

BFF374 Jesus, Our Faithful and Merciful High Priest

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: I am well. How are you?

Scott: I'm good. Today we're going to talk about a very steady trait of God and God's people. It's being faithful.

I don't know if you were there, but when we had one of our inaugural meetings with the men who meet in St. Louis, Todd said, "I'd just like to have a hand raise. How many of your parents stayed together?" Everybody raised their hand. Here's a room full of men who are operating in the world of home education encouraging dads.

Perhaps, the greatest benefit they received from their parents was that their mom and dad stayed together. One guy said, "My parents were too stubborn to split up, even though they probably should have, they still stayed together."

What a legacy, and this wasn't a flashy thing, it's just two people that had hung in tight and been faithful to each other, even through the temptations of the world. It is so easy now to just say, "Enough," and walk out the door and get a no-fault divorce, but they were faithful.

Faithful is one of those traits of God and of God's people that is not given enough credence, if I can put it that way. We like flashy, we like ministries. We like people that have social presence and media presence. We like people that have written books and have been on radio stations and all that kind of stuff, but it's the faithful guy that wins the race. That's what we're going to talk about.

Father, help us now as we dig into Your word, to not only see the faithfulness that You have for us and for Your purposes, but help us to understand how we can be faithful. I especially want to encourage those who are faithful and they perhaps don't think they're flashy.

I pray that You will give them a big hug this morning, a big high five, a big pat on the back, a big attaboy, because faithful is what You have called us to be, and faithful is who You are, and faithful will win the day. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: I think I said everything in that prayer, so we can probably wrap this up now. This will be the shortest podcast.

Scott: I was going to say, I'm not sure God's people have done a great job of being faithful. When I read the Bible, there's not a lot of being faithful in there of most of them.

Steve: Well don't forget the 7,000 guys who'd never bowed the knee to Baal that nobody knew about, even Elijah didn't know about them. He thought, I am the only one and God says, "That's because you don't see what I see."

What I see is 7,000 faithful followers of God who have not kissed nor bowed their knee to that false god.

Scott: Touché. I knew you'd have a good answer.

Steve: When we read about Paul's journeys, we find out that he didn't go by himself. He had a team with him. That's how Luke received eyewitness accounts of what happened in several instances in the book of Acts, because he was there.

He was the steady faithful guy, among a team of people. These guys were hanging out with Paul and probably encouraging him. This is what faithful guys do, and I've had faithful people in my life that you'll never hear about this side of heaven, and yet they've been faithfully by my side. They've been praying for me, they've been standing with me, and I can be up and I can be down and they're just steady, rock solid.

Let's look at some passages. Hebrews 2:17. We're going to focus right where we ought to focus on Jesus, right from the beginning. "Therefore He had to be made like His brothers in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in the service of God to make propitiation for the sins of the people."

He was merciful and faithful, but it looks like that came from the fact that He tasted our humanness. He had to be made like His brothers in every respect, and He was tempted in all points as we have and yet He didn't sin.

Romans 2:4–7, "Do you presume on the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance, but because of your hard and impenitent heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. He will render to each one according to His works. To those who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, He will give eternal life."

That expression, "patient continuance in well-doing" is found in the King James Version. To me it provides a definition of what it means to be a faithful follower of Jesus. Patient continuance in doing what is right. You just keep getting up and you put one foot in front of the other and you are patiently continuing in well-doing and you're going to inherit eternal life. You're pursuing the kingdom. You're not flashy, you're not on the radio, you are just patiently continuing to do what you know is right.

I want to give a big shout out to those that are hanging onto their marriages, they're faithful. Perhaps they don't give the most inspiring family devotions in the morning, but they're still doing it. Perhaps they don't have a lead position in their church or

their fellowship, and perhaps they don't have a 501(c)(3) nonprofit ministry, but they are faithfully continuing in doing what is good and right.

Revelation 17:14 says, "They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them for He is Lord of Lords and king of kings, and those with Him are called and chosen and faithful."

