



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Tell Someone: You Can Share the Good News – Part 2

Guest(s): Pastor Greg Laurie

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Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Roger Marsh: Welcome back to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and on yesterday's broadcast, we heard part one of a powerful conversation featuring our own Dr. James Dobson and his dear friend, Pastor Greg Laurie. Now, this was recorded back in 2017, but this conversation is probably more germane today than it's ever been. Pastor Greg Laurie is an author and the senior pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship with church locations in Irvine and Riverside, California. Greg is also known for his large public evangelistic events called the Harvest Crusades. In fact, just a couple of weekends ago, they held their annual Anaheim SoCal Harvest that takes place at Angel Stadium in beautiful Orange County.

Over 8,600 people chose to give their lives to Christ back on November 4th and 5th because of the Harvest event. Over those two nights, Greg and his team hosted more than 76,000 people, young and old, married, single, believers and unbelievers. Everyone was welcome to attend in person and hundreds of thousands more watched online. Now, you might feel like it's easier for others to share their faith, but maybe not so much for you. However, Pastor Greg's stories in part two of today's conversation will surprise you. He's sharing stories from his life to encourage every believer.

If you're inspired by what you hear today, you may want to check out Greg Laurie's book called *Tell Someone: You Can Share the Good News*. Okay, let's jump right back into that inspiring conversation right now on today's edition of Family Talk.

Pastor Greg Laurie: I'd just like to say something personally that when our son went to be with the Lord in 2008, one of the first phone calls I received was from you. Your son Ryan was good friends with my son Christopher, and you spent about an hour on the phone with me. To hear that voice that brings comfort to so many on the radio on my phone and you were so compassionate and shared a lot of great things with us, it just helped me so much. Thank you for all that you do, and it's my honor to help in any way that I can.

Dr. James Dobson: Greg, let's revisit that time in your life. We've talked about it before, but we're talking to people right now who have been through struggles like that, who have lost a child. I hear about it all the time. I like to know how the Lord helped get you through that. Your son was killed on a freeway in Southern California. His name's Christopher.

Greg Laurie: That's correct.

Dr. James Dobson: You were in, well, obviously great pain when I talked to you. How'd you get from there to here? Did you ever blame God? Did you ever go through a time where you said, "You could have stopped this. You could have put him on another freeway?" What were the thought processes?

Greg Laurie: I never blamed God, but I questioned why. Why Would this happen and what good is it? He was so young. He was 33. His life was ahead of him, newly married with a beautiful little baby girl, Stella, our first granddaughter, and one on the way, little Lucy. He was serving the Lord. He had been a prodigal for a number of years, Dr. Dobson, and had come back to Christ and was doing the graphic design at our church. It was almost like everything I'd hoped for was happening. My son was walking with the Lord, we were serving together, and suddenly he's gone. It made no sense, but I never blamed God and I wasn't angry at God, but I did ask God why. But I don't think there's anything wrong with asking God. Why.

Dr. James Dobson: You just never get an answer.

Pastor Greg Laurie: You just never get an answer. I mean, even Jesus said, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" But no, there is no answer. Even if God gave us one, let's just say for the sake of a point the Lord said, "All right, I don't usually do this, but I'm going to tell you why I did it," we wouldn't be happy with the answer. I think you have to move away from the why question and move to the what question.

Dr. James Dobson: Everybody has the why question. Sooner or later, you'll hit a wall. Things will not make sense to you. I wrote a book on that. The Book of Job is really interesting in this regard because Job wrote the most eloquent question, the most eloquent statement of the why question that I think anybody's ever written. You just read it. It's amazing what he was saying. When he gets all finished, the Lord says, "Who are you to ask me that question? Were you there when I created the foundations of the earth? Were you there when I made the streams and the mountains? Who are you to ask me that question?" He wants us to believe even when we can't make the pieces fit.

