

Podcast 293 God has exalted above all things His Name and His Word

Scott: Welcome to the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme! I'm your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today! Good morning, Steve. How are you today?

Steve: Oh, I'm just peachy. I did buy peaches yesterday – one of the only fresh fruits you can buy right now. My wife loves peaches, and God bless her, she's sick, so I'm doing the grocery shopping. I bought her some fresh peaches yesterday.

Scott: You know, I've been living on peaches and bananas since I got sick, and it stuck. I started doing that because it was about the only thing I could really enjoy – I don't know if enjoy is the right word. It was the only thing I could really eat for a little while, and I've kept doing it for breakfast since then. But mine are canned peaches, weird enough. My wife never buys those because she doesn't like canned fruit, and we always had it when I was a kid, so maybe it's a comfort food for me or something.

Steve: Now I know what to get you for your birthday! A case of canned peaches.

Scott: I'll take them, man.

Steve: Two podcasts ago we talked about God's name, which I still can't get enough of. I am reveling in what I'm learning about God through His name. The other day, I was kind of struggling a little bit wondering "How do I bless His name? How do I praise His name?" I asked God, "What am I missing?" The first thing that God brought to my mind was the beginning of the disciples' prayer: "Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name." That's all He had to say – one sentence, and I got it.

Because when I hear "hallowed," or "holy is Your name" – my mind immediately runs to Isaiah 6, where the angels are worshipping God, saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts," and I made the connection. God knows how to communicate with each one of us, for we're all different, but as He communicated to me, all He said was, "Hallowed be Your name," and I put it together. God's name and God's person are inseparable. When I bless His name, I'm really blessing His person, because God's name and His person are the same. They're one. God is holy, and His name is holy.

We're going to talk about today what we started to talk about last week a little bit – His Word. And God's Word is also the same as God Himself, because God, Jesus, is the Word made flesh. God, His Word, His name – they are one, and that's why we can't deal lightly with God's Word. We can't add to it, we can't take away from it, because it's a revelation of God Himself. God is the Word made flesh. As we contemplate His name – we recall the Ten Commandments, "Don't take My name in vain, because if you take My name in vain, you take Me in vain."

There's one verse that brings these two thoughts together, and it's found in Psalm 138:1-2: "I give You thanks, O Yahweh, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing Your praise; I bow down toward Your holy temple and give thanks to Your name for

Your steadfast love and Your faithfulness, for You have exalted above all things Your name and Your Word.” Isn’t that a powerful passage? Psalm 138:2: “You have exalted above all things Your name and Your Word.”

During our last podcast, we talked about our adventures, but then we ended up talking about how abiding in God’s Word leads to bearing fruit, and knowing God also leads to bearing fruit. The more we know God, the more fruit we’re going to bear. So knowing God’s name feeds into this thought. Knowing God’s Word is a part of bearing fruit for God.

Let’s pray. Father, thank You for Your Word that You’ve given to us. And I know I’ve been guilty of not treating it with the respect that I ought to, but yet, at the same time, thank You for helping me to love Your Word, helping me to be faithful in reading Your Word. Thank You for that habit You started so many decades ago, to read a portion of Your Word every day. And I pray that You’ll help me to increase in my desire to not only love You, but to love Your name and to love Your Word, because they all go together. And the more I know Your name, the more I’ll know You, and the more I love Your Word, the more I’ll love You. I pray that You’ll help my heart to be beating with David’s heart and Paul’s heart and Moses’ heart, who loved God, loved His Word, loved God’s name. In Jesus’ name, help us all to drink of that stream, of that clean water that comes from heaven, that tunes our hearts, so to speak, as the song says, to sing Your praise and to love the things that You love. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Steve: We’ve talked about abiding in God, loving God, and bearing fruit for God, and there’s a connection. Paul prayed for the Colossian church, that they would increase in their understanding of God and that they would increase in their ability to produce fruit. I’m going to read a lot of Scripture today, because that’s what we’re going to talk about – His Word. I’m going to begin with John 15:1–8, and you were actually the one that put me onto this.

Scott: Oh, cool.

Steve: A while back, you said, “Why didn’t you bring up John 15?” I thought, “Oh, yeah! Duh!” So here you go: “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask

whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”

Probably like yourself, my first thought when I read that passage is, “How do I abide in God? I want to bear fruit for God. I want to glorify God. How do I live in Him? How do I get tapped into Him?” As I read these inspired words my mind is filled with the image of a branch, part of a vine. How do the life-giving nutrients that are flowing up into that vine find their way into my branch so that there can be fruit at the end of the branch? And I think the key is, “My words abide in you. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you.”

Three verses later, He’s going to say, “Abide in my love,” which I’ve talked a lot about. God has been helping me to live in the awareness and the conviction that God loves me and I love Him. I’m abiding in His love. But I want His words to abide in me.

