

## BFF330 Eden, where Heaven and Earth were One

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 Demme: I am up and perky. I get up early this morning, it's a beautiful summer day, and I thought, I'm going to go sit on the back deck. I put a little sweat shirt on because it was in the sixties. I just got back from Texas.

Scott: Yee-haw.

Steve: Texas, boy, it was really hard to get there. For those of you that think that Steve has a charming life, running around the country, meeting wonderful people, that's half true. It's become a challenge now.

Scott: You just flew in from Texas. Boy, are your arms tired?

Steve: No. I got up at five-something on Thursday morning. I was at the airport by 6:00. At 7:00, the flight was supposed to take off. By 9:00, they'd canceled it.

Scott: Ah, mercy.

Steve: After multiple delays for a couple hours, I put up one on my phone, and I booked another flight out of Baltimore, which is in a different state. I went home for a little bit, took Johnny to work, took the dogs for a walk, and tried to rest for a minute or two.

Then, I jumped in the car, went to Baltimore, got into Texas. It was over 100 degrees, got picked up at the airport, made it to the convention by 4:40 for a 5:30 talk.

Scott: That's cutting it close.

Steve: Exactly. Flying out of a different airport, different airline, different state. It was a long day. Then, when I came home, I had to get up at 3:00 AM to make a five o'clock flight, because that was the best one coming back on Sunday morning.

By the time I got home, I'd been flying and been up for hours and hours, and most of the world was just moving around. But the people were amazing, and I keep finding that I'm learning more about how to communicate the Gospel to believers, which is our topic for today.

Some of those folks gave me some really neat insights which I've been processing, and I'm going to share those at the end of this podcast today.

In Ephesians 3 we read that we comprehend with all the saints what's the length, the breadth, the width, the height, and the love of God. We need each other. We need to help each other to comprehend His love, because the more we comprehend His love, then the more we're able to love Him, since we love because He first loved us.

If we don't take in how much He loves us, the love that we have in response won't be as great. The more I learn about how to comprehend His love, the more I'm able to love Him, which is the first and great commandment. It was a very rich time.

Scott: Bring it, man. We need that.

Steve: All right. Let's pray. Father, thank you for all the different ways...Sometimes it seems circuitous, but, when we look back, we see that your hand was there all the time, in the hard things and in the good things. Help us today to comprehend your love and care in a deeper way, in Jesus name. Amen.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: By the way, I watched a movie on the airplane, which was the best part of the day on Thursday. It was called "American Underdog." Have you seen that?

Scott: No.

Steve: It's the true story of Kurt Warner, who became MVP of the Super Bowl. It's worth watching. He has a special-needs step-son who has impacted his life, which always touches my heart. It is a very special movie.

We finished, pretty much, our series on the Tabernacle. A couple weeks ago, we talked about the cherubim, and then we talked about God's presence on top of the mercy between the overshadowing cherubim.

I made a comment. I said the first time that that word cherubim is used in the Bible is Genesis 3:24. "He drove the man out, and at the east of the Garden of Eden, He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword, which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life."

In my mind, I had always assumed that there was one angel with one sword, and somehow he was able to move in every direction to guard the way to the tree of life. Cherubim is plural. Cherub is singular.

I was out with my son Isaac for lunch, and I was talking to him about that. I said, "It's really curious to me because it appears like there's multiple angels, there's multiple cherubs guarding the tree of life."

He said, "I think there's a reason," and I said, "What's the reason?" He said, "Because it's connected to the Garden of Eden. The same cherubim, I don't know if they're the same, but the idea that there are cherubim over the Ark and the mercy and there's cherubim in the Garden of Eden," he said, "that's the connecting link." Great insight.

What we see here is a connection between God in the garden and God on top of the mercy and the Ark in the Tabernacle. This is just in a small picture and yet a grand picture, for this is a picture of what God has been doing ever since man sinned in the garden. He is restoring us to that original relationship that he had with us in Eden.

I wish we had a lot more information about what the Garden of Eden looked like, but I'm just going to bring up two points.

The first one was Heaven and Earth were one. There was no separation between Heaven and Earth because they were in harmony. They were in sync. Sin had not entered the picture. The serpent had not tempted Adam and Eve. They hadn't fallen.

It was Edenic. It was perfect. It was the way God intended it. The garden was beautiful. We tended the garden. Adam tended the garden, and he loved tending the garden because it was the garden of God. He was created for that, and he did it. He and Eve were one. There was no sin between them. They had a perfect relationship. Adam and Eve communed with God. They were one. There was no separation. There was no guilt. There was no remorse. There was no shame involved. There was no regrets. There was nothing. They could just get up in the morning and look God right in the face. It was perfect.

