



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: We've Never Been This Way Before

Guest(s): R. T. Kendall

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to another episode of Family Talk. My guest is my much loved friend, Dr. R.T. Kendall, who has been led by the Holy Spirit, I believe, to write a book that seems to have been written for this time and place. It's titled, *We've Never Been This Way Before*. The subtitle is *Trusting God in Unprecedented Times*. Let me introduce Dr. Kendall to you although he's been a guest many times on Family Talk and earlier on, *Focus on the Family*, I think at least 20 times or more through the years. I met Dr. Kendall in London in 1992 where I had gone to work on a book that became known as *When God Doesn't Make Sense*. He was then senior pastor of Westminster Chapel where he eventually served for 25 years.

The church was located just a few blocks from Buckingham Palace in the heart of London. We attended that historic church while we were there and we developed a fast friendship with Dr. and Mrs. Kendall. He's a scholar who holds a PhD from Oxford University and many other advanced degrees. He's written 60 books or probably more than that by now, and many of them have been bestsellers. So with that, welcome Dr. R.T. Kendall to our program.

R. T. Kendall: Thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: You've now released this new book that deals with going through hard times. It's an interesting title. *We've Never Been This Way Before: Trusting God in Unprecedented Times*. I want you to start by telling us how in the world you came to write a book on this subject in early 2020, before most of the problems we faced had come about. The book has turned out to be rather prophetic, hasn't it?

R. T. Kendall: Well, it wasn't on my schedule at all. I had already written a book called, *You Just Might Be a Pharisee If ...* And I think that will be a very interesting book. But one line has been going through me for weeks. We've never been this way before. It's what Joshua said to the children of Israel as they're getting ready to go into the land of Canaan, into the Promised Land. And so Joshua said, "Keep your eyes on the Ark of the Covenant, because where it goes, you follow and if you go where it goes, you'll be okay." And so keep your eyes on the Ark because you've

never been this way before. It's a most tender word that God knows our past, He knows where we are. And I kept thinking for days and days, you know what we're going through in America. We've never been this way before. Well, because we were in lockdown. Do you know, I wrote it in less than a month?

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you hit the nail on the head, that many people are troubled today because the future is so uncertain and seems so dark. You've written this book to address these times specifically. What do you say to the people who feel like they've been under siege?

R. T. Kendall: Well, I say to them what Joshua said to the children of Israel. They had never been this way before. Never in their lifetime had they had such a challenge. And so transferring that to the New Testament, Hebrews 12 verse two, keep your eyes on Jesus. Fix your eyes on Him. He knows where He's going and as long as you keep your eyes on Him, you will be safe. And so I've written this book as a word of comfort. It's also a word of caution. And not only that, I believe that this will end up in the greatest awakening in the history of the church. What do you think of that?

Dr. James Dobson: Do you really believe a third great spiritual awakening is coming our way?

R. T. Kendall: I do. I do. You see, God is at the bottom of it all. He's right in the middle of it. He didn't bring this on to mock us. This is what I call gracious judgment. He's done this to get our attention and it's not for nothing.

Dr. James Dobson: So we're in a period of judgment at this time.

R. T. Kendall: Oh, it is judgment. Now, in my book, which you kindly referred to, *We've Never Been This Way Before*, I mentioned five kinds of judgment. For example, there's retributive judgment, that's getting even. In the Old Testament, eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. And retributive judgment is when God gets even. And there's two ways He gets even. One, I have to say it, eternal punishment. When people go to hell, it won't be to do them good, it won't be to make them better. It is punishment for our sins and that's retributive judgment. But thankfully, there is one other way that God gets justice and that's when Jesus died on the cross and the blood of Jesus satisfied God's justice and wrath. Oh, so that's the first kind of judgment, retributive judgment.

And then gracious judgment, that's partly retributive and partly merciful. For example, David sinned, King David, he committed adultery and then he committed murder to hide the adultery. But good news, Nathan said, "You will not die." And God got David's attention and he fell to his knees, wrote Psalm 51, "God have mercy on me." And God was merciful to David. And so that is what I mean by gracious judgment. There's a third kind, redemptive judgment. That's partly retribution, partly promise. When the children of Israel murmured against God and God sent poisonous snakes that bit the people and people were dying all over the place. And God ordered Moses to make a fiery serpent and set it up

on a pole and all who were bitten looked upon the serpent and they would live. And so Moses held up the serpent of brass and all who looked on it lived.