This is the kind of people that God picks to be on His team. When everything is separated into two battlefields you might say, two long lines of soldiers and cavalry and they're facing each other at Armageddon on the field of Megiddo and Valley of Esdraelon.

Who does Jesus pick to be on His team? Those that He had called and chosen and faithful. These people that have just kept doing the work and keeping their head down humbly, picking up one foot after the other and following Jesus.

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."

Revelation 3:14, "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write, the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness."

I have to stop and give a testimony here. When Sandy and I were...I think the proper word today is courting. We were purposefully seeking God whether we were going to get married. I was praying and she was praying. We had very little time to actually be together.

We were in different states and she took a ministry assignment a thousand miles away. We were limited to writing letters, and sending cassette tape recordings to each other. When I could afford it, we had some phone calls.

When we finally felt like we were getting pretty close to an answer, we were together for New Year's Eve and reading the Bible together, the last three chapters of Revelation. I'm about to read the passage where God talked to me. I had been praying and needed clear light and direction. I needed something from God and from His word that I could put my teeth into.

I received three affirmations in those three chapters of Revelation, but the biggest one was -- and I've thought of it many times -- Revelation 19:11. "I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse. The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war." That is a picture of Sandy. Sandy is faithful and true.

When I was asking my spiritual mentor for advice and input I said, "I'm feeling drawn towards Sandy." I said, "What do you think?" He said, "Well, she's not strong physically." She wasn't. She had to leave Bible school part of the way through for part of a semester because she had headaches, she had migraines.

She's battled physical things her entire life and she continues to this day battling them, but she's faithful and true. She might not be strong and successful, she might not be splashy, but she's faithful and true. When I read those words, it's like God said, "This woman sitting next to you is faithful and true."

By the way, as soon as we were done with our Bible reading, I looked at her and I said, "Will you marry me?" Of course she thought I was making a joke and I said, "No, I'm serious." She said, "Yes," so we got married, but I really wanted something from the Bible.

This whole idea of being faithful and true and solid and steady is very practical to me because not only is Jesus faithful and true, but I've had the privilege of marrying someone who is faithful and true. Here are some verses that encourage us about God's nature and character.

Exodus 34:6, "Jehovah passed before him and proclaimed, 'Jehovah, Jehovah, a God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.'" Maybe I could change that a little bit. A God merciful, gracious, slow to anger and oozing in steadfast love and faithfulness. It's abounding. It's coming out of every pore in His being. This is who He is. He is a faithful God.

Psalms 89:14, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne. Steadfast love and faithfulness go before You."

One of my favorite songs which I was singing this morning out walking, "Great Is Your Faithfulness." You want me to sing it?

Scott: Sure. You haven't sung in a while.

Steve: There's only three verses, "Great is Thy faithfulness oh God, my Father," and then the second one begins, "Summer and winter and springtime," The third verse starts off, "Pardon for sin and a peace..."

Once I get going, I know most of the words, but the context of it is in Lamentations 3 where Jeremiah is watching everything that is near and dear to every Israelite go down the tubes. The nation being taken into captivity and being kicked out of the land.

We haven't talked perhaps as much as we should about how Israel's identity was tied to the land and the promises that God made to them, "I will give you this land." He made those promises to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob and all the way down the line.

They're leaving the land and the city, Jerusalem, the city of the Great King where God said, "I'm going to put My name there forever. This is where My heart is. I love this place and I want you to pray for it."

They're being kicked out of the city. The city is being overrun. Foreigners are now desecrating everything that is holy and Jeremiah is feeling it. This is in his book called The Lamentations of Jeremiah.

Right in the middle of his laments, he says, "But Jehovah's loving kindnesses indeed never cease for His compassions never fail, they are new every morning, great is Your faithfulness." That man gets extra points.

It's one thing when you're sitting in Jerusalem sipping on your drink and watching the sun go down and you just had a wonderful trip across the sea of Galilee and God is real. No, no, no, this was at the absolute nadir of the history of Jerusalem. It is being destroyed and abandoned.

Yet he says, "Yeah, but you know what? God doesn't change. He is a faithful God and I am going to declare it. His loving kindness has never ceased, His compassions never fail, they are new every morning, great is Your faithfulness."

