

## BFF332 A Peculiar People for Gods Own Treasured Possession

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

**Steve:** We've been studying God's presence in the tabernacle. We talked on a recent podcast about Asaph and the Sons of Korah. I'm operating under the glow of all that we've been learning and I'm processing things we have studied. Even as I'm reading my Bible, I'm noticing new things that I haven't seen before. I'll give you some examples.

When I'm reading in the Psalms, I noticed in four of the Psalms, references to God's courts. I probably skipped over those before, because I didn't have the same understanding of what it means to come into God's courts.

Psalm 65:4, "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."

The temple and the tabernacle are where God dwelt. The tabernacle was mobile and the temple in Jerusalem.

Psalm 84:1-4, "How lovely is your dwelling place, O Jehovah of hosts. My soul longs, yes, faint for the courts of Jehovah. My heart and flesh sings for joy to the living God. Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young at your altars, O Jehovah, O host, my king, and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise."

As I read these verses, I'm thinking of these precious priests who are dwelling in God's house. These Sons of Korah and Asaph along with Levites to sing praises and give thanks.

Psalm 92:12-14, "The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of Jehovah. They flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age. They are ever full of sap and green." I like that verse because now I'm getting old, and I don't want to stop bearing fruit. When I do bear fruit, it's because I'm spending time in God's house, in His courts, in His presence.

John 15 speaks of "Abiding in the vine to bear fruit." Abiding, we know, means to dwell. This is the same thing he's saying here. It's consistent in scripture throughout that the way we bear fruit is to spend time and dwell in God's courts and in His presence.

You can see how studying the tabernacle has impacted this understanding. Before we go any further, because I'm already getting going here, let's pray.

Father, we are so anxious to learn more about You and Your ways. This is why we're here this morning and listening to this podcast. We want to grow in our understanding. We want to grow closer to You. I pray that these next 20 minutes or so will contribute to that. I pray that by Your Spirit, You will talk to our hearts in a special way. In Jesus' name, amen...

**Scott:** Amen.

**Steve:** I don't know what the Gospel sounded like to you the first time you heard it, but when I heard the Gospel, it was what God can do for me. God's going to take away my sins. He's going to give me peace and joy.

In fact, some Gospel presentations used to begin with this line. God has a wonderful plan for your life. In other words, we're going to have a better life because God's going to be on our team now.

It's interesting how it's taken me decades to turn that thought around and focus not on what God can do for me, but what I can do for Him?

The first and great commandment which Jesus mentions in Matthew 22, as He quoted Deuteronomy 6, is, "You shall love the Lord, Your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind." We are to be lovers of God. He's to be the object of our affection, not ourselves.

It takes some time though to get our minds around these concepts. Today I'm thinking about the priests and Levites, and the instructions David gave to them. 1 Chronicles 15:2, David said that no one but the Levites may carry the Ark of God, for Jehovah had chosen them to carry the Ark of Jehovah and to minister to Him forever. These people were to minister to God. I used to think, "God doesn't need anything. He's God." However these Levites were people set apart to not only take care of the tabernacle and to carry the Ark, but they were to minister to Him.

1 Chronicles 16:37, "David left Asaph and his brothers there before the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah to minister regularly before the Ark, as each day required."

1 Chronicles 23:13, "Aaron was set apart to dedicate the most holy things that he and his sons forever should make offerings before Jehovah and minister to Him and pronounce blessings in His name forever."

These Levites and priests belong to God. When the 12 tribes were set apart and given portions of the land of Israel, 11 of the tribes, received dirt. They received cities, and something they could look at. They could build and farm and develop a legacy to pass on to succeeding generations.

However to the Levites, the tribe of Levi, their possession was God Himself. Even though they had some cities reserved for them to live in with some land, it was very clear that God was their reward. They were His, they were different. I'm going to use a word now that most of us would never use to describe ourselves, but our neighbors might. Are you ready for this special word? It is peculiar.

**Scott:** I'm sure your neighbors describe you as peculiar, Steve.

**Steve:** I'm sure they do. I'm sure my fraternity brothers in college thought so when I chose to follow Jesus. I'm sure they thought that I was peculiar and different, and it's OK. By the way, that word is only used in the King James Version of the Bible.

I shouldn't say only because I haven't examined every single version, but are a verses. 1 Peter 2:9, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession," (which King James translates as a peculiar people, and other translations say a treasured possession) that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

It's not that we want to be peculiar, it's because we are set apart like Levites for God's own possession. Peter is writing this to believers. We are to be His. We're to be God's people. This is what we have been called to do from the very beginning.