By the way, Charles Spurgeon, the great English preacher of the 19th century, had a great sermon, Look and Live. And he would say, "Run to the cross. If you can't run, walk. If you can't walk, crawl. And if you can't crawl, look." And Jesus said in John 3:14, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so much the son of man be lifted up." And that is redemptive judgment. There is a fourth kind, natural judgment. That is simply, it speaks for itself. You reap what you sow. Natural judgment. And then I come fifth, silent judgment. That's really the worst kind. That's when God appears to do nothing. When He just doesn't speak, you don't know what's going on. Do you realize God's not like us? When we get angry, we show it. The angrier God is, the calmer he is. He says nothing. And so it is my conviction, it's my belief. I would go to the stake believing this, what we have is gracious judgment. God isn't finished with us yet and He's trying to get our attention.

Dr. James Dobson:

R.T., I wrote a letter to our constituency. I talked about the fact that America has become morally bankrupt and spiritually bereft. This is what I said. "Sadly, she, referring to America, has prostituted herself with pornography, perversion, pedophilia, profanity, infidelity, greed, pride, sexual slavery, premarital sex, the LGBTQ ideology, illicit drugs, lawlessness, dishonesty, hatred, racism, want and violence, family abandonment, public schools that are corrupting our young and exposing them to apostasy. The institution of marriage, which was ordained by the creator, is a metaphor for the relationship between Jesus Christ and His church. And yet marriage has now been redefined and perverted.

Among America's most heinous sins are the murders of 62 million babies who were being knitted together in their mother's wombs. Then they were ripped without anesthesia from their places of safety. Their blood calls out to the creator from the ground in which it lies. There is one phrase to describe our godless culture. It is utter wickedness, which if left to its natural course, will eventually bring divine judgment. That's what you're talking about R.T., isn't it?

R. T. Kendall:

Oh, yes. And in my book I've referred to four things that has caused it. Number one, racism. It's written in the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men were created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights. That among these are life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness." And the way we have treated African Americans, do you know most of us white Christians, we don't even think about their hurt. It doesn't cross our minds. And it's like in James chapter five verse four, 2000 years ago, the issue wasn't black or white. The issue was rich, poor, and there were the rich Christians that were neglecting the poor Christians and even holding back their wages. And the poor Christians cried out. And James chapter five, verse four says, "God has heard you. The Lord of hosts has heard your cry." And if you want to know why the judgment, this is not the only reason, but it is a very definite reason. God is angry with our racism. And I think white Christians need to own up to the fact that they've been insensitive to the way African Americans feel.

Dr. James Dobson: I felt for many years that the tragedy of the Civil War where 600,000 men died was a form of delayed punishment for the evil of slavery.

R. T. Kendall: I think you're exactly right. I couldn't agree more.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, what's number two?

R. T. Kendall: Number two, well, you've already said it. It is legalized abortions without any penalty. And this has made God very, very angry. The fact that John the Baptist leaped in Elizabeth's womb when the Virgin Mary showed up with the son of God in her womb only one day after conceiving by the Holy Spirit, that's proof. And this is God's attention. And the Supreme Court's decision in 1973 to allow abortion for any reason without penalty opened the way for, well, you just said it, 62 million. Do you know that's the population of New York and California combined. And these are babies that have been murdered. And so many of us, we don't even have a sense of outrage anymore. And I could tell you another that thing. One of the main reasons for abortion, it's people wanting sexual freedom without the responsibility of having to raise children. And that's behind it, and that's what we are facing.

Dr. James Dobson: I shudder when I think of what we've done to the next generation. How about number three?

R. T. Kendall: Number three, same sex marriage. The contempt that we have now for our creator, God. I think one of the most abused truths in the Bible is Genesis 1:27. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God, He created Him. Male and female, He created them. You see, this was God's idea as to how the earth would be populated and marriage was God's plan. And the biblical view of Christian marriage between a man and a woman has largely been eclipsed by the general approval now of same sex marriage. And you know, Jim, as recently as 10 years ago, the average American was disgusted at the idea of same sex marriage. But then that has all changed and now we have just lived with it and don't think anything about it and have approved of it. And God is angry and God has stepped in.

