

## BFF342 Thankful Priests

**Scott Moore:** 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 well although our family is struggling. As soon as I'm done here, I'm going to go over to the hospital and take my turn watching John.

**Scott:** Oh no.

**Steve:** Yeah, my son John has been battling a cold respiratory thing since Thursday. We took him to the hospital, and they found he had Pneumonia and RSV virus.

**Scott:** Mercy.

**Steve:** The best thing they put them on was oxygen. His oxygen level was low which affected his ability to function. By the time I left yesterday he looked a little perkier. Now, my wife's not feeling too hot, and we discovered she has bronchitis.

**Scott:** God bless you all.

**Steve:** Thank you.

**Steve:** This last weekend, I had the opportunity and the privilege to be in Connecticut. Friday night I spoke to homeschoolers and Saturday, I was with support group leaders throughout the day. The neat thing was it was a manageable enough group that we can not only hear stuff but we can break up into small groups and apply it and then get back together and debrief. It was very helpful.

It was also enlightening for me because we started off by each support group leader introducing themselves, telling them how many people in their group, and describing their group and what it offered.

It was fascinating. My hat's off to these people who have their own kids which they are homeschooling, and they're managing a group. Some people have 20 people in their group, and some of them have 160 people in their group. Some offer one elective class a week, some offer two, some have a miniature school for two days a week in the university model. It was fascinating to me.

I did my workshop on communication where we focus on listening to each other, and then we broke up into small groups and each person had a chance to experience it, not just listen to me talk about it.

During the debrief I asked them "Tell me how it felt. What did you learn? How did it go?" One mom raised her hand and she said, "Oh, it was so refreshing. It was so different to be heard." She is one of those people who is always giving as a support group leader.

Then, the second person that contributed said similar things. It's lonely at the top, and when you're the leader, it's nice to be able to have somebody at your side doing it with a team. It was precious, but it made me understand them, hear them, and feel compassion for them.

**Scott:** Awesome.

**Steve:** Let's pray and we'll jump into this week. Father, thank You that the sun is still shining. Thank You that You're still sitting on Your throne, and You're not leaning anxiously over the earth, wringing your hands, wondering how things are going to go that the election's tomorrow, but You are sitting and You're expecting.

We adopt the same position by faith. We want to be bearing our burden and doing our part in our culture which you've placed us, but the same time, we got our eyes on You. If You're sitting by faith, we're sitting.

Help us today to comprehend what we're going to talk about and have ears to hear only what we were supposed to think and say according to scripture, but then help us to be doers of Your word and not listeners only. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Scott:** Amen.

**Steve:** We're going to talk today about another characteristic of priests. As you might remember in 1 Chronicles 16, David set apart the priests to give thanks, to praise, and to sing, which reminds me of 1 Thessalonians 5:16 where Paul exhorts the believers, "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

You and I have talked about this, and I can still remember you saying, "You know, young people are always asking God for His will." There it is! "Rejoice, pray and give thanks." That is not a natural response in the world in which we live.

**Scott:** There's the understatement of the year.

**Steve:** In the last days, "People will be unthankful, unholy, without natural affection." (2 Timothy 3:2) That's the downward trend of our culture but we are not in that trend. We are a peculiar people. We're people that have been called out. We're people that have our eyes fixed on Jesus. Our eyes have been opened and we see things that we wouldn't normally see if we hadn't been born from above.

Jesus said in John 3, You can't see the kingdom until you have your eyes opened up, until you're born from above. It takes divine work in our hearts. Our eyes look up and we see Jesus and we think, "Oh, now I know how I can be thankful." We have a reason to be thankful.

Thankfulness, I have discovered and most of us probably have, can be developed. It's a muscle. One of my favorite movies is Pollyanna. Hayley Mills plays the part of a young girl who changed people by applying "The thanks game." The book, of course, has a lot that the movie doesn't have, and it was wonderful. Pollyanna's parents were missionaries and they used to get these things called missionary barrels.

