

BFF352 Servant Priests

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

Steve: I'm recovering. How are you?

Scott: I'm good. Still in the midst of basement chaos.

Steve: God bless you. I was in Minnesota for a men's retreat this past weekend. I'm going to start off with a little report of that, and then we'll go into our topic for the day.

Scott: Let's do it.

Steve: Father, thank You for bringing us through another week. Thank You for helping Scott and his family get their foundation rebuilt. There's still more work to be done, but thank You for what has been done. Thank You for being with me in Minnesota. Now, You're here today. We invite You by Your good spirit, minister to us and through us in Jesus' name, amen.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: Last year I spoke at the Mache Homeschool Conference in Minnesota. I remember not so much the main sessions, which were in a big auditorium, but I remember the men's breakfast, which was early in the morning, with no wives or kids. Just me and the dads and we really connected.

In that atmosphere, I can be more open. I don't have to be as careful what I say. Afterwards, I thought, "I'd like to meet with these guys again." Later in the summer, I spoke at Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch down in Southern Minnesota for the first-ever homeschool family conference for special needs families.

I was the camp pastor, but it is a wonderful facility and I thought, "I'm in Minnesota at this beautiful facility. What about having a retreat here?" I got together with some of the leaders of the Minnesota home educators and said, "What do you guys think?" We prayed and decided, "Let's go for it."

This weekend was the fruition of our planning. We had 20 men show up which was a good number. We met together the first night where I explained that I wasn't going to be the speaker. We were each going to speak and tell our story.

I gave a couple tips or ground rules, so to speak. Each day we applied the principles of coming into His presence to begin. We made a joyful shout. Sang. Gave thanks, and praised His name. The men went with it and it was blessed. It's one of the first times I have done those principles, with a group the way that we did this time.

I began by giving my testimony for 15 minutes. Then we had time for asking me questions. Then we did three more guys the first night, Friday night. It was a really good start.

Saturday morning we got up, had breakfast. The temperature had gone from minus one to into the single digits by the morning. By the afternoon it was 30, so it was a heat wave.

Sunday morning, after we had the last couple of guys give their story, we went around the room and said, "What were your takeaways? What struck you?" Just like a one-minute brief affirmation testimonial.

One of them really stuck out to me. One young man said, "I have been going to our present church for over 10 years. Even though I've gone there for that length of time, there's only one man that I know as well as all 20 of you." Isn't that a special observation?

Scott: Wow.

Steve: I can say the same thing. I get into a routine at church, but there are very few families that we really know well, and very few people that I've heard their story.

In our church, we're applying the same principles with a group of 14 men. We meet on Thursday night. We've each told our 15-minute story. Now, a couple of years after we began, we're spending more time telling our story and going deeper.

Those 14 guys, when I meet them at church, they're my brothers. We don't have to teach each other, exhort each other so to speak. We just hear each other. We're connected with each other. It's very special. I'm going to invite comment on that. What do you think before we get into our topic?

Scott: You better be careful. You could start a whole revolution in ministry. People might actually start to get to know each other at church again. I say that tongue in cheek, but it's needed. We've been trying these small-group ministries for years. Most of them are just a waste of time. Groups that fizzle out after a couple of months, and stuff like that. This is actually helping people to lock arms and get to know each other.

Steve: You put that well. We've been a part of a small support group, which was good. We pray for each other, or give a report what happened during the week. But now that I have seen how to tell stories, and the benefit, I'd like to do it again and say, "How about everybody take turns? Every time we get together, three more people will share their story. By the time we're done, we're really going to get to know each other."

You don't really know somebody until you hear what they've been through, where they've come from. I'm still processing what I heard about these 20 men. Some of their stories were heart wrenching. In fact, that's probably the common theme, "Life is hard," whether you're a follower of Christ or not. There's a lot of stuff that we've been through, that we're going through.

If you don't go through it as a single guy, when you get married you're going to go through it, families, and challenges. You know what? If I was to meet these guys again next summer, like you said, our arms would be linked in a whole different way. Well put.

OK, I was going on a prayer walk just yesterday and my theme was that Christ is the King. The majestic verse that started off my study was 1 Timothy 6. "Our Lord Jesus Christ," skipping a few words, "He who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light."