Pastor Greg Laurie: That's it. I had a Job-like moment. My home quickly filled with well-wishers, who quite frankly some of them weren't helpful at all. I could almost write a whole book on what not to say to someone who has just lost a loved one, because I heard it all myself. I went up to my office, which was above my garage, and I just

fell on the floor and I just said, "God, you've got to help me right now. Because if you don't come through for me, I don't know how I'm going to make this."

Although I'd been a pastor for years and had comforted and helped other people who had lost children, when it happens to you, it's just so life altering. I said, "Lord, you gave them to me and I give them back to you." And that's what Job said to God. After all those calamities came upon him, he said, "Naked came I into this world. Naked go I out. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Dr. James Dobson: Though you slay me, yet will I serve you.

Pastor Greg Laurie: That's correct. God was there. Someone asked me a while back, "What was the most spiritual moment of your life when you sensed God's presence more than any other?" I had to think about that for a bit. Was it preaching in a crusade? Was it when I first came to Christ and prayed that prayer. I thought and I realized, I think the most spiritual moment of my life was after my son died. Dr. Dobson, God was there for me and he gave me the grace I needed in that moment.

It wasn't like grace to get through the next week or the next day. It was grace to get through the next hour because it's so devastating. You're just hanging onto God for dear life because of the pain. I felt like an elephant was sitting on my chest. It was hard for me to breathe. I felt this pressure for weeks, a physical pressure.

Dr. James Dobson: You have a great marriage in Cathe and how did you all relate to each other? Do you ever blame each other? How'd you get through that as a marriage?

Pastor Greg Laurie: Dr. Dobson, a lot of marriages don't make it when a child dies. Actually the statistics bear this out. You can almost see why, because those things happen. Cathe never blamed me. I never blamed Cathe. I blame myself. I didn't blame anybody else. And then really there was nothing to blame myself for. I said, "Well, I should have never hired him to work at the church. If I hadn't hired him, this wouldn't have happened." Well, that becomes futile after a time. I said earlier...

Dr. James Dobson: That's a dead end street, man.

Pastor Greg Laurie: You have to move from the why question to the what, as in what am I supposed to do? I realized I need to give God glory and I need to learn whatever I can learn from this. God's given me a platform so I can help other people who are going through this. If I say nothing else, I can say this. Maybe. Dr. Dobson, someone right now listening just lost a loved one, maybe a child. I would say this, you can survive this, but you need to hang onto Jesus. You don't need a manual, you need Emmanuel. You need God. It's Jesus.

You hold onto him tightly. You go to God's word. You need scripture to sustain you, and you need to trust God through this. But my wife, right after it happened, when I heard the news, I literally collapsed on the floor. I couldn't stand. My wife could see how hard it was and she just grabbed my face in her hands and she just said, "Greg, it's going to be okay." Just somehow that helped me. I mean, I thought I was going to die on the spot. It was so devastating. It's going to be okay.

Dr. James Dobson: Can you imagine we're talking to people who right now are right where you were this? They're hurting so badly. Give them the best comfort you can give them.

Pastor Greg Laurie: Jesus is with you right now and you need to call out to Him. You need to hang onto Him. You need to remember a couple of things. Let me say this. If you're a Christian, you need to remember that God loves you and that God is in control of your life and in the circumstances that surround your life. We don't know why this happened to you, but we know he causes ultimately all things to work together for good to those that love him. What you need to do is hang on to the Lord right now and trust Him, and He's going to give you the strength to get through this.

Listen, if your child, your loved one, your husband, your wife, whoever it is you're grieving, if they believed in Jesus, they are not just a part of your past, they're also a part of your future. You will see them again. Until that day, you need to put God first, honor him, open up the word of God, read Scripture. Scripture to me. Dr. Dobson, was a huge lifeline that just lifted me up as I would get an eternal perspective. I read your book during this time when God doesn't make sense. It was a very helpful book to me. I wrote a book about this and the aftermath of my son going to be with the Lord called *Hope for Hurting Hearts*. I read books that people had written.

