

Podcast 303 Jesus is the Gate

Scott Moore: Welcome to the "Building Faith Families" podcast with Steve Demme. I'm your host Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today.

Steve: We're talking about the tabernacle today. A little review. If you remember, last week, we talked about the tabernacle which was called the Tabernacle of Testimony or the Tent of Witness.

Tabernacle and tent are used interchangeably. Witness and testimony are also synonyms. The tabernacle is a dwelling place. The ultimate purpose or witness is in John 12:20–21. "There were Greeks among those who were going to worship at the feast. They each came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.'"

Our goal in studying the tabernacle of witness is to learn what God has for us when He chose to put so much in the Bible about this subject. I have to confess, it's been a revelation to me how many Scriptures are about the tabernacle.

John 5:39 also motivates me, "Jesus told the people you search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life. It is they that bear witness about me." The scriptures point to Christ.

Let's pray that God will help us to see Christ in the Tabernacle of Testimony.

Father, here we are today. We're learners, we're your children, and we're coming with child-like hearts, soft hearts, and we're coming, asking you to teach us, disciple us, and reveal more about Jesus to us. We know that you have set Him above all things.

He's seated at the right hand of the throne of God and the scriptures point to Him. Help us to see Jesus in the scriptures we consider today, by Your good spirit who, again, was sent to point people towards Christ in Jesus name, amen.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: When I read through the Bible every year, sometimes I read the whole book of Genesis over a weekend. For those of you that are thinking, "Wow, I could never do that." Sometime count the words in the Bible versus your favorite novel. Think about how we used to get lost in novels. I remember going to bed at night and reading Narnia books or Lord of the Rings. I could read for hours.

Yet, we chafe at reading 10 minutes of the Bible a day, as if this is going to overwhelm us. Genesis is fascinating. Exodus has plagues and a great deliverance from Egypt. Then, you get to the end of Exodus, and there's a whole chunk about the tabernacle.

When we read Exodus, it is pretty clear to even a new believer that you see Jesus all through Exodus. God is very careful to foreshadow His Son. You have the spotless lamb, slain, with the blood put over the doorposts. It's called the Passover so that when God sees the blood, He will "pass-over" our sins. The Gospel of John then picks

up on that, and he says, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

We're introduced to the lamb. We're introduced to sacrifice. We're introduced to the blood of Jesus covering us. Then what we see is God on the mountain. God, thunder, lightning. Terrifying.

He invited Moses up into the mountain, and the elders and He said, "Be careful," and put a boundary at the bottom of the mountain, because you don't want anybody to break through. We don't want some curious people to see what is on that mountain because they will die. I am holy, I know who I am, I know who you are because I created you, and I want you to be careful.

God is on the top of the mountain. He's holy, He's majestic, He's thunder and lightning, but then in Exodus 25, He says, "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell, or tabernacle, in their midst. Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it."

When I read that, I see God moving nearer. God takes the initiative to come from the mountain, right into their midst. "That I may dwell in their midst." You have to do it exactly like I show you. Probably you and I, most of our listeners have wondered, "What did Moses do up on the mountain for 40 days?"

I think a significant amount of time was spent studying the pattern of the tabernacle so he would get it right. He did, right to the letter.

The idea is, God is creating for Himself a house in their midst. God is holy, and He tells them how to build the Ark, how to build the mercy seat, and He works from the inside out. Eventually, He gives them the pattern for the wall, the curtains that are going to go all around the outside to mark it.

I look at that and I think, "That's our Dad again." He's careful. He's got the holy of holies in the inner sanctum, so to speak, that's called the most holy place, and then you have the holy place before that. Then you have the courtyard with the brazen altar before that, and then you've got these curtains that go all the way around the courtyards.

Today, we're going to talk about how you get in through the door, the gate, and these words are used interchangeably in the Greek and the Hebrew. This opening or portal. I try to put myself in the position of an Israelite who had just seen God on the mountain.

I had seen fire and a cloud. While at the edge of the Red Sea I'd seen Him come separate us from the Egyptians. Then in the Sea I'd seen Him destroy the Egyptians. He's a powerful holy God.

Now, He's inviting us into His presence. He's inviting us to come through the gate, through the opening. In the Hebrew, there's a couple of different words. One is "shaar," which means "the gate."

As an Israelite I've been watching this tabernacle be built, in fact I've contributed to it. That's how that's whole thing was built. He says, "Ask for a contribution, everybody whose heart stirs them, give to this."

They took all of our contributions, the cloth, the oil, the flour, brass, gold, silver, everything. I contributed to this to make my God a home, and now He's inviting me in, and I would have some mixed emotions. As I'm going through that gate, I would be thinking, "I want to get close to God, but I don't want to die. He's holy."