Dr. James Dobson: Angry, indeed. Prior to 2015, the citizens of 30 states here in the United States voted for constitutional amendments designating marriage as being exclusively between one man and one woman. That was the law of the land in those states. The people of 30 states went to the polls and voted to put that clause into their constitutions. But by majority of one justice, the US Supreme Court struck that down all across the country. And this definition of marriage was redefined even though it was the expressed will of the people to call marriage by its name. So quickly, Americans jettisons their own beliefs and allowed these five Supreme court justices to redefine marriage throughout the United States.

R. T. Kendall: You're exactly right. And no sense of outrage. God has stepped in and He's angry.

It's my heartfelt conviction, God's judgment is on America. But thankfully, it's gracious judgment. It's His way of wanting to get our attention and I hope how soon it drives us to our knees.

Dr. James Dobson: Where does that judgment lead?

R. T. Kendall: Well, the awful violence that we're going through at the moment, not only that, but disease. When God sent plagues in the Old Testament, He expected us to ask, why are you doing this? For example, in the days of King David, when the famine came, David says, "Why is this happening?" And God answered, "It's because of the way you've treated the Gideonites." And although that had been years before, you see, we tend to think if God doesn't step in the next morning, well, there's nothing wrong with it. See, none of this is by accident. Jesus, at the right hand of God. And we're told Hebrews chapter one, verse two, He upholds all things by the word of His power. And these don't come by accident. Listen, God is angry, but He loves us and He is not finished with us.

Dr. James Dobson: In the book of Proverbs, it says, "When the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" There's some hand-wringing here. It implies that we're all going to be affected by this judgment. Summarize the three primary causes of judgment and then give us the fourth.

R. T. Kendall: First, racism. Second, legalized abortions. Third, same-sex marriage. Fourth, theological liberalism in pulpits all over America where we've denied the inspiration of the Bible and through the influence of German theologians like Paul Tilley, Karl Barth, Moltmann. And this is crept into the American pulpit. Not all of them, thankfully, but so many of them. And there's a teaching known as open theism. This is taking over the pulpits. It's the idea that God doesn't know the future. It's the idea that God doesn't even know what to do next. He's looking to us for input.

Dr. James Dobson: That's blasphemy.

R. T. Kendall: It just shows how man-centered theology has been and the idea of believing in the virgin birth, the substitutionary death of Jesus on the cross, all these things are not being taught and God is angry.

Dr. James Dobson: It seems to me that there's a fifth source of judgment and it's very, very alarming to me. I've talked about it throughout the last year because it's stuck in my throat and it has to do with what we're doing to children. You just look at what's taking place in the public schools. The LGBTQ ideology is now taught from kindergarten through grade 12 in many public schools. We're literally warping the next generation spiritually, R.T.

R. T. Kendall: I've got three grandsons. It breaks my heart to think what they're going to have to hear, what they're going to have to see. Our grandchildren are homeschooled at the moment. We don't know at what time government will step in on this, but I couldn't agree with you more. We could add that as a fifth cause.

Dr. James Dobson: Repentance is the key to forgiveness, isn't it? Without repentance, God's judgment will continue.

R. T. Kendall: Well, what has thrilled me is different people that have read the book, one close friend, I didn't expect her to say this, and she said spontaneously said, "R.T., your book gave me peace." You see, as the children of Israel were told to keep their eyes on the Ark of the Covenant because you've never been this way before. That New Testament fulfillment of the Ark is Jesus Christ, the glory of God. And if we will keep our eyes on Jesus, He will be near. James said, "Draw nigh to God. He will draw nigh to you." And we began to experience how real Jesus is. And I can tell you, people listening right now will just turn to Jesus and look straight at Him.