I read Scripture. I prayed. And you know what? I reached out to people. I have the privilege of knowing someone like you. I reached out to you, Dr. Dobson. I reached out to other pastor friends of mine. I would say, if you've heard this news, go to your church, go to your pastor. Listen, if this happened to you and you're not a Christian, this should be the moment where you come to Christ and put your faith in Christ and begin to follow Him. The Bible says He's the God of all comfort. It says also that, Jesus speaking, "Blessed of they that mourn for they shall be comforted." Jesus can give you the help that you need.

Dr. James Dobson: Greg, with our remaining time today, I'd really like to use this opportunity to introduce people to Christ who don't know Him. You just can never underestimate how many people are listening to radio like this and just driving down the freeway and happened to spin the dial and came up on you. You've written a book called *Tell Someone*. I'd like to give you an opportunity to tell someone. Because let's assume we are heard by people who don't really know what we mean when we say you can have a personal relationship with Christ. What are you going to say to him?

Pastor Greg Laurie:

Well, Dr. Dobson, I'm going to say, you've tuned into this program for a reason. Maybe you're eavesdropping on the conversations of Christians thinking we're all collectively crazy. I used to think the same thing, and that is actually how I became a believer. There was a high school Bible study on my campus and these Christians would sit in a circle, sing some songs, and then someone would talk about God. One day out of sheer curiosity, I sat down close enough to eavesdrop on their conversation, but not so close that someone would think I was joining them. As I listened and I looked around at the Christians and I thought, these people are crazy.

There's no way this could be true. But then I tried a new thought on for size and the thought was, what if they're right? What if God is real? What if Christ can be known? I quickly dismissed it. It's impossible. Then I again thought, but what if it is true? I looked at these Christians and I thought their lives have changed because I knew some of them before. And then the guy who was speaking, I don't remember most of what he said, but I remember one statement he said, "Jesus said you're for me or against me." I looked around at the Christians and I thought, well, they're clearly for him. I'm not one of them.

Does that mean I'm against Jesus? I mean, I always believed Jesus existed. I'd seen all of his movies, but I never knew he could be known in a personal way. I didn't want to be against him. That was the day I prayed and asked Christ to come into my life. Now, listen, he can come into your life right now. Now, what do we mean by that? Here's the problem. Every one of us have sinned and broken God's commandments. You say, "Well, I'm not as bad as some people." True, but God doesn't grade on the curve. One sin is enough to keep you out of heaven. We've all sinned. This is a no-brainer. Everyone sinned.

The Bible says, "All have sinned and fallen short of God's glory." But then Jesus Christ, who was fully God, came to this earth on a rescue mission. He breathed our air. He lived our life. He walked on our shoes, then He died our death, and He rose again from the dead. You see, He died in the cross to take God's judgment that should have come upon you and He took it upon Himself. He came to pay a debt He did not owe because, well, we owed a debt we could not pay. And then three days later, He rose again from the dead. And that same Jesus who lived and died and rose is right here with you. Wherever you are, driving your car, listening at home, wherever you are, He's knocking at the door of your life.

He is saying, "If you'll hear my voice and open the door, I will come in." What I needed to do as a young kid on my high school campus was asked him to come into my life. What you need to do and say, "All right, Jesus, I don't understand everything about you, but I want you in my life." Why would you want Him in your life? Because He'll forgive you of your sins and because He will give you the guaranteed assurance that when you die, you will go to Heaven. He'll give you the meaning and purpose in life you've been looking for up to this point.

Dr. James Dobson: What is sin? We talk about sin as a concept. You talk about it in your book, *Tell Someone*.

Pastor Greg Laurie: Sin is defined a number of ways in the Bible. One definition of sin means to miss the mark. It's based on the idea of an archery game they would play. You would be given 10 arrows and the objective was to hit the mark with all 10 arrows. God has set a mark for humanity, which is absolute perfection. Jesus said, "Be perfect as I'm perfect." Well, who's perfect?

Dr. James Dobson: Nobody is perfect.