Right away, I walk through the gate and I see a brazen altar. I see priests and I see people who are offering up their sacrifices and their offerings because we have to take care of our sin. We're going to talk about the brazen altar another time. Let's just talk about the gate right now.

As I'm reading through this, I discovered the Hebrew for the word gate, and I checked it in the Greek and the Septuagint, as well, I noticed that this word gate is used for lots of different kinds of gates, like the gates of a temple, or the gates of a royal castle, or palace. They're used a lot in Ezekiel, as he's describing the temple and the courts.

Nine times the "gate of the court of the tabernacle" appears. It's used eight times in Exodus, and one time in Numbers 4. As I contemplate this gate I remember that Jesus is issuing an invitation to come into the presence of the Father.

This is not a new thought for Jesus invites us to come into His presence. Matthew 11, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." We rarely see Jesus saying anything except come to me in the Bible. Jesus is the portal of the way into the presence of the Father.

John 14:6–9, "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, but through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. From now on, you do know Him and have seen Him.' Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us.' Jesus said to him, 'If I've been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip, whoever has seen me, has seen the Father.'"

Jesus is the gate.

I found this fascinating as I started researching John 10. I'm going to read several verses here. The word for gate in Greek is "thira," which is used 39 times in the New Testament, but it's also used in the Septuagint to describe the same words we're talking about in Exodus.

When it talks about the gate of the court of the tabernacle, and they translated the Hebrew into the Greek and the Septuagint, "thira," the same word as we find in John 10 is used. I'm going to read this in the New Living Translation because most of us are familiar with it in a different translation.

"I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber but the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him. The sheep recognize His voice and come to Him. He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out.

"After He has gathered his own flock, He walks ahead of them, and they follow Him because they know His voice. They won't follow a stranger, they will run from Him because they don't know his voice." Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn't understand what He meant so He explained it to them.

"I tell you the truth. I am the gate." You see that? It's wonderful "I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before Me were thieves and robbers, but the true sheep did not listen to them. Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through Me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures." Jesus is the gate.

I don't know how your mind is envisioning this, but I see two pictures in my mind. I see Jesus standing at the door saying, "Come." Inviting us into the presence of the Father. Then he says, "And come through me. I'm the way, the truth and the life." Then he says, "In fact, I am the gate."

Acts 4: 12, "There is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Jesus is the gate. The only way to come into the Father and be saved is through Jesus and in His name.

Now, I mentioned this before, and I recognize it's a little bit of a stretch but consider Hebrews. The whole chapter 11 of Hebrews, men of faith, are people from the Old Testament. These people saw the promises of God and they greeted them from afar. Somehow their faith in God's promises was counted to them for righteousness.

They saw Jesus. In the Spirit they connected with Jesus through the Old Testament by faith, because there's no way to be righteous without the blood of Jesus covering you. I thought of David because as I'm studying Psalm 100, which I read a lot in the last couple of years, writing the book about Come Into His Presence based on this Psalm.

"Make a joyful noise to the Lord all the earth, serve the Lord with gladness, come into His presence with singing. Know that the Lord He is God, it is He who made us and we are His. We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture."

Remember, we just read about I'm the door of the sheep. I'm the gate of the sheep. I am the gate. Notice verse four, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise." Psalm 100 is talking about entering into God's presence, entering into His gates entering into His courts.

Because of Jesus, who has invited us in, we can enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. We don't have to go in fear. He has taken away our sin by His sacrifice on the cross, we have believed in Him. He has sprinkled us with His blood.

We can now walk through the gate, walk through Jesus, and come into the presence of the Father.

Jesus also said it's a narrow gate. Matthew 7, "Enter by the narrow gate for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction and those who enter by it are many for the gate is narrow, and the way is hard that leads to life."

We get to enter into the gate, but Jesus is saying, "Yes and I am the gate and I'm the way and I'm inviting in and you've got to come through me. You can't climb over the walls, you can't go in the broad gate, you've got to follow Me."

Jesus also prayed this prayer in Matthew 11:25, "Oh Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever and revealing them to the child-like. Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way.

"My father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the son and those to whom the son chooses to reveal Him. Then Jesus said, "Come to me." That's the background for, "Come to me." When I read that, I think of a couple of things. I think, Jesus is making this really simple. Let's not miss it.

He is, as He says in John 10, the gate. He is the shepherd, He is it. He is the way, it says in John 14. He is the only way to come to the Father and just believe it. Let's have that child-like faith and grab on to this truth.

What I learn when I'm reading through all these scriptures is God the Father wants to be near His people. He's provided a place for them to be near Him. He did it very carefully because He knows our frame, He knows His frame. He's protecting us in the process.