What a powerful verse. I clicked on BibleHub so I could learn more about it by reading in the Greek. I saw that He was not only the only potentate or sovereign or supreme ruler. He was also the king. In the Greek it says, "Of all who are kings. He's the Lord of all who are reigning as lords." He's the pinnacle. He's the king. It was a great verse to start off the day and the talk today.

I remember that when we started this study on being priests, we read Revelation 1:6, which says, "He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father." Also Revelation 5:10, "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God. They will reign upon the earth." We are a kingdom and priests. You don't have a kingdom unless you have a king.

As I was meditating on Jesus being our king, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, the next thing I usually read is a verse about seeking Him. The verse this day was Revelation 1:5. "Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, the first to rise from the dead, and the ruler of all the kings of the world. All glory to Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding His blood for us." I never saw how discordant that picture is.

King of Kings shedding His blood for His people. I stopped. "The King came off of His throne, -- you might say, for a visual picture -- and He laid down His life for his people. He shed His blood" He gave His life, so His followers would have life.

That is so out of sync with what an earthly monarch would expect His followers to do. He would want them to die for him. This is what earthly kings, rulers, and dictators do. They want to be on their throne. The king marshals his troops and says, "Now you need to die for our kingdom. You need to die for me."

Then my mind just kept going down this line. He not only died for us. Right before He died, He washed our feet. We know He not only cleaned them up, but He established and set them apart to be priests in that one act.

He also gave them an example that they were not to be big chief priests. They were to be servant priests. They were to wash each other's feet. This is how His kingdom was going to operate. I don't know when I've had such a picture of clarity of Jesus Christ being the King of Kings, Ruler of all the rulers, Lord of Lords, the Sovereign Potentate. Yet He's the one who laid His life down for us, washed our feet, set us apart to be priests, gave us examples to wash each other's feet, and served us. Then I started thinking of verses like, "He came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many."

As I thought about that, I went back in my mind over all the studies that we've already done. The first one we did was, priests are people that God has set apart to minister. Not only to Him but to each other, to His people. They were to pray. They were to fill those incense bowls every day.

Yesterday in my daily Bible reading, I was listening to Mark where it says Jesus had come into the city. He cleansed the temple of all the money changers and different things.

He says, "Don't you know my house is supposed to be a house of prayer for all the nations?" Those words struck me because this is what He was calling us to do. We were to be keeping His house a house of prayer. I'm going to run through our priestly responsibilities.

"Priests are to seek God and seek His face," according to 2 Chronicles 7:14. Turn from our sin. Seek His face. Priests give thanks. Priests are warriors. Priests believe...This is the work of God that we believe. They believe in what God has said. They believe the Word of God. They stand for the Word of God. They're praying, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Priests fight the good fight. They resist the devil, who's the enemy of our souls.

Priests sing. They worship. They sing praises. They bless. They stand by the Lord of the whole earth. They are with Him. They're on His team. They're identified with Him. They don't shy away from saying, "Yes, I'm a follower of Jesus." They're consecrated. They're clothed in Christ.

As I went through all those thoughts quickly in my mind, I realized that the main thing we do is we emulate Christ because He is the one that has done all of those things first. He's our example. He's not only the high King. He is the high Priest. He's the one that we follow. He's the pattern.

I started thinking of all these situations such as right before He was about to be betrayed and crucified, He prayed and sang a hymn. He led them to worship. I thought, "In His greatest hour of trial, when He should have been girding His loins, He said, 'Let's sing a hymn.'" Then He gave the Lord's supper to His followers.

I saw our King as a praying King, a serving King, a teaching King, a worshiping King, and one that stood by His father. The reason He died was not only so that we could live, but He came to destroy the works of the devil, which He did. He came to swallow up death, which He did. I saw Jesus in a whole new light.

Folks, that is the main reason that we're studying anything in scripture, so we can learn more about Jesus because the more we know about Jesus, the more we're going to love Jesus. The great purpose, the great goal, the great command we have, is to know God and love him. Now, I see Jesus as the high and exalted King, but I also see Him as a completely given sacrifice, a servant, a lamb.

In all these different aspects, the more I meditate on them they just keep coming to life. How many shepherds are also sheep? How many kings are also servants? This is Jesus. It's an incredible pattern. There you go. How does that strike you this morning?

