in people’s homes,

He also taught His disciples. He took them apart, and He instructed them. He taught them in parables.

Not only did He teach, but He consistently lived it out. He didn’t just teach them to His children; He lived with them. He didn’t even have His own place. He taught them as He walked by the way, when He sat in His house, when He laid down, and when He rose up. What an example of the perfect teacher. What we are directed to do as parents to teach our own children, Jesus did. He was absolutely consistent. There was no distinction between His walk and His talk. What He spoke, He lived. This

powerful teaching made an indelible impression on these men who changed the world. Those twelve common everyday men were filled with the Spirit, and they lived like Jesus lived, and they taught us. Amazing.

This brings us to the Spirit of God, Who is on hand now because Jesus has ascended to the Father and is sitting at the right hand of the Father and praying for us right this minute. The Spirit, who is mentioned as a teacher in Nehemiah 9:20, "You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them." In John 14, Jesus says, "The Helper, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." I bet that Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, counted on that passage, because the Holy Spirit certainly helped to bring to their remembrance all that Jesus taught them when He was walking by the way, lying down, sitting in His house, etc.

John 16: "When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come." Not only did the Spirit teach the disciples; the Spirit teaches us through the Word of God. I have done intensive studies on the Holy Spirit, because I felt there was so much misinformation that I had in my own thinking about the Spirit that I wanted to search the Scriptures and find out what God says.

Consider the Spirit's influence on the writing of the Word of God. 2 Peter 1, says, "Above all, you must realize no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God." All these men, women of God in the Old Testament that recorded them at different times in history, with different personalities and different backgrounds and different levels of education, they were all moved by the Holy Spirit, who orchestrated the writing of Scripture. It's a work of the Spirit. 2 Timothy 3 says, "As for you," talking to Timothy, Paul's words, "continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

One of the many wonderful things about the Holy Spirit is that He not only orchestrated the Old Testament, but He wrote it with Jesus in mind. John 5:39, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me." As an excellent author, the Spirit of God orchestrated these men and women of God to point to Jesus. 2 Samuel 23 says, "These are the last words of David: The oracle of David, the son of Jesse, the oracle of the man who was raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel: 'The Spirit of the LORD speaks by me; His word is on my tongue.'" The

Psalms point to Jesus. Not only do they reveal Jesus, they encouraged Jesus who quoted the Psalms while He was hanging on the cross. Jesus was the Good Shepherd in Psalm 23, etc.

As I look back over my life learning about Jesus and following Jesus, I'm always amazed at what a great teacher God is, and how patient He is, and how He has brought me along in my journey in revealing more of His character and His nature. He's my rabbi. He's a really fine teacher, and He tutors me.

I am thinking about being a tutor recently since I'm teaching my granddaughters now. I've known them their whole life, but it's taken me a couple months to figure out how they learn best, how they retain information, what I can do to make my teaching more effective, because I'm getting to know them more and more as I spend more time with them. God knows us individually like nobody else. And we're being tutored, and He knows our learning style, He knows how to write lessons on our heart, He knows how to best communicate truths to us. He's a wonderful teacher, and He's a patient teacher, and He's a good teacher, and He's a loving teacher, and He desires nothing but for things to go well with us. He's also teaching us about His Son, and He's teaching us about eternity, and He's teaching us the things that we need to learn, the essential truths.

When I think about my side of it, I'm a student. I'm a lifelong learner. To me, that's what a disciple is, and I look at people in the New Testament that Jesus got really hot at. When we read John 8, the gloves are off. Jesus said to the Jews, "If you abide in My Word, you're My disciples," and they say, "Puh! We're offspring of Abraham. We've never been enslaved. How are you talking to us about the truth will set us free? We're not enslaved." And then He goes on to say, "I know that you are offspring of Abraham, yet you seek to kill Me because My Word finds no place in you." Boy, that phrase gets me every time. Another translation says, "My Word does not have free course in you." There's a big part of us that is naturally hard-hearted, naturally stiff-necked, and naturally unbelieving. We want to do our own thing.

But we need to have soft hearts. We need to have teachable spirits. We need to have minds that are open to truth and be humble when we come to Jesus and come to His Word. I find great encouragement in these last two passage I'm going to read. The first one is in Ezekiel 36: "I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes and be careful to obey My rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be My people and I will be your God." I love that passage. May God fulfill it for all of us who are listening today, that we'll have God give us a new heart, a new spirit, a heart of

flesh, teachable spirits so that we can learn, because God has been ever teaching us and is continually teaching us.

Paul prayed for the Ephesian church, “I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.” Ultimately that’s where God’s teaching is taking us so that we know God and we know His Son and we love them. For the more we know them, the more we know about them, the more we love them. Amen.

Let’s close in prayer:

Father, thank You for being an excellent teacher, and thank You for opening our eyes and revealing Jesus to us. Thank You, Spirit of God, for being on hand now to teach us from Your Word and to teach us by Your providences, and continue to turn our hearts in a special way and open our minds to what You want to give us and teach us today. But thank You for what You have taught us, and may we have those hearts that we read about that are soft and pliable and fleshy. In Jesus’ name, amen.