There are walls, there are curtains, there's a veil, because we have to be careful how we approach the Father. But I also see Jesus inviting us to come into His presence, but He's taking care of the walls. He's taking care of the veil. I'm getting ahead of myself. He's taking care of the gate. He is the way. He is the life-giving way, He's the true way, He's the gate.

Even though it's narrow, if we follow Jesus, we will find life. John 17:3 says, "This is eternal life that they know You, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." Knowing God through the Son, knowing the Son through the Father --He said that on purpose -- is how we find eternal life.

Recall Matthew 16, where Simon Peter was asked "Who do you say that I am?" After some people said, "Oh, you're Elijah, you're this person, or that person," Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven."

In Matthew 11, "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son, and anyone

to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him." The Father and the Son are revealing themselves to us through each other.

The Father has orchestrated through the Holy Spirit, through the pattern He showed Moses on the Mount, how to build this tabernacle that will protect the people, make Himself near, and reveal His Son, at the same time. Their invitation is an opening a portal for us to have eternal life and to know God the Father and God the Son.

Scott: You have any idea what verse I'm going to go to now? If you keep going with the whole door metaphor, the first verse that comes to my mind when I think of a door is written in Revelation 3. He says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in, and eat with him, and he with me."

Not only has He made the door, He is the door. He's the gate. Now He's knocking at the door. It's not enough for Him to just open the gate for us and let us come in. He's coming to us to knock on the door of our own hearts.

Steve: It's halfway down my page in big red letters. No, this is good. It turns out that as I study these things, I'm seeing all kinds of references in the Bible that are, you might say, are connectors, because there's a whole bunch of doors in the Bible. There's a whole bunch of gates in the Bible. There are the gates to the city of Jerusalem, there are gates into the temple.

Think about John 3:16. What is John 3:16?

Scott: God so loved the world.

Steve: "God so loved the world that He gave His son and whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is the Father sending the Son into the world. This is the Son saying, "Come unto me." The beautiful part is, each of us has the opportunity to be a part of the invitation process.

Each of us has the opportunity to be an inviter along with Jesus. It says in Revelation, the 22nd Chapter. I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things, for the churches, I am the root, the descendant of David, the bright morning star. The spirit and the bride. That's us.

We've been so transformed into His likeness that the spirit and the bride are on the same page, and we are saying, "Come." The spirit and the bride say, "Come," not just God saying, "Come," not just Jesus saying, "Come," not just the spirit saying, "Come." Now we are joining Him and saying, "Come." Let the one who hears, say, "Come. "

Let the one who was thirsty, "Come." This is our joy now to say to the world, "Come unto the Father through Jesus the Son." This is what we're doing. We're becoming gatekeepers. We're not the gate, we are pointing to the gate.

We're saying, "Jesus is the divine portal into the presence of the Father." He is the way, the truth, and the light. He is the gate and yes, He is the one that has opened the door.

He's the one that holds the keys. Revelation 3:7. There's a lot in the Bible about this topic. I hope this has been edifying to you. One of the things that I noticed is in my Hebrew study is that word, "Shaar," which means gate. When you go all a little deeper, you discover that "Shaar" stems from a similar root word which is only used one time in the Bible where it says, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Proverb 23:7 KJV I read that and I thought, "What does thinking in our heart have to do with the gate?" Then I thought, perhaps our heart is the portal. As you just read, God is knocking at the door of our heart. That's the portal. That's the gate and it's not only a portal into our heart. This is revealing God's heart for us. How much He loves us and wants us to be near Him. Amen.

Steve: How do we close this up? I do want to say, though, that...Again, I'm seeing all these connectors because I've been studying gates like "Enter His gates with Thanksgiving and His courts with praise," and I think about David.

David loved God's house. David loved the tabernacle, David loved the temple, David loved God. He entered His gates with Thanksgiving, and he entered His courts with praise, but only through Jesus. Jesus is the one that makes a way for us to come to the Father.

Let's pray, Father, thank you for this gate into Your presence. Thank you for the walls that keep us safe.

Thank you for the gate, the opening, so we can come near to our Heavenly Father. Thank you for sending Jesus to take away our sins. Thank you for sending Jesus to invite us into your presence. Thank you, Jesus, for taking our sins, suffering, so that we could enter through you into the presence of the Father. It's a wonderful picture. It's a wonderful image. Continue to reveal more about Yourself. As we read through Your word, open up things to all of us. We are like little children. We are coming. We're not wise. We're not smart, but we are hungry. We're thirsty for You and more of You. I pray that You will satisfy our thirst in Jesus. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scott: If you have a question for the show, email Steve at spdemme@gmail.com. If you have a question for me, you can reach me at scott@unsocializedmedia.com. Thanks for joining us. Have a great week.