Scott: I've thought of Jesus as being the servant King before and how dramatically different it was for Him to die for us and all that, and to wash our feet and everything. Thinking of Him as the high priest, in that culture you look at the character of the high priest, especially when they were crucifying Him. That guy was high and mighty. You didn't mess with the high priest.

You didn't speak ill of him or anything. He wore the fancy robes, had the good parking space, and all that stuff. Even in the churches where...You know, the pastor or whatever they call him, is still lifted up in a lot of places. This is a constant reminder, man. Jesus is calling us to be a pastor or a priest if that's your calling. For all of us it is. It's a lowly calling.

We're not meant to be lifted up and praised. We're not supposed to lift one person up over another. Does that make sense?

Steve: Sure. We're not supposed to seek the chief seats. At the same time that we're doing this, it's important when we're washing each other's feet to remember that we're following in the footsteps of our King and our high priest because He's called us to be a kingdom and priests.

In one sense, we have been endued with a whole bunch of...I don't know how to even put it, but He calls us His priest, He calls us His friends, He calls us to be a part of His kingdom. He tells us that we're going to reign someday.

That could elevate us and get us puffed up, but not if we keep our eyes on Jesus because He really was the King. He really was the, as you put it, High Priest. He really does have all His own parking spots, and He left all that so that He could serve us. I don't know, I'm seeing Jesus in a new way, and I'm awed by it.

I'm awed by what a great King He was. I'm awed by how incredibly effective He is as a priest. He not only prayed for us before He died, He is praying for us now.

Just take that in for a second, that you and I are being mentioned by name to His Father. He also stood by His Father when He was on Earth. I could keep giving examples, but it's a beautiful testimonial of His life that He points us to His Father and now the Holy Spirit is pointing us to Him so that we can be faithful until the end. Good stuff.

I know one church where the pastors are the ones that are the janitors. I met a man who currently serves there, and he related, "My dad taught me this." He said, "If you want to be able to serve these people, you need to take the lowest job. You need to be cleaning out the bathrooms." He grew up cleaning out the bathrooms at church, which his father did before him. How's that for an attitude?

Scott: The other thing I think of when you mention Jesus is King, whenever I hear that I think of two key moments from scripture that, to me, are two of the saddest moments in all the scripture.

One is when the nation of Israel in the Old Testament asks for a king and God basically says, "Don't do this, I'm your King." They say, "No, no, we want to be like everybody else and have our own King."

Then the parallel in the New Testament when Pilate asks, "Shall I crucify your king?" I can't hardly say it. It's so painful. They say, "We have no king, but Caesar."

Steve: They rejected Him.

Scott: It's so easy for us to want to worship some other king. No, no. He's the one.

Steve: This is what wins our heart when we see that this is our King. He not only talked the talk. He walked the walk in a way that continues to astound us, which the more we see, we're going to be able to spend a lot of time in eternity worshiping Him and thanking Him because I don't even think we've seen a portion of the picture. We've only gotten a taste.

Steve: When we see Him fully sitting on His throne, and we learn all that has been done for us, and we really are able to comprehend it, it's going to be nothing but heartfelt praise that's going to exude and pop out of our lips. It's going to be real worship. We won't have to work at it.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: Praise the Lord. Thank you, Father, for Your plan, which is so mysterious in some ways and yet so awesome in other ways. How You can send Your Son so that we could become Your sons and daughters. Thank You for Jesus' faithfulness. He saw what You were calling Him to do. He fulfilled it to the letter from where He was born, to whom He was born, to how He died.

Even that piece, while on the cross, His garments were not torn asunder to fulfill scripture. He fulfilled it to the letter. He did exactly what You called Him to do. He did it even though it cost Him everything. Thank You that You have made Him now the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. He is the only Potentate.

We join today in worshiping Him and ask You to send Your spirit afresh to us and help us to emulate Him. Regardless of our calling as priests, or kingdom members, or followers of Jesus, help us to keep our head down low. Help us to humble ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him. Thank You for Him as our priest and as our king. In Jesus' name, amen.

Scott: Amen. 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. If you have a question for me, you can reach me at scott@unsocializedmedia.com. Thanks for joining us. Have a great week.