Pastor Greg Laurie: Nobody. That's where Jesus comes in, because I've sinned, I've fallen short. But then the sin also means to cross a line. The Bible talks about trespasses and sins. You've seen the sign maybe in a city park where the grass has been planted, no trespassing. When you break a commandment like you shall not steal, you shall not lie, you shall not take the Lord's name in vain, you break one of those 10 Commandments, you cross the line. Every one of us have crossed the line. Every one of us falls short of the standard.

Dr. James Dobson: The definition that I like, it's that sin is the willful transgression of a known law. In other words, when Jesus was on the cross, he looked down at the men who did this dastardly thing, the worst murder in history, and He said, "Father, forgive them. Why? Because they know not what they do." It's when you know. When Ryan, my son, was two years of age, I could tell him something, he could do the opposite. If he didn't understand what it was I was asking of him, he's certainly not going to ever even know that he displeased me. But it's when that little rascal would clench his teeth and look at you and say, "I will not. No," it's a willful transgression of a known law.

I like that definition because I'm responsible for what I understand and what I know. He will make it possible for me to live without that. We won't live perfectly because only Jesus can give you that perfection that he demands of us.

Pastor Greg Laurie: It's Christ living in us, and that's really what being a Christian is. It's not just believing a man named Jesus lived historically. It's having Christ Himself come and live inside of you and give you the strength to be the man or the woman he's called you to be. Really, how does one ask Christ to come into your life? The Bible says for as many as received Him, He gave them the power to become sons of God. Dr. Dobson, if I were going to give you a book, I'm holding this book, *Tell Someone*, and I said, "I want to give you this book," you would reach out and accept it and say, "Well, thank you."

The same is true of God. It's a gift. He says, "I want to give to you the gift of eternal life. I want to forgive you of your sin. I want to come and live in your life." I need to say, "Okay, thank you. Come in." And that is as simple as praying a prayer and asking Christ to come into your life. Right now, I believe if someone will pray this prayer, a simple prayer could even lead them in, if you would like

me to, that Christ will come and live inside of them because the Bible says whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

Dr. James Dobson: I wish you would do that.

Pastor Greg Laurie: Okay. Listen, wherever you are, if you want Jesus to come into your life, if you want him to forgive you of your sin, if you want to know that you go to heaven when you die, I want you to pray this prayer after me. In fact, you could even pray it out loud. It's a simple prayer. Just pray this with me now. Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner, but I know that you're the savior. I'm sorry for my sin. I turn from that sin and I choose to follow Jesus from this moment forward. Jesus, come into my life as my Lord, as my savior, as my God, and as my friend. Thank you for loving me and calling me and accepting me. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Dr. James Dobson: He's promised to answer that prayer and provide for you what you're asking. Now what? What happens tomorrow and the next day and the next day when you've given your heart to the Lord?

Pastor Greg Laurie: Well, the Bible says if we will confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If you just pray that prayer, God has heard it and God has answered it. I want to just say welcome to God's family. Now, you need to go find out where the family gets together, and they get together every Sunday in church. You need to become a part of a church, a church where the Bible is taught, a church where Jesus is honored. Get involved in a church. You need to get your hands on a Bible. I would highly recommend you start with the Gospel of John because it was written that you might believe these things about you the son of God.

Dr. James Dobson: Really ought to be a Bible believing church.

Pastor Greg Laurie: Yes, very much so.

Dr. James Dobson: One that preaches and teaches the Bible because that's the foundation.

Pastor Greg Laurie: That's it. And then start reading the Bible for yourself. This book is going to come alive to you in a way that it never has. Start reading the Bible and then start praying. Dr. Dobson, prayer is just talking to God. We just did that in our prayer a few moments ago. The Lord knows all the latest words. You don't have to worry about speaking in King James English. Just pour out your heart to God. Be honest with God and communicate with God. Reading the Bible, prayer, being actively involved in a church are three essentials for growing spiritually.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, what happens in the afterlife?