God's kingdom was on Earth, and God was one with His people. Of course, that all stopped when sin entered the picture and God had to drive them out, which was a mercy. You and I, if we were in that garden and we had eaten from the tree of life and we were sinful, we would not want to live forever that way. It was a mercy.

Ever since that point, though, we've been moving towards the Book of Revelation, when we are restored to when Heaven and Earth are the same, when God and His people are one.

Getting from Genesis to Revelation, is the story of redemption. It's the story of restoration.

Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven." Every time we pray that prayer, we are asking God to bring His kingdom to Earth and establish it right here so that we can be restored to what we had in the Garden of Eden.

What you and I discovered as we've been going through these, I think, 30 episodes on the Tabernacle, is that God made a way for Him to come near to His people without compromising His holiness, without compromising His sovereignty and His integrity. He made a way through the gate, through the courtyard, through the sacrifice, through the basin, through the showbread in the golden lampstand, through the veil, on top of the law, under the mercy to come into His presence.

We saw all the way through that that was also Jesus. At every point, we saw Jesus because we know that we can't come to the Father except through the Son. He's the way, the truth, and the life. Nobody comes to the Father except through the Son. The Son was instrumental at every level.

The Tabernacle, in a sense, is a foretaste of what will be fulfilled in Revelation when we are able to come to the Father. These cherubim, then, are a reminder to us.

In fact, I put it this way. The cherubim kept us from the tree of life. In the Tabernacle, the cherubim invite us to eternal life by coming into the presence of God. The cherubim are a reminder that this is what we're doing here, we're restoring what we lost in the Garden of Eden.

There's lots of passages here. Let me read a couple. In Daniel 2, "He has a vision of this little stone kingdom, which is going to crush every other kingdom, and it will grow until it is the only kingdom."

Revelation 11 describes the result. It's the seventh angel. He says, "The seventh angel sounded. There were loud voices in heaven saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.'"

All these worldly kingdoms in Daniel 2, Babylon, Rome, Greece, they are all going to become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever. Not only will we His people, be restored to our God, but His kingdom will come to Earth. His kingdom will be established on Earth. We'll have one kingdom. His people will be restored to their God, will have a perfect relationship just like it was in the Garden of Eden.

Revelation 21 describes this. "I saw a new Heaven and a new Earth. For the first Heaven and the first Earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

"I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with men. He will dwell with them.'" We know that means also He will Tabernacle with them. "They will be His people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

"He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away."

We are back to the Garden of Eden. This is simple, and yet it's sublime. God is going to lick the devil on his own turf. We're not moving to Mars. He's not giving up on the Earth. He's going to restore His kingdom on Earth. We've been praying it since Jesus taught his disciples to pray. We pray it all the time, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on this Earth just as it is in Heaven."

What's our response to that? Two things I'm going to share here that I haven't shared before. The first one is a few weeks ago, I was talking to God. He said, "When you asked Me to help you love Me with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength," which I did a little over 10 years ago, He said, "You opened the door."

Revelation 3:20 has always been meaningful to me, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and eat with him, and he with Me."

That's written to the church in Laodicea. That's written to believers. Sadly, I've seen that verse misquoted many times when the pastor, or the evangelist especially, will stand at the front of the room and knock on the podium, as he's appealing to unbelievers to come to Christ.

He often says, "Right now that God is standing at the door," then he knocks on the podium. He said, "If you will open the door, He will come in. You'll be born again," etc. The reality is He's talking to the church. He's talking to the believers. He said, "If you hear My voice and open the door, I'll come into you."

Apparently, I must have heard His voice when He revealed in scripture that I need to love Him with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength. I said, "Father, help me to love You with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength."

I think that can look different for each one of His people. He showed me that's when I opened the door, and that's when God came in. On one hand, my world fell apart. On the other hand, He revealed His love for me in a new way. I would not be where I am today if it wasn't for that experience in 2012.

I was sharing this for the first time in public this weekend. Afterwards, a sister came up to me and read Isaiah 30:15, "Thus says the Lord Jehovah, the Holy one of Israel, in returning and rest shall you be saved, in quietness and in confidence she'll be your strength."

Have you ever heard that passage?

Scott: Yes. Beautiful.

Steve: It's like a favorite. I know lots of people that would say that's their favorite passage, but there are four words that I'm going to read again.

The New America standard says, "The sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, 'In returning and rest shall you be saved. In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength, and you would not...'" ESV says, "You were unwilling." New American Standard says, "You would have none of it."

God was knocking at the door of their heart in Isaiah. He's saying, "If you'll turn back to me, you'll be saved. Quietness and confidence will be your strength, but you would have none of it." God was knocking, and they locked the door.

God is always knocking. James 4:8 says, "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you." I looked up that verse this morning. I was looking it up. I knew it was in James 4, but instead of putting in James 4, I put in "draw near." See where that phrase appears in the Bible.