Charles Spurgeon once said, "I looked to Christ and the dove flew in. I looked at the dove and He disappeared." It's a way of saying that we must keep our eyes on Jesus even when good things happen. We start looking at those things and we get our eyes off of Him. And so the purpose of the Holy Spirit is to keep us focused on Jesus and that will give us peace, that will give us joy and perfect love, cast out fear. And that is the need.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, for those who joined us late, we've been speaking with Dr. R.T. Kendall. He's written a book, a new book that he's called, *We've Never Been This Way Before: Trusting God in Unprecedented Times*. R.T., summarize your message for those in the audience who are particularly worried and anxious about the future and what they see occurring around them.

R. T. Kendall: Here's the question I would ask every person listening right now, do you know for sure that if you were to die today, would you go to heaven? And if you were to stand before God, you will, and He were to ask you, He could do, "Why should I let you into my heaven?" What would your answer be? And I would say to any person listening, if you're trusting your good works, if you're trusting trying to be a good person, if you're trusting anything other than the blood of Jesus, I would not want to be in your shoes for anything in the world. So as soon as I asked the question, what should one say to God, if God says, why should I let you into my heaven? You should immediately think it, spontaneously it should come, because Jesus died. And that's the only hope we have.

And I would just say to anybody listening right now, just pray this prayer. Lord Jesus, I need you. I want you. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. Wash my sins away by your blood. I welcome your Holy Spirit into my heart. As best as I know how, I give you my life. Amen. That's the prayer.

Dr. James Dobson: That's a fundamental to our faith, isn't it?

R. T. Kendall: Exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: You know, the ministry of evangelism explosion is built on that very question.

R. T. Kendall: Our mutual friend, Jim Kennedy, now in heaven, he taught me that. And he asked the question, do you know for sure if you were to die today, would you go to heaven? And if you stood before God and He were to ask you, why should I let you into my heaven, what would you say? And Jim Kennedy said to himself, well, I've tried to do this, I've tried to do that. And then Donald Grey Barnhouse pointed out, you only saved by the blood of Jesus. And at that moment, Jim Kennedy was converted and that's why he used that the rest of his ministry. And that's where I got it.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, Dr. R.T. Kendall, I have known you now for 28 years and I love you like a brother. I appreciate so much who you are and I love you because you love my Lord and you've given your entire life to Him and you're still going strong.

R. T. Kendall: I am.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, we're almost out of time, R.T. Before we close, and I think we have a minute or two left, I would like to make reference to a mutual friend of yours and mine, Bishop Harry Jackson. I was with him many times at many events, including the White House and other places. I had great love for this man. He was a bishop and he had many followers and he died recently very unexpectedly. But he was a very close friend of yours and mine, and he wrote the forward to your new book, didn't he?

R. T. Kendall: He did. And I don't know this for sure, but I would almost predict it's the last thing he did before he died, and he wrote a very long forward and referred to my book as a prophetic message.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, we're going to see him again in heaven, won't we?

R. T. Kendall: We sure will.

Dr. James Dobson: Well bless you, my brother, and thanks for this book. One more time, we've been discussing We've Never Been This Way Before, with a subtitle, Trusting God in Unprecedented Times. We're certainly experiencing those times right now. God go with you, R.T., and thanks for being with us today.

R. T. Kendall: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: And with whatever may be going on in the world, we should always take our concerns to our Heavenly Father, indeed. Now that was RT Kendall and our own Dr. James Dobson here on Family Talk. If you have a need in your heart and you want to ask us to pray with and for you, all you have to do is reach out and a member of our trained customer care team will be happy to provide you with the resources that fit your needs. Just call 877-732-6825 anytime Monday through Friday between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM Mountain Time.

Even though Roe versus Wade was overturned just over a year ago, did you know that the fight to protect the preborn is far from over. To support expecting parents, young families, and new mothers in need, you can stand with us today. Too few people realize that the local pregnancy resource center is literally on the front lines of that mission field, sharing the gospel and ministering to pregnant women, young moms and their children. To encourage these inspiring ministries, the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute urges every church and Christian to adopt a PRC, pregnancy resource center.

Now, to find a PRC in your area, you can go to a special web address that we have created for you at drjamesdobson.org/prc. And maybe there's one that God has put on for prayer and support. Remember to keep these expecting moms and their babies in your prayers each and every day as well. I'm Roger Marsh, thanks so much for tuning in today. Be sure to join us again next time for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.