These are barrels of things that people back in the home church would put together, with clothes, toys, and all kinds of things. They would put these missionary barrels together, send them out to these missionaries who were on the field, and the missionaries would open them up with eager anticipation.

They had expectations and things they were hoping for. They were probably praying for certain items. I remember one particular situation where a pair of crutches came

instead of the doll Pollyanna was hoping for. Pollyanna looked at her father and said, "What are these? What am I supposed to do with crutches?"

Her father came up with an idea. He had gone through scripture and found over 800 references to being thankful, giving praise, all these things that are really counterintuitive. When he saw what a weight of scripture was there, he taught Pollyanna how to play the thanks game.

They looked at those crutches and they pondered how they could give thanks in this circumstance. One of them said, "I'm thankful that we don't need crutches." What a great response. Instead of fussing and saying, "I was really hoping for a little doll. I've got crutches, but I'm thankful that I can walk. I'm thankful I don't need the crutches." This is being thankful. Let me play right now. How can I be thankful that my son is in the hospital with pneumonia? First of all, I'm thankful for a hospital. I'm thankful that we were able to get right in. We walked in and sat down in the emergency room, gave him our information, and he told us to go to the waiting area. I looked around and there were several people there.

We had hardly sat down when the man calls us back into a special room, did some more work with us, took his vital signs, etc. Boom, we were in a room and there were nurses hooking Johnny up to machines. Turned out that there's an RSV breakout in our part of the world.

They had three people come in within a half an hour with the same diagnosis, so they weren't messing around with it. I thought, "Well, thank God that my wife had the intuition to realize that this is more than something that we can make it through the night, but we need to go to the hospital and get help.

Thank God for the hospital, thank God for the nurses, and thank God that there was an open bed. Some of these hospitals are full. We had an open bed. Johnny's sitting in room 218 right now. There's just so much to be thankful for. Thankful that we have a family that's praying for us and thankful that my job is flexible.

There's a lot we can be thankful for if we can develop our muscles, we can play the thanks game, and can recognize that being thankful might not be a part of our current earthly culture, but it's certainly a part of the Heavenly culture.

Sometimes in the past I have made lists of things to give thanks for. I have a several pages on what I'm thankful for about God's attributes. I am thankful for the Father. I have another list for the Son and for the person and work of the Spirit.

These references help me to get my eyes up and develop my God-awareness. Knowing there's a loving, omnipotent Heavenly Father who is able to redeem and work all things for our good, changes my attitude and outlook.

What we see around us is not the end result, it's not the final say. We shouldn't be surprised that Psalm 100 encourages us to, "Make a joyful noise to Jehovah all the earth. Serve Jehovah with gladness, come into His presence with singing." Right away, as I was thinking about this topic this morning, I realized it is not normal to make a joyful, militant noise the first thing when you are coming into God's presence.

Neither is it normal to serve Jehovah with gladness and be happy about it and start the day off with singing. These are not normal approaches. We have a culture that thinks about ourselves first. As one of my friends says, we gaze at our own navels.

**Scott:** Navel-gazing.

**Steve:** Yeah, navel-gazing. There you go. Sometimes even our worship is about that. It's about how we're feeling. Our hymns have turned from worshiping Him to thinking about how we're feeling. I don't know what to make of it. I'm not making a blanket statement here. All I know is there's something about coming into His presence with a joyful, militant, ringing shout, being happy about it, singing about it that I find very counterintuitive and yet very helpful.

When I do, it takes me outside of myself and it focuses me on God. It's the opposite of what it says in Romans 1:21, which says, "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." I read that and I think, well, "God, help me to honor you, help me to give thanks to you, so I won't be futile in my thinking and my foolish heart won't be darkened, but it will be lifted up.

The rest of Psalm 100 says, "Know that Jehovah he is God." That's why we can do the first three things. "It is He who made us. We are His, we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture." Now, you know that I like capitals. Whenever I copy a verse out of most Bible translations, I have to go through and change all the pronouns to make them capitals. Just in these first couple of verses, let me recount what I see.