There's a beautiful synthesis you might say. I don't know how to describe it, but it's all through scripture from when God called the children of Israel out of Egypt. He says, "I didn't choose you because you were the greatest nation or the most talented nation, I chose you because I've set My love upon you. You are to be Mine. You're My people, and I'm going to be Your God."

Unless you think that this is an Old Testament concept, let me read 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. I normally quote this passage when I'm talking to young people who are wanting to get married. The only thing that scripture teaches is to marry another believer. This is it. It doesn't say what race, doesn't say what tribe, what color, what nation, what DNA, it just says marry a believer.

Then I asked them this. I said, "I don't even know how I would want to be with someone who wasn't a believer, because if I love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, and He is the most important thing to me, this is what I'm going to talk about. This is where my affections are. This is where my purpose for living comes from. If I'm with somebody very long, they're going to figure that out. If they're not on the same page, we're going our separate ways." As I read it, notice how Paul was searching for examples, metaphors, and illustrations to show how marrying an unbeliever is not even worth thinking about.

"Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, 'I will make My dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.'"

1 Peter 1:14-16, "As obedient children do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as He who called you is holy, you also shall be holy in all your conduct since it is written, "You shall be holy for I am holy'."

Lest we spiritualize this too much, holy means to be separate. But not to be separate or peculiar for peculiar's sake, but to be separate so that we can be like our Dad who is holy. His whole nature and being is holy.

"I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above Him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!'" (Isaiah 6:1-3)

God is holy, God is unique, God is peculiar. We are peculiar because we are His.

"As you come to Him a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious. You yourselves, like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:4-5)

This is who we are. We are a special people. We're a peculiar people and we are called to be ministers. Let me say something about that word. When I was growing up in a church and you've talked to Scott about your church, I think it was Episcopal.

I grew up in a Methodist Church and we referred to the people that served the church as ministers. The ministers had special robes that they wore during the service. It was similar to Episcopal.

Yet the more you grow in your faith, you find out that ministers are servants.

Religious leaders in Israel took a lot of heat from Jesus in the New Testament because these people who had started off as servants had now become officious ministers with special uniforms.

Matthew 23:5-12, "They do all their deeds to be seen by others for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others.

"You are not called to be rabbi, for you have one teacher and you are all brothers. Call no man your father on earth for you have one father who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors for you have one instructor, the Christ. The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

Jesus sought to restore order. Ministers are not to receive the greetings, the best seats, the places of honor, and to be seen by others. Ministers are to be servants. They're to be humble. As you read about Paul's definition of apostles in Corinthians, notice that he says, "We are the least, you guys are the ones who are honored."

People think you're special, but not us, the apostles, we're the least of those. It's just different. When I read verses like this, Deuteronomy 21, "The priests, the sons of Levi shall come forward for Jehovah Your God has chosen them to minister to Him and to bless in the name of Jehovah."

I want to introduce a new thought then. I want to introduce the thought that perhaps God is calling us, I know He's calling me, to minister to Him.

Psalm 100 is a significant part of my journey now, and I want to approach Him, making a joyful noise. I want to come into His presence with singing and enter into His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. I want to spend time with God. I want to abide and live in His presence. I want to minister to Him because I'm finding that the more time I spend with Him, the more effectual my ministry, and my service to others is.

It's very clear to me that my vertical relationship is so important to my horizontal relationships. I can't minister well to God unless I love Him with all my heart, mind, and strength. Once I do that, then I'm able to love my wife and kids like He's loved me.

In the Disciples' Prayer, "Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Your name," it starts with us looking at God and saying, "Oh, Dad, You live in Heaven. Hallowed be Your name."

Then as priests, as His people on earth, we're praying His will be done on earth just as it is in heaven. That's a prayer I take very seriously that we are people here now on earth, who have been called out to be separate, to be God's own possession.

We are to be His ministers, His representatives. What we're believing for is we're praying for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. We pray and believe for our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation. Help us to keep separate and holy, and deliver us from evil.

I take this really serious now. I feel like God's put on my heart to bind the strong man. which I do on a regular basis and I bind him and I bind him and I bind him because He said, "Whatever's bound on earth will be bound in heaven," which is where the real battles are being fought every day.