I don’t know who it was that first discipled you, Scott, but how did they encourage you to read the Bible? You were a Navigator, which places a lot of emphasis on God’s Word.

Scott: What’s funny is that I wasn’t, I was pretty resistant to the whole idea of Scripture memory. We had a small group men’s Bible study my freshman year in college, and I’d started going to Navigators and then joined this Bible study. And the guy that was the Nav’s guy there – Ward Boward, who was the first guy who really discipled me in this regard – he challenged us all to memorize a verse a week, but he was really patient with me, because I grew up in a certain background where that was probably thought of as being too religious or something. I don’t know what the idea I had in my head was, but somehow I thought that that would be bad, which seems ridiculous now. So I didn’t do it. I didn’t memorize anything. But slowly, I started seeing the Word getting into these guys, and I saw their hearts, really. They were exhibiting more of the love of Christ than I felt like I was in some ways, and I thought, “Maybe there’s something to this Scripture memory stuff.” Especially when you hear someone who’s been doing it for years, and the Word just pours out of them, like with you, for instance. The Word doesn’t just flow out of me as easily as it does for some people because I haven’t gotten as much of it into my heart, and I want more of that. But that was the first that I really started with that. And eventually I did start memorizing Scripture, but I’m still slow at it.

Steve: And I also know you also make a habit of listening to the Bible.

Scott: Yes. I do the daily audio Bible podcast, and I go through the Bible in year every year listening to it, and that’s been life-changing for me. First of all, I’ve gotten through the Bible many more times than I would have just reading it on my own, because I’m just not that disciplined about it, and I can do this while I’m driving around. It’s been really helpful.

Steve: Good! It does say in Revelation, “Blessed are those who read and hear the words of this prophecy.” So that’s legitimate. I have had a pretty full summer in speaking, and when I’m in the road and banging around hotels, I’m not in a good rhythm like I am at home. At home, I get up, I read the Word, and I go through **Come into His Presence**. I focus on one aspect of Jesus’ character, I read the section on preparing my heart, sing a hymn, give thanks, and bless His name, and then I do my Bible reading.

I am older, and don’t have 14 kids running around the house, and so I know that that’s not realistic. But I got behind this summer. I had some long drives, and I listened to Proverbs and a couple Psalms, and now I’m caught up. Now I’m in Ecclesiastes in my Old Testament reading, and I’ve got a couple more Psalms, and then I go back into the New Testament for my New Testament reading. Every time I’m reading it and listening to it, I think, “Wow! There’s so much in here. I just want to spend the rest of the day just studying this one chapter.” But then life happens.

Scott: It’s funny how different passages take you different ways at different times. Whether you’re reading it or listening to it, something just hits me, and I’m like, “I don’t remember ever hearing this before! Is that really in the Bible?” And then I go and look it up, and sure enough, it is. The Spirit works on us in different ways at different times, you know?

Steve: Reading and listening to the Word impacts me! We just read that one verse, “Already you are clean because of the words I have spoken to you.” I feel that. Even if I don’t get a new insight, just hearing the Word of God and reading the Word of God, it does something. It cleanses my spirit. It impacts me at a deep level. Here are a couple insights about the Word, because to abide in the Word, I think first of all, we need to read it. I don’t know how to say it any simpler. Let’s try that one more time. To abide in the Word, we need to know it. We need to read it.

Way back in Deuteronomy 8:1–3, there’s a long passage and which most of us only know the last line of it. Jesus quotes this last line in the beginning of His ministry, “The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that Yahweh swore to give your fathers. And you shall remember the whole way that Yahweh your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that He might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. And He humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of Yahweh.”

You can see why I love Deuteronomy. This context helps us understand Matthew 4:4 – “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of

God.” This passage is quoted in the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. This is the fourth chapter of Matthew, the first book in the New Testament. Remember the context, “He humbled you and fed you with manna. First He let you hunger, and then He fed you with manna, and the point was so that you might know that you don’t live just by bread, but you live by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

If you want to meditate on something, meditate on that one verse today – “man lives by every word.” That’s one reason I rarely read commentaries. Rarely. In fact, I can’t even remember the last time I consulted a commentary. I want to read God’s Word, which was written for us to read. Knowing that we live by every word, is one of the reasons I read the whole Bible every year, because I want to make sure that I know every word.

During the last year, I have been going deeper into individual words by studying the etymology of words. You don’t have to know the Greek and the Hebrew anymore. There are so many resources which explain it to you. I particularly like BibleHub. Here is an example. When I wrote **Come into His Presence**, I found out that “come into His presence” meant come before Him, face-to-face. This is the same expression in Hebrew that’s used when it says “seek My face” in Psalm 27, and “if My people, who are called by My name, shall humble themselves and seek My face” in 2 Chronicles. So coming into His presence, seeking His face – these are all the same words.

Steve: I do believe that you have to know the Word before you can go deeper into the Word. There are insights into the person of Jesus that we don’t see until we know the whole Scripture. Jesus Himself says in 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.”