"Come into **His** presence" with saying there's one, "Know that Jehovah **He** is God. It is He who made us." "We are His" "We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving, His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him. Bless His name for Jehovah is good. His steadfast love endures forever, His faithfulness to all generations." I count 12 pronouns representing God. The spirit of God helped the writer of Psalm 100 to get their eyes on God and not their navel.

May God help us to all do that because this Psalm of praise is all about Him. It's all about what He has done. It's all about what He's doing. That's why we have the posture that we have. We commence with our heads raised, our eyes focused on Him, and we make joyful, militant noises. We're happy about Him and so we sing. Amen.

**Scott:** Amen.

**Steve:** What do you think about that?

**Scott:** I was just thinking if you're anything like me, this is almost another weapon in the armor of God. I'm the kind of person who... I'll get frustrated that we accept the things that we accept in life as being normal and OK. We were kicked out of Eden, so therefore we were created for Paradise, and any day outside of there is a day of suffering.

I don't want anybody to try and tell me to just be happy or whatever, but when I read the scriptures and see Jesus, Paul, the Psalmist, and practically everybody saying give thanks in all circumstances. I think that's probably more than just that would just put

a smile on your face and be happy. It's actually necessary for survival, for one, but also for thriving, for being effective, for having a good life. That might just be the key or one of the keys.

When I see somebody who I can tell has clearly developed this practice, they don't just brush away their feelings, but they've developed this habit, this discipline of being thankful and it shows. When you talk with Joni Eareckson Tada or somebody like that who's clearly worked on this, you can tell that the Holy Spirit is involved. It's not just a Pollyanna thing, to use that ridiculous phrase.

**Steve:** Yeah, I used to hear that said with kind of like a someone that drinks too much of the kool-aid of just being a positive thinker. They have a "Pollyanna religion." It's not real. It doesn't take into account all the hard things in life. When I read the book and learned the whole story of Pollyanna, I found out that that wasn't the case.

They lived in hard circumstances, but they had learned, as you put it, and it's beautiful the way you put it, the discipline of getting thanks in all things. I thought about Corrie Ten Boom. While they were imprisoned they had lice or bedbugs and they were complaining and praying.

God, we've asked you many, many times to take away these bedbugs, take away these lice, and later they found out that the guards wouldn't come in and mess with them because they were afraid of getting the lice and the bedbugs.

God used the bugs for good. I am sure there are a lot of things like that. We don't know, but God does. That's why, knowing God, we can with full assurance and confidence, give thanks in all things on.

**Scott:** It's got to tick satan off when we're thankful in difficult circumstances. I get the feeling that he and his demons don't like to be around people who are thankful when it's difficult. That feels like it's another way to make him angry.

**Steve:** There you go.

**Scott:** Exactly.

**Steve:** The study for today is focusing on this attribute of being thankful. These studies are a way for me to not only come into His presence applying these principles of Psalm 100, but also coming into the presence of God into the holy of holies that we learned in our study of the Tabernacle.

And it is a way to learn more about God. Today we begin with Psalm 18:2, "Jehovah is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer. My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge. My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."

You and I know we could preach a sermon on each one of those qualities of God. He's our rock, our fortress, deliverer, the one where we go to for refuge, for help. He's our shield. He's the horn of our salvation. He's our stronghold. He's the one where we pitch our tent. We stay with Him.

Now consider Deuteronomy 32, and we begin with the shout verse, "I will proclaim the name of Jehovah. Ascribe greatness to our God the Rock. His work is perfect, all His

ways are justice a God of faithfulness and without iniquity just and upright is He!!!”  
Now, I'm not going to ask you to guess what the song I picked for this topic is.

**Scott:** Alright. I was going to say Rock of Ages.

**Steve:** That one kind of puts me to sleep. Instead I chose the Solid Rock. I'm going to sing the first verse. Notice that I have amended the chorus. "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid rock I stand all other ground is sinking sand. On Christ the solid rock I stand.

