

BFF383 Reports and Israel

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: It's a beautiful sunny day, crisp fall morning. Although when people listen to this it'll be bleak in November. Right now it's very pretty outside How are you?

Scott: I'm good. I'm almost all healed up from surgery and not complaining too much about stuff. That's a good thing. Little Baby Henry broke nine pounds this week.

Steve: Wow, the bruiser.

Scott: He's getting up there.

Steve: I had a Men's Retreat this last weekend up at Spruce Lake. That was wonderful. Then I participated in a March For Life in Pennsylvania yesterday. I thought maybe we could talk about some of those things.

Steve: Let's pray. Father, thank You, that You are the same yesterday, today, and forever. Our experiences, we're all over the map. We have good days, bad days. We have crazy weather and nice weather. Yet You are the same. You never change. You are good. You are faithful. You're steadfast.

Draw near to us this morning. Encourage all of us that are listening. Help us as we contemplate scriptures as we report on what You did to sense Your presence and be encouraged, in Jesus name. Amen.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: My week started Thursday night when I was asked to give my testimony at our men's group at church. This idea of giving your testimony and your story without being interrupted and going deeper, while avoiding shallow stuff, is new to them.

The next day I was at the retreat and because we only had eight men, we were able to spend a significant amount of time when a person was talking, to ask them questions after hearing their story. Three of the guys had never given their testimony in public before.

There is something powerful about getting together with other men and telling your story and being heard and not being judged or compared or fixed but just listening. It's something. I'm curious, what was your experience like the first time you went out to our men's retreat in St Louis, Scott?

Scott: Wow! It was definitely a deep experience. I'd shared my testimony before, but not in that depth and with questions and just getting to know the other guys too. It's powerful. Definitely was a new level of intimacy in a retreat, I guess, is how I would put it with men I hadn't known beforehand.

Steve: Yeah, and being an introvert, if I may say that.

Scott: Yes, sir.

Steve: That's more of a challenge. Don't you think?

Scott: I've learned over the years to live in the extrovert world, but I don't go to a retreat thinking, "Oh goody, I get to meet some strangers." I am the kind of introvert though who when I get to know someone I really want to get to know them.

I don't want to just stay in the shallows and talk about the weather. That's a waste of time to me. I want to know them. That format is really helpful for a guy like me.

When we get to really hear their stories and you jump past the shallow level of communication into the deeper stuff right away and that gets my soul going.

Steve: That's nice to hear that. I had never asked you that before.

Scott: Sure.

Steve: I got home from that event on Sunday and my granddaughters were waiting for me. That was a welcome back to reality. "Papa, let's play basketball." I just wanted to play "Papa, let's go take a nap," but that didn't happen.

I was out in the yard playing basketball, and then that wore off. Then we sat there and played this game called Auction, which we've created. We have perhaps the world's largest auto auction, quite near our house. I was driving by it one day and as I'm always looking for opportunities to teach the girls stuff I explained what an auction was. They didn't know what an auction was, so after I explained, we made our own auction. We started auctioning off monkeys and different things. Then we bid. We first decided how much money we have.

This time we were up playing when my next-door neighbor who's about 9 joined us and she quickly entered into this auction game. It was quite sweet. Their imaginations are very entertaining.

Plus, I was sitting. That was the main thing. I tried to make it interesting so I didn't have to get up and move. Yesterday, Monday, I woke up and I was looking forward to crashing a little bit after the long weekend when I remembered, "Today is the Pennsylvania March for Life."

I hopped in the car, drove 45 minutes to Harrisburg, found a parking spot, and walked to the place they had set up right in front of the capitol in Harrisburg, and listened to some guys speak.

One of the speakers was born in the same hospital I was in Pittsburgh. I thought that was pretty cool. Afterwards, I went up and found him and I said, "What year?" He's a young fella. 15 years younger than me. He said that hospital which was one of the largest hospitals for delivering babies, McGee, in Pittsburgh, at the time, had moved into a Planned Parenthood headquarters. That was sad.

After we hear people talk, we walk around the capitol. There's a band that goes first and everybody goes behind and every year, it gets bigger. I was at the inaugural one three years ago. As we're walking, I quickly discovered that that band was loud.

I let them go on ahead and I just started praying, and singing, and praying the Lord's Prayer, and singing the doxology. All the things that I do in my twice-a-day prayer times. I had tools for this kind of work. I had hymns that were memorized. I had scriptures that were memorized.

I was able to go around the capitol with everybody else in faith for God's will to be done in Harrisburg, just as it is in heaven. When we were done, I thought, "I'm going to do this again." I went around by myself, prayed again, and it was good.

I'm a little bit behind in my Bible reading so I figured out before I left what I needed to read and I listened to Isaiah 50 to about 58 on the way up, and then on the way back, I listened to 59 through 66. It was rich.

It was also apropos because, especially in the '60s, there's a lot of scriptures about Jerusalem. We're all carrying Jerusalem and Israel on our heart. As we did in our podcast that we did prayers for Israel, I like to read the scriptures. I'm going to read a couple of passages from Isaiah today.

Isaiah 50:3, "Jehovah comforts Zion. He comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of Jehovah. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song."

Isaiah 52:7 "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!' The voice of your watchmen, they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy."

"For eye to eye, they see the return of Jehovah to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for Jehovah has comforted His people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. Jehovah has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of your God."

Isaiah 54 -- "No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper."

Isaiah 56:6-7 "The foreigners who join themselves to Jehovah, to minister to him and to love the name of Jehovah, to be his servants, everyone who keeps from profaning the Sabbath and holds fast my covenant, even those I will bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples."