All of Scripture is pointing to Jesus. These words are bearing witness about Jesus. I’ve mentioned it, but I’m not ready to teach it yet because I’m still researching and digging into it, but I feel like God has led me more and more to look at the Tabernacle and to look at the temple, because I’m learning more about Jesus the more I study that. The Tabernacle points to Jesus. He is outside the door saying, “Come unto Me,” Jesus is the way into the presence of God by offering Himself as our sacrifice.

In Hebrews we read that He broke down the partition in His flesh. One of His primary purposes was to restore us to the Father. But we have the Father, you might say, in the Holy of Holies, and Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life into the Holy of Holies. The more I’m studying this Old Testament concept the more I’m seeing Jesus. Scriptures points to Christ.

Steve: 2 Timothy 3:16–17 “All Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuke, correcting, and training in righteousness.”

Steve: Do you know the seventeenth verse?

Scott: I actually didn't memorize that far, but I have it in front of me because I figured you might get to that one. "So that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." I didn't read the first part, though. I just rattled that off.

Steve: Read the fifteenth verse, since you've got it open. Oh, wait, fourteen – start with fourteen. This is Paul talking to Timothy.

Scott: "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuke, correcting, and training in righteousness."

Steve: Sixteen and seventeen are wonderful, but what was a revelation to me was, from childhood – and we know that Timothy came to Christ through his mom and his grandma. They're the ones that shared the Gospel with him. Paul knew this, and he says, "You continue in what you know, knowing from whom you learned it, and from childhood – from infancy – you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."

Paul knows that Scripture points to Jesus, and the Scriptures are what make you wise through faith in Christ Jesus. That passage was one of the reasons that I wanted to have family devotions in our home. I'm very limited as a dad, more so than I ever believed. You know, when you first have kids, you think, "Wow! I can shape these kids, I can train them, I can teach them, all that kind of stuff." Pretty soon you find out, these are little individuals have their own identity, their own personality, their own makeup. I believe you can influence them, but you certainly can't get in there and do any really significant changing.

However God's Word can, because "the Scriptures are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." So when you read through the Bible, know that the Scriptures – are pointing to Christ! These are laying the foundation for faith in Christ. These are eternal words, and the rest of what you read is, it's breathed out by God, inspired, it's profitable, and if you get really steeped in it, you will be complete, equipped for every good work.

Think about that! You and I have everything we need right in God's Word. And all these challenges that are coming upon us in our culture and the world around us, if we will be rooted and grounded in God's Word and abiding in His Word, we're going to be equipped and complete for every good work. We're going to see Jesus more. We're going to be bearing more fruit for Him. I really believe that we're coming into darker times than we've experienced up to this point.

Yesterday, I was out walking the dogs, and my neighbor – really good guy – and we were talking about this ridiculous world that we live in right now, because every time

you get a runny nose now, you don't say, "Oh, I have a cold" – you wonder if you're dying of Covid. Right?

Steve: Somebody posted on Facebook, "I wonder if there will ever be another flu season, or if it will just be a different variant." We've got most of the world running around in fear, and a lot of my people that I know, they say, "I can't wait until it gets back to normal." I don't see normal happening. I wish it would get back to normal, but I don't see it happening. In fact, I have people now coming right up to me and asking me, "Are you vaccinated?"

I was behind a person going through the checkout line yesterday at the supermarket, and the cashier says, "Be careful! Don't get too close to this woman who is checking out." I said, "Okay!" and stepped back. Then, as she left, the cashier said, "A few minutes ago I thought there was going to be a fight on aisle 8 because this woman was freaking due to the man behind her being too close." I thought, "Really?" Then the checkout lady looked at me and said, "You know, people really need to get their life back." And I said, "I never gave it up! I've been ignoring this thing for the last year and a half, and I refuse to bow to it and live in fear." Okay?

Scott: Amen.

Steve: All right, so there you go. The point is that we are going through some tough times, and we're going to continue to go through tough times until this world bows before Jesus. We want to be abiding in His Word in a new way. We want to be bearing fruit and looking for opportunities to point people to Christ. Not fear – faith.

Thank You, Father, for Your Word. Give us an appetite for it. Put something right down deep in us that would hunger and thirst for righteousness. Help us to love the Word of God. Help us to abide in the Word of God. Help us to read the Word of God. And as we read it, increase our faith, point us and reveal Jesus. Point us to Your Son, because we know that all Scripture, inspired of God and profitable and wonderful, but it's bearing witness about Jesus. Help us to see Jesus as we read it. Help us to be more cognizant of His presence in God's Word. But help us to have Your eyes. You love the Word. You inspired it. You commissioned it. And help us to have the same attitude toward the Scriptures that You have. You have magnified above all things Your name and Your Word. Help us to be careful to also magnify Your name and Your Word. In Jesus' name, amen.