This is what priests do though, and each of us called to be priests and ministers. I find this calling gives new purpose and meaning to my life. I think that if I was relegated to a wheelchair, I could still sit there and minister to God. I can come into His presence. I can believe for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. I can pray for people. I can praise God.

As we talked in the last podcast, I can be a Son of Korah, I can be an Asaph. I can do what Paul says, which is fascinating to me because I think that Paul had the same thing in his heart when writing in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God and Christ Jesus for you." This is what we, who are priests, have been called to do.

Let me read a little section now, with those kinds of thoughts in your mind, John 8:31 through John 15, 16. I'm going to pull out passages.

"Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, 'If you abide/dwell in My word, you're My disciples.'" I need to pitch my tent and live in His word. I've got to read it. I've got to meditate on it. I've got to chew on it. This is a mark of His disciples. They love the word of God.

John 15, eight or nine times, I'm not going to read them all, "Abide in Me." It doesn't say just abide in My word but abide in Me, my person. Dwell in Me, live in Me.

Further on it says, "Abide in My love." We abide in His love by obeying His commandments but abiding, dwelling, living, tabernacling in God because God has tabernacled with us.

God has called us to be His priests. I've been taking notes, on what these priests did, these ministers. They represented God to the people. Some of the kings had teaching priests that He sent them out to teach people His ways. This is what we do as believers, we teach.

We also bless in His name. I frequently find myself asking God to bless a certain person or give him grace. This is what priests do. We bless in His name. We pray, we worship, and we draw close to God.

These are things that these precious people, like Aaron, Levi, Asaph, Korah, David, Moses, Joshua, did. These were God's people, and in their generation they were peculiar. They were set apart. They were God's own treasured possession.

Two passages from Revelation 1:5–6 and 5:9–10.

"Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead and the ruler of kings on the earth, to Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father." (Revelation 1:5–6)

"They sang a new song saying, 'Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open the seals for you were slain, and by Your blood, You ransomed people for God, from every tribe and language and people and nations, and You have made them a kingdom and priests to our God and they shall reign on the earth.'" (Rev. 5:9–10)

What do you think, brother Scott? How does this resonate with your heart?

**Scott:** I'm still catching up from what you were talking about becoming priests. I was listening to the Bible yesterday and the part I'm in, in 2 Chronicles, talked about the priests abandoning Jeroboam to go with Rehoboam when Judah and Israel were against each other because Jeroboam was just setting up his own priests and they weren't Levites and descendants of Aaron.

Jeroboam and his priest were worshiping goat idols and stuff like that. It was a big deal to be a priest is my point, and it took a lot. You had to be born on the right

lineage and all that to be a priest back then. Jesus calls us all priests, but it seems like He changed the role a little bit too.

I know they were ministering to the people in the Old Testament, but they were also ministering to God. Jesus said, even though the Son of Man didn't come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. One of our jobs is to serve others too. That's a different thing.

Some of the stuff I saw growing up, when there's a certain chair that only the pastor/ minister can sit in and a certain parking space that only that certain person gets. That didn't sit right when I was reading about Jesus.

**Steve:** I totally get it. This is what naturally we do. We corrupt stuff.

We could probably end with this passage in Titus 2:11-14.

"The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and Godly lives in the present age. Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works."

King James puts it, "Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works, a treasured possession." This is what we've been called to do.

This is something that's a little different as you observed. God called us to be His own treasured peculiar possession.

**Steve:** That's why the grace of God has appeared. I'll pray.

Father, I pray that You'll help us to have this servant ministerial heart that ministers to You first, loves You first, draws near to You first, and abides in You first. Then let that living waters that we are able to become saturated with, flow through us to those that are nearest to us, and then to our neighbors and turn to this needy world.

Help us to be zealous not only for good works but for You. Give us an attitude of people like David and Asaph and these writers of the Psalms that all they wanted to do was spend time with their dad in His presence. Give us that attitude and give us a love that we haven't had before for this role of serving and ministering to You in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Scott:** Amen.

**Steve:** Just to add one thing, when you were saying you had to be born into the Levitical priesthood, but David was tribe of Judah. I feel like he pressed his way into the kingdom. [laughs] He said, "I'm not a Levite," and yet we know David was a priest and he wore a linen ephod, and God did speak to him and teach him. A huge portion of the Psalms were written by David. Jesus was of the tribe Judah.

He was of the tribe same as David. There's nobody that can be left on the outside. God has invited us all to draw near to Him and be close to Him. Amen.

**Scott:** 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.