**Scott:** Amen.

**Steve:** OK. Now, I'm going to read the words because the more I sing these hymns, the more I see the patterns within the structure of the verses. "When darkness veils His lovely face, I rest on His unchanging grace. In every high and stormy gale, my anchor holds within the veil."

Now there's a beautiful image, darkness, high and stormy gales. Yet, according to Hebrews, "Jesus holds us within the veil. My anchor holds within the veil." That expression comes right from Hebrews.

"His oath, His covenant, His blood support me in the whelming flood." This is true stuff. We're in floods. We're in stormy gales. Some people are listening today are in stormy gales. "But when all around my soul gives way, He then is all my hope and stay." Then, we can affirm, "On Christ the solid rock I stand."

At the very end, "When He shall come with trumpet sound, Oh may I then in Him be found, dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne."

What a beautiful picture of the gospel. We're dressed in Christ's righteousness. His robes of righteousness. We are faultless now standing before the throne, not wondering if we'll be accepted. We're robed in Christ. We can look at God. We can look Him right in the eye because Jesus has done a perfect job for us. It's a strong hymn.

As I memorizing him, it's almost like memorizing a scripture. The more you go over it, the more you get the good of it and the more you see how much is packed in there.

Moving to the next section, "Give thanks sent to Him," all based on Psalm 100. I read a verse. I'm just going to read two and then keep moving to finish this up on time.

"You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you because he trusts in you. Trust in Jehovah forever, for Jehovah is an everlasting rock."

I might read that passage and say, "Thank You that You've helped me to keep my eyes on You. Thank You that I can trust You. Thank You that You are an everlasting rock."

In this next verse, really what we began with except I put my own pronouns in it. "You alone are my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken. My victory and honor come from God alone. You are my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me." Amen.

I give thanks based on these passages, based on these truths, and then praise His name. As we said during the beginning, "Praise You, Jehovah, for being our rock and

our fortress and our deliverer. Praise You, Father, that You are the rock of our salvation."

Psalm 89, "Praise You that You are holy. There is no one holy like Jehovah, and there is no rock like our God. Praise You that we have been built into His house, in which the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself." Ephesians 2:20, the whole verse says, "We are his house. We're built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. The cornerstone is Christ Himself."

Then, I have several verses about the blood of Jesus, about the Spirit of God, and about the washing of water. All three things that they did before they came into His presence. They offer the sacrifice washing of water in the basin, but then twice daily, they offered sacrifice.

I like twice daily to say, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world," and ask God to fill up His church with His Spirit. That's what they were to do. They were to fill up the golden lampstand.

Father, today, fill up your people with thankfulness. Fill up your people with a thankful heart and a thankful spirit.

Then, the other thing that I've been doing is to bind the strong man. I don't know if your neighborhood is covered with political signs like my neighborhood is. When I see those signs, they remind me that it's not flesh and blood that I am fighting. It is the principalities and powers in heavenly places.

Jesus told us, "We can bind the strong man and we can loose." We can bind and loose. "It is not by might nor by power but by My spirit."

Jesus also said, "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house."

**Steve:** God's taking my game up to a different level. I am seeking God to bind the strongman every day, to lose people from his grasp, to plunder his house, and to set captives free.

Today, I'm focusing on John 8:44 which says, "You are of your father the devil. Your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, does not stand in the truth because there's no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies." That's called plain speaking.

The devil is a murderer and a liar. Based on that, "Father, in Jesus' name, we bind the liar in the media. We bind the liar in public education. We bind the liar trying to tell people that they are not children of God. We bind the murderer, the murderer of babies, the murderer of families, the murderer of everything that's good and decent in our culture. We bind him in Jesus' name."

Jesus says, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind to set at liberty those who are oppressed."

Father, set children free from the untruth being taught in schools, from the media, from the works of the devil. Deliver babies from death in their mother's womb. Deliver the decision-makers in congress, deliver them from blindness, help them to make right and wise decisions. Father, we bind and we lose in Jesus' name. 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.