As I read this passage, my mind went to Jesus in Matthew 21. It's also mentioned in Luke. He said to them -- this is when He cast out the money changers -- He went in

on what we call Palm Sunday, saw them selling sacrifices, and single-handedly, made a whip and drove them all out. He cleaned house.

Then He said to them, "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you make it a den of robbers." I thought, "That's the exact passage in Isaiah 56 that Jesus is referring to in Matthew 21, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer.'"

I have not gotten over the fact that two years ago, we did a set of studies, 30 of them, on the Tabernacle which still resonates in my heart. This is God's house, in God's chosen city, "I've chosen this city, Jerusalem, I've chosen this place to put my name." Jesus loved God's house. It was said of Him, "zeal for His house consumed Him." It crushed Him to see them making it a den of robbers. Here we see a side of Jesus we hadn't seen before. The meek lamb, the man Who come riding in on the donkey, and the next thing you know, He's cleaning house because this was His dad's house, this was His place where He had chosen to put His name. Out of all the Earth, He'd chosen Jerusalem, and He'd chosen that house.

1 Chronicles 28:6, God talking, and He said, "He said to me, 'It is Solomon, your son...'" This is God talking to David, "...who shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be My son and I will be his Father." This is God's house, these are His courts.

Isaiah 62:1-7, this is powerful stuff, "For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of Jehovah will give."

"You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of Jehovah, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no more be termed forsaken and your land shall no more be termed desolate, but you shall be called my delight is in her -- Hephzibah, and your land, married -- Beulah; for Jehovah delights in you and your land shall be married."

"For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. On your walls of Jerusalem, I have set watchmen. All the day and all the night, they shall never be silent. You who put Jehovah in remembrance, take no rest, give him no rest until he is establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the Earth."

This is what I felt like God has put on my heart, that He hasn't changed. Jerusalem, it's going to be restored, it's going to be a holy mountain. The nations are going to go up to it in the millennium.

What we're witnessing right now in the Middle East, is a part of that conflict that's going on on Earth that began in Heaven, as the devil and his minions are fighting

against God's purposes, and then they get cast to the Earth and they fight against God's purposes on the earth. We know the end of the story, but right now, we're in that contested period.

It's an opportunity for us to pray and be a remembrancer. That's what one translation puts it, "You are my remembrancer." We remind God, "You said that you were going to make this a glorious place, You said that you were going to pour out Your spirit on Jerusalem, and not only on the city but on the people that make up the city, and You're going to turn her back to God."

Scott: I have been kicking around the passage in John 11 from this weekend when our pastor preached on it. I've heard it a bunch of times as Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. When he says to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life." That just hit me so hard, a bunch of different levels.

That's coming to mind again, while you're reading all those passages, I'm just thinking, Jesus is in all this. I don't know exactly how to characterize that or phrase it. I wonder how that's playing out in what's going on right now. To be blunt, I don't really care about the geography in the temple building and whatever.

Our bodies are His temple now, and Jesus is our life. What is He doing in this? The earthly conflicts are all playing out, somehow. I'm much more interested in what's going on with Him in the midst of all this.

Steve: Absolutely. When the judgments of God are in the earth, the inhabitants learn righteousness. I have friends that have spent a lot of time in Israel, and they say, "We think of it as a religious country." It's not.

Scott: Yeah.

Steve: Tel Aviv is sin city. It's not a God-fearing country. It's going to be, but it isn't now. They need shaking up, and they're getting shaken up. There are people on both sides of this conflict that God is working in their hearts. He's a very present help in times of trouble. He's a teacher in adversity, and He will shake the nations, and it won't just be in Jerusalem.

The whole world is going to be shaken. We're going to be shaken out of our complacency and until we all say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord," until we all embrace the resurrection and the life.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: It's going to be hard going. I have to tell you that as I was walking around the Capitol, at the front of the Capitol, which is beautiful, Teddy Roosevelt made a visit to the Harrisburg capitol and remarked, "This is the most beautiful Capitol in the country."

It's a gorgeous facility. However when I walked around the back, I noticed a water fountain. The water fountain was pink, and it hurt me because all I could see was the blood of unborn children making the clear water pink with their blood.

I don't want to be ghastly about this, but as bad as the hundreds of people that have been slain in Jerusalem, there are thousands every day that are slain in their mother's womb. God sees that too. We're going to be shaken. We have committed heinous sins, and we continue to commit heinous sins as a country. God is going to shake us.

Anyway, that's what came to me instead of thinking, "Oh, look at the sunshine on the pink water." All I could think of was the blood of the babies.

Scott: The verse you're referring to in the shaking, can I read that?

Steve: Sure.

Scott: It's Hebrews 12. If you start in verse 25, it says, "See that you do not refuse Him Who is speaking. For if they did not escape, when they refused Him Who warned them on earth? Much less will we escape if we reject Him Who warns from heaven. At that time, His voice shook the earth, but now He has promised yet once more, I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens. This phrase yet once more indicates the removal of things that are shaken, that is, that have been made in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain."

Steve: Good verse.

Scott: That seems like that's what's going on. That shaking is happening now.

Steve: Amen. Let's pray. Father, help us to have unshakable stuff in our being, our faith in Christ, our faith in God, our faith in His word, our faith in His Spirit, our faith in His plan and purposes. Help us to have something that is unshakeable as we take refuge under your wings during this shaking time.

Psalm 91, wonderful Psalm, and I take refuge in your presence. I take refuge under the shadow of your wings. As this shaking goes on, I pray that you will help people to not curse God, but be softened by the shaking, apologize to God, believe in Him, and accept His offer of forgiveness and eternal life.

Turn our hearts towards you. In the midst of conflict, help us to not shake our fists, but shake our knees and find our place in your plan. 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.