Pastor Greg Laurie: Well, what happens in the afterlife is if you're a Christian, you go immediately to heaven, and then you're there reunited with loved ones who have died in faith who have preceded you. And then one day, the Bible promises that God will

give us a new glorified body that is similar to the resurrection body of the Lord Jesus Christ. And then one day, Heaven will come to earth and there'll be a whole new world and will rule and reign with Christ. But it's all good.

Dr. James Dobson: Isn't that the greatest gift ever?

Pastor Greg Laurie: The greatest gift ever.

Dr. James Dobson: The promise of eternal life.

Pastor Greg Laurie: It is. The older you get, the more you appreciate the eternal life part.

Dr. James Dobson: That's right.

Pastor Greg Laurie: Now, when you're younger, you appreciate the abundant life and a life with meaning. And that's all true. There's not just life after death. There's life during life. Life will be fuller and more meaningful and you won't need to go after drugs or booze or all that junkie ways of your life anymore. Now you have Christ living in you. But as you get older, that eternal life part starts resonating even more.

Dr. James Dobson: My dad referred to it as a pearl of great price. The older you get, the more the pearl shines.

Pastor Greg Laurie: Yes, that's true.

Dr. James Dobson: When you're younger, you're thinking about other things. But when you're beginning to look over to the other side, there is nothing like knowing that you're going to live someplace in eternity, and that some place is called Heaven. There's also a Hell.

Pastor Greg Laurie: Yes, there is.

Dr. James Dobson: You talk about that. You're not afraid of that word, are you?

Pastor Greg Laurie: No. No, we can't be. Because if we shy away from what we're not giving the whole council of God, Hell is just as real as Heaven is. Hell is just as eternal as Heaven is. Jesus spoke more about Hell than all the other preachers of the Bible put together, and that's because He doesn't want any man or woman uniquely created in His image to spend eternity separated from Him in this horrible place. That is why Jesus took such drastic measures to save us by dying on the cross so we wouldn't have to go to Hell. If anyone ends up in Hell, they have to practically climb over Jesus to get there, because He does everything He can to stop us. But ultimately, it's our choice.

Dr. James Dobson: Greg, I love you like a brother. I've enjoyed talking to you today. You, speaking to the listeners, can get a copy of this book, *Tell Someone*. If you have accepted Christ and you're kind of apathetic about your relationship with Him, the best

thing to do is to start sharing it. This book will tell you how to do that. Thank you. Greg, for inviting me here. It's a pleasure to be with you.

Pastor Greg Laurie: Thanks.

Roger Marsh: Matthew 4:19 says, "Come follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." As Jesus has called us, Pastor Greg Laurie shines as a true inspiration that we all can share the good news with everyone. All we need to do is tell someone. You've been listening to Family Talk with Dr. James Dobson, who shared a powerful conversation today with Pastor Greg Laurie. I'm Roger Marsh. If you missed any part of today's conversation, or if you'd like to go back and listen to part one which aired on yesterday's broadcast, you can hear the full conversation on our website, drjamesdobson.org.

Something else I'd like to add about Pastor Greg Laurie, besides being a strong preacher, a faithful leader, and a powerful social media influencer, he also has a huge heart for evangelism. He likes to say that that is job one for him. Dr. Dobson has said the same thing, and I quote, "All that matters at the end of your life is who you loved, who loves you, and who you brought to Christ." Well, I think that both of these godly men were influenced by the greatest evangelist of the 20th century, the late Reverend Billy Graham. Lets you and I see what we can do in our own lives, outside the walls of our own homes to spread the good news as well.

Now, as you probably know, Family Talk is a listener supported broadcast, so please consider how you can support the work of our ministry here and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. Your financial contributions and your prayers help us to share God's word all over the world. You can donate online at drjamesdobson.org, that's drjamesdobson.org, or call us. You can make a contribution over the phone at 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825.

Thanks again for your prayers and your faithful financial support and thanks for joining us today on our flagship radio program, Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love. I'm Roger Marsh. Join us again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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