



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: I Still Believe

Guest(s): Jeremy Camp

Air Date: November 25, 2022

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Dr. James Dobson: Hello, everyone. You're listening to Family Talk, a radio broadcasting ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and thank you for joining us for this program.

Roger Marsh: The following program was recorded in 2019 and originally aired on Family Talk in 2020. We hope you enjoy today's broadcast.

Dr. James Dobson: Hello, everyone. This is Family Talk, a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. It's supported by listeners like many of you. I'm your host, Dr. James Dobson. Thank you for joining us. Psalms 34 says, "The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them. He delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." I love that verse. It's easy to proclaim trust in God when life is going smoothly, but what does it look like to live a bold faith even in the midst of overwhelming pain and grief?

In my book, *When God Doesn't Make Sense*, I describe a crisis of faith that is often experienced by believers when they're going through hard times. If we adopt a faulty view of God in the midst of hardship, then you're confused on what God is doing in your life. In my book, I explain that you can trust Him even when you can't track Him. That trust enables us to endure hardship even when the circumstances don't add up.

In today's broadcast, we're going to focus on the story of a man whose faith has been tested immensely. We're going to hear from singer and songwriter, Jeremy Camp. Jeremy has a powerful testimony. He knows what it's like to walk in faith even when crushed by grief. He's a popular speaker and an author. Now his book, *I Still Believe*, has been turned into a movie, and that's why we're airing this discussion. Let's listen to this heartfelt message from Dr. Clinton and Jeremy Camp.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jeremy, take us all the way back to those years when you were wrestling with baseball and football, and God places a calling on your life.

Jeremy Camp: Writing this book, I saw from the beginning God's hand on my life. I always tell people, "Hey, you should write a book about your own life because you'll be pleasantly encouraged to see God's hand leading and directing you your whole life." That's what it'd been for me. Even from the beginning, I remember true stories of going... Okay, my family would be praying for groceries. I grew up with not much money, my family. We literally lived by faith. I mean, I was praying for things and saying, "God, we need you to come through."

I remember one time, we were praying. My dad didn't get paid until Friday, and it was Tuesday. We ran out of money. We prayed for God to provide food for the family. I remember, one day, praying and, the next morning, waking up, and there was a bag of groceries on our front porch. That kind of stuff literally happened all the time. I know that that kind of stuff is just preparation of things to come.

For me, it was wrestling, okay... My whole heart, growing up, was I want to play sports. That's what I want to do for a living. I just pursued that and pursued that. Finally, when I was 14, my dad was like, "Hey, why don't you play guitar?" I was like, "Well, I'll pick it up. Show me some chords." He showed me some chords and picked up the guitar. All of a sudden, it just came very naturally for me. From that time, God just slowly started shifting me away from sports, and my passion for music and for singing songs to the Lord became way more prominent.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jeremy, let's enter a little girl named Melissa to the story.

Jeremy Camp: As time went on, I went to Bible college. When I was 18, God called me to go out there to study His Word. It was an amazing time. Of course, such a good foundation for me.

After that, I met this amazing woman. Her name was Melissa. When I first met her, I remember I was doing a Bible study. I was doing worship. I looked up because I had opened my eyes. I looked up, and there she was, raising her hands up high. It was unbelievable. It was almost like I interrupted something. I felt like, "Oh my goodness. She's singing to the Lord right now." Our eyes met. To make a long story short, I just fell in love with the girl. I mean, she loved Jesus more than anything else in the world. That's what attracted me to her.

We went through the