You know where I found a whole bunch of them appeared? In the book of Hebrews, which is come to life for me, the more I've studied the Tabernacle, the more I understand Hebrews, the more Hebrews comes to light.

Hebrews 4:16, "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 7, "The law made nothing perfect, but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced through which we draw near to God."

Hebrews 7:25, "Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."

Hebrews 10, couple of times, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." Hebrews 11, "Without faith, it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him."

I believe God is ever knocking on the hearts of His children, saying, "Draw near to Me. Come close to Me. Come into My presence." Matthew, "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden."

This is ever the patient, the long-suffering, the pursuing God who pursues His children. He says, "Come close to Me. Draw near to Me. Come into My courts. Enter into My presence."

I found this wonderful passage in Psalm 65. "Blessed is the one you choose and bring near to dwell in your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple."

God is calling to us, but will we say, "Yes, I'm opening the door. Come in. Have a meal with me. Talk to me"? Will we be like the people in Isaiah 30, "...and you would have none of it"?

As she shared Isaiah 30:15 to me, I stopped. I said, "Whoa, just a minute." She said, "What?" I said, "I've got to write this down. I've got to process this. This is powerful stuff because this is God's heart." "I want you to return. Find rest, quietness, and confidence. Find strength in My presence."

I've been puzzled and perplexed that when I share the gospel. I can almost see Christians track with the message to a certain point. Then there's a kind of invisible wall goes up. I can almost see them start to say to themselves, "This is as far as I can go," or, "This is as far as I'm comfortable."

I don't know what it's going to take, but I want to pray for us that God will help us because this is what He is restoring. He is restoring us to the Garden of Eden. We're not going to be on the outskirts of Eden.

He wants us to come right up into His presence. He wants us to commune with Him like He did with Adam and Eve. Every evening He drew near to them. It was gorgeous. Genesis 3:8, "They heard the sound of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." Instead of running to Him, as I'm sure they did every night that we don't know for how long, it says, "The man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of God among the trees of the garden."

Instead of running to their dad and saying, "Yes, this is my dad. This is what I've been waiting for all day. I like working in the garden. I like being in the Garden of Eden. I love the fruit, and I love the trees, and I love my relationship with my wife," what they're really saying is "As wonderful as all these things are, the best part of my day is when I hear You walking in the garden.

"Then I get to spend some time with You." But since sin entered, now they hide themselves.

Steve: Father, help us to not hide ourselves. Help us to not say those awful words, "They would have none of it." Help us as we hear that gentle knocking at the doors of our hearts to always say yes, to always open the door, to always invite You into Your presence.

To always say, "Yes, Lord, I want to come unto You. I want to find rest. I want to draw near to You so that You'll draw near to me. I want to know You better. I want to love You more."

Thank You for those cherubim that remind us that this is what You were doing in the Tabernacle. You were calling us back to that Edenic relationship when Heaven and Earth were one and God and His people were one. Help us to get that, I pray.

I know that Paul labored in talking to the Ephesians. He labored that God would help them comprehend with each other that He would give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that You will help us all to take away those blockages and come into Your presence.

As we just read over and over in the book of Hebrews, thank You that You have made a way for us, that You have saved us to the uttermost and You've made a way for us to draw near to God through You, and that You live to make intercession for us.

Thank You for saving us. Thank You for living for us. Thank You for praying for us, take us all the way through.

We join with those early disciples and with disciples over the ages with our hearts, informed in a new way today. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. In Jesus' name, amen.

Scott: Amen. That's our show for this week, folks. Thanks for joining us for the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme. If you have a question for the show, email Steve at [spdemme@gmail.com](mailto:spdemme@gmail.com). If you have a question for me, you can reach me at [scott@unsocializedmedia.com](mailto:scott@unsocializedmedia.com). Thanks for joining us. Have a great week.

Scott: Two places in Hebrews. Did you know it says, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts"? Hebrews 3:15 and 4:7. It's quoting Psalm 95:8, but that's right there, saying exactly what you're saying. "If you hear His voice, do not harden your heart." I think that's what a lot of us do.

Steve: Excellent. If we hear His voice harden not your heart. Perfect.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: Amen. Nothing more to say.

I tell you Scott, I didn't know it until God showed me the other day. He told me "That's when you opened the door." Anytime that we turn at His words we open the door.

I'll read you another one, Proverbs 1:23. Different translations bring it out differently. The New Living Translation says, "Come and listen to My counsel. I'll share My heart with you and make you wise."

The ESV says, "If you turn at My reproof, I will pour out My spirit to you. I will make known My words to you." That's always been a very important verse to me.

God just calls us to simply keep saying yes and keep turning. We are reprov'd when we're convicted, keep saying yes, and He will pour out His spirit upon us. He'll reveal more about His words to us. Amen.