

BFF363 Spiritual Warfare, Fighting the Good Fight

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?

Steve: Last week, you planted a seed when you said, "Why don't we do some more with spiritual warfare?" I took that to heart. I'm going to focus on one aspect of spiritual warfare, then we're going to apply what we've learned to a specific situation.

Steve: Father, help us to not only talk, but to do and not only do, but to believe as we talk. Help us to pray in faith. Help me, help us all. Help us to have ears to hear and be led by Your spirit. I pray that this would not be just an entertaining conversation, but that will be a profitable conversation for seeing Your Kingdom come and Your will being done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: We've been leading up to this series since we've been talking about all the different functions of a priest as a worshiping warrior, praying, believing, resisting, binding, as well as singing and ministering.

Yesterday in my Hebrew class, we were talking about Baruch, which means to bless. We had a discussion about what it means to not only minister to each other, but to minister to God. Today, we are going to talk about fighting the good fight of the faith.

I think it's important for parents to learn how to pray for their family. It's important for the church to learn how to pray for God's kingdom to come. It's important for believers to pray for world and political events. It's part of what God calls us to do.

1 Timothy 6:12 "Fight the good fight of the faith." There's a lot to that, just that one expression. It's a fight, but it's a good fight, and it's a fight that we were designed to do. This is part of being a believer. Paul says in another place, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil." He's our enemy and we're in a fight against him.

As soon as we say yes to Jesus, then everything in us is now starting to learn to say no to the devil. We have the three enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil. The flesh is our own internal war. The world is something we have to be on guard against, lest we be swallowed up in it. The devil is who we're going to be focusing on.

Paul goes on to say, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood." I've mentioned this before. It's not against people on media. It's not against people on our computers. It's not about people in the world in which we live. It's not against the Hitlers and the Putins and, who's ever prime minister of China.

It's not against flesh and blood. It's against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. This battle is real and ongoing.

Of course, one of the main strategies of the devil is to keep people from believing that there is a battle, that everything is fine, that we're OK, etc., but there is a battle going on in the heavenly places.

If you remember, one of the first things that Jesus said when His disciples asked Him, "Teach us to pray like John taught his disciples," He said, "Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." There is a heaven, and there is a will in heaven. There's also an Earth. There are incredible promises that we're going to get to, about this heavenly battle that is also being reflected and influenced, by Earth. The first thing we want to learn is how to pray in faith. Remember when Jesus was entering Capernaum in Matthew 8. A centurion came to Him and said, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented." Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof. Just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority with soldiers under me. 'I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes. Another one, 'Come,' and he comes. Unto my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it.' When Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, 'Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.'"

This centurion, not an Israelite, said, "You say the word. It'll be done because I know that You are the person in charge. You're the person in authority." That's faith. Jesus also encourages us in Luke 18 to keep at it. He didn't just say, "Ask," He said, "Seek" and "Knock." I think this lady takes it up a notch.

"He told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, 'In a certain city, there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. There was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, "Give me justice against my adversary.'" For a while he refused. Afterward, he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice so she will not beat me down by her continual coming.' The Lord said, 'Hear what the unrighteous judge says. Will not God give justice to His elect who cry to him day and night?'"

Then He goes on to say, "Will He delay long over them? I tell you. He will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on Earth?" There are times when I get tired and am tempted to lose heart. He said, "Don't. You're going to be tempted to lose heart and be tempted to think that I'm not answering, but you keep at it." That's what this is telling us.

He also says, "When I come, I want to find you still believing. You may not have seen what you were praying for come to pass, but I'm coming soon. I want to see you at your post believing." That's how it comes across to me.

Then there was the Canaanite woman had some chutzpah. Matthew 15, "Jesus went away from there and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out saying, 'Have mercy on me, Oh Lord, Son of David. My daughter is cruelly demon-possessed.'

"He did not answer her a word. His disciples came and implored him saying, 'Send her away because she keeps shouting at us.' He answered and said, 'I was sent only to the

lost sheep of the house of Israel.' She came and began to bow down before Him saying, 'Lord, help me.' He answered and said, 'It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.'

"She said, 'Yes, Lord, but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their master's table.' Then Jesus said to her, 'Oh, woman. Your faith is great. It shall be done for you as you wish.'" She wouldn't take no for an answer.

You could read this and say, "Boy, Jesus seemed a little bit rough on this lady," However I think there was a twinkle in His eye when He said, "You know, I can't do this. I'm not supposed to do this." It's like He was encouraging her. "Keep asking." She did. She says, "Yes, but even the dogs feed on the crumbs."

He said, "Yup. You're right. Your faith is great. I'm going to answer your prayer." However you want to read that, the point is, keep at it. To me, this is knocking until you get an answer.

When you ask, it's one thing. When you're seeking, you're taking that asking up a notch, and when you're knocking you're taking it up another notch, and not going to let go until you get your prayers answered.

Jesus also says in John 6:29, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." It takes work to believe. It takes time being in the scriptures. It takes effort. It's not just reading through a little prayer book in the morning, this is work. One of my primary prayer verses is, "This is the confidence that we have toward Him. That if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. If we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him." 1 John 5:14-15.

This is how we know God's will, is it according to scripture? God has revealed His will in scripture and I'm going to spend as much time as I can in God's word because faith comes from hearing, hearing by the word of Christ. Faith not only hears the words of Christ, faith knows the words of Christ. Faith knows what God has said He's going to do. We're going to mix God's declarations and promises with faith. We're going to believe Him.

Today our topic for prayer is, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." An encouraging passage along this line is Matthew 16:19. "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. Whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

I continue to apply this passage and it almost makes me catch my breath because He is authorizing us to do this work. He's telling us, "Look, I'm giving you the keys. Whatever you bind on earth, whatever you loose on earth, it will be loosed and bound in heaven."