The more I've meditated on this concept I thought, "They are not only the same every day, they're new every day because He is a faithful God and He never changes."

Psalms 91:4, "He will cover you with His pinions and under His wings you may seek refuge. His faithfulness is a shield and a bulwark."

1 Corinthians 10:13, I'll bet you big money you've memorized this one. "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation, He will also provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it." God is faithful.

Now how does this relate to our series on spiritual warfare? Sometimes this is how we win the day, just by hanging in there and not yielding. You and I know we've read Ephesians 6 so many times, but I'm going to read two verses in Ephesians 6 about warfare.

"Take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness."

The word for stand firm is "histemi." The root, is "stemi," and that word is used three times in these verses here. Resist, stand firm, and stand firm, they're all tied to that same root.

Even when we're not actively engaged in fighting the good fight, such as resisting the devil, or pushing him back in the name of Jesus, and applying the blood and other different weapons we've talked about, the fact that we are still standing in an attitude of, "I am faithfully standing at my post and I am not leaving, is powerful. We are going to stand firm in a position of resisting and not yielding."

I don't think it's going to be long before we're going to be remembering these passages because things are happening quickly. It seems like they even get ramped up, accelerated even more, but we're going to be called to stand firm. We're going to be called to stand by God.

There are two witnesses that are spoken of in Revelation and in Zechariah 4, described as two anointed ones standing by the Lord of the whole earth. They're faithful, they're steady, they're at their post, and they have their eyes fixed on Jesus. They are going to do what God gives them to do. They're not going to follow the world, the flesh, and the devil. They're not going to follow the Antichrist and all his beasts and false prophets.

We too are going to stand by the Lord of the whole earth. We're going to be faithful. We're going to be true, exactly like God our Father is, like Savior Jesus is, Who was faithful and true. Amen.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: Can you think of anybody else? I know your mind is still working over there. I mentioned the 7,000 that didn't bow to Baal. You think of any other faithful people?

Scott: Actually I was just thinking of something different, if you don't mind.

Steve: Go ahead.

Scott: Just a little bit of encouragement for those of us who like to struggle with things, for lack of a better phrase. I think we get confused between faithfulness and perfection sometimes. The devil can beat us with this all the time.

You just start thinking, "Well, there was that time in 1998 when I thought some wrong things, and so I'm not faithful because I wasn't faithful in that moment in my heart." We can beat ourselves up to death. Then if you're more like me, it could be yesterday instead of 1998, but God calls us to faithfulness. Jesus fills up whatever our lack is. You know what I mean? Perfection is not likely.

Steve: I don't believe God calls us to be successful, He wants us to be faithful.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: That's a huge concept since we live in a world that's always about being number one and winning and the whole package. He wants us to be faithful and true, standing with Him and by Him.

Steve: I think it means the world to Him that we are His faithful witnesses.

The root word for "witness" is "martyr." That's probably what it's going to come to for a lot of us. We're going to be martyred. Not because we're out doing big stuff. Just because we are faithfully standing, and we are not going to bow. We're not going to yield and we're not going to take that mark.

We might starve to death because there's no way I'm buying and selling since I'm not taking the mark of the beast. We'll just settle it ahead of time. We don't have to pray about whether we're going to take the mark of the beast. We already know what we're not going to do. We're going to be faithful.

To all those couples out there that are faithfully picking up one foot and putting it in front of the other, faithfully teaching their children, faithfully going to church, faithfully standing by God, I just want to give you a big attaboy today, and attagirl. Amen.

Father, bless us and help us. We know that You are abounding. You are oozing faithfulness and steadfastness. This is who You are. This is Your character. We're Your children. We've been born, and born again and adopted into Your family, and now Your seed is working in us.

You're making us more and more faithful. You're making us steadier. Even though our natures might not be, Your divine super nature is now having the day. Thank You for all these people that are exhibiting this fruit of being steady and faithful and standing with You. Give us a big dose of grace today, a big attagirl, attaboy 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.