I want to pray today for God's kingdom to be established on earth. At the same time, I know that I have an enemy. I have an enemy that is seeking to keep God's kingdom from being established, and that enemy is the devil himself. He's called the god of this world and I'm going to bind him.

I'm going to bind him in Jesus' name. We talked about that last week. I'm going to bind him in the cords of the blood-washed Son of God. It's His scarlet blood soaked, cords that we're going to bind him in. Let me read three more scriptures then we're going to pray.

"The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to another people, but it shall break and crush and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever." That's Daniel 2:44 talking about God's kingdom which He's going to set up. It will never be destroyed. It will break and crush and consume all these other kingdoms.

Zephaniah 2:11, "Jehovah will be terrible unto them. He will famish all the gods of the earth and men shall worship Him, everyone from his place even all the isles of the nations." Powerful passage. I remember when my spiritual mentor prayed that the first time.

I found this verse the other day, Matthew 13:41-42. "The Son of Man shall send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that cause stumbling and them that do iniquity." Wonderful promise.

Let's go to prayer. Father in Jesus' name, thank You for this exhortation, to pray for Your kingdom to come. Thank You for these tools that You've given us. In Jesus' name, we bind, right now, we bind the devil on this earth. We bind him in Jesus' name.

We believe that Your kingdom is established, its sovereignty is for sure and that kingdom which You've established is breaking, crushing and consuming all these false kingdoms. All these kingdoms that have their roots in hell. In the name of Jesus, we bind and we crush and we consume all these other kingdoms and we ask You to famish all the gods of these kingdoms. Famish them in Jesus' name.

Send forth Your angels to gather all the causes of stumbling and those that do iniquity out of these false kingdoms so that Your people can be free to worship You. Amen.

In the second half of this passage, we are also authorized to loose. In addition to binding we can pray to establish and see God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven.

To do this effectively, we need some scripture to help us. Deuteronomy 4, "Know therefore this day and take it to your heart that Jehovah, He is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath and there's none else." I love that passage.

Revelation 11, "The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall reign for ever and ever."

Psalms 103, "Jehovah has established His throne in the heavens and His kingdom rules over all." "Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. Your dominion endures throughout all generations."

Psalms 145:13. "He" speaking of Christ, "has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son."

Let's pray. Father thank You for the binding that's taken place today. Now we also loose, loose us to believe in Jesus. Loose this world to know that You are God who reigns in heaven above and on the earth beneath.

Thank You that Your word says that the kingdom of this world has become the Kingdom of our Lord. You will reign forever and ever. We believe that. We mix that scripture with faith.

You said that Your throne is established in the heavens, and Your kingdom rules over all. I believe that, too. Doesn't look like it a lot of times, if I watch the evening news, but I'm looking at the world news in Your scripture, and heaven and earth is going to pass away before Your word will ever change.

Thank you for delivering us from the domain of darkness. I believe for a whole multitude today to be delivered from a domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of Your Son. Thank You that You're the ruler in the kingdom of men. Thank You that Your kingdom is everlasting.

Thank You for this wonderful passage in Isaiah, "A child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us, and a government will rest on His shoulders. His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government, or peace on the throne of David, and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from this time forth, and forevermore. The zeal of Jehovah of host will accomplish this."

Father, let our zeal match Your zeal because we are with You. We are believing today for Your will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. You've revealed in Your word that Your kingdom is coming and has come, and that it will completely fill this whole earth, from the north to the south, to the east, to the west.

Some day, every knee is going to bow and every tongue confess that You're Lord, and You will indeed be king on this earth and not just in heaven. That's what we're praying for and we ask You to make it happen. Thank You for the privilege of working with You today. In Jesus name. Amen.

Scott: Amen. That's powerful, man.

Steve: Well, the more I stay in scripture, the more power there is. Ephesians 6. "This is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." This is what we fight with. We fight with His word. We fight with His sword. We're effective. If we start fighting in our own strength, we're going to fall.

Scott: That's exactly what Jesus fought the devil with when He was tempted in the desert. Satan came at Him with scripture, but He went right back at Him with more scripture.

Steve: He twisted it. Jesus had to straighten him out.

Steve: This is some of the things that we're going to talk about. I don't want to spend more time on the devil than God himself. He is a liar. He's a deceiver. He's your accuser. Some days that's what I do. I bind the accuser. I bind the liar.

Steve: Then, at the same time, I want to make sure that I magnify the truth-teller. I want to magnify the Word-made-flesh because "Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world."

Scott: One of the things I was going to say, there's so many aspects to this. To me, it's such a mystery still because there's the verses that talk about if you pray and believe what you have, then you have it. "Ask whatever you wish. It'll be given you," those kind of things. It seems like it's easy.

Then there are passages that make it seem like, "OK, this isn't as easy as some of those other passages sound." When you look at just the birth of Christ, God sent an angel to wake Joseph up in the middle of the night and tell him to run to another country basically. There was a mass genocide of babies to try and stop what God was trying to accomplish.

Now this is God. He could have done it somehow. I don't understand all of what's going on there. If nothing else, that ought to let us know that there's something different going on than we think if we think things are easy.

Steve: This is a fight. It's a fight to the finish. Even though we know the end of the book, we have to be working with God and do our part to make that come to pass. I don't know how that happens, but that's what I'm doing.

Thank you, Father, for Your word. Thank You for Your encouragement. Thank You for Your call. Thank You for helping us to fight the good fight of the faith. Help us to be strong in faith, help us to learn how to wield Your sword of the spirit. 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. If you have a question for me, you can reach me at scott@unsocializedmedia.com. Thanks for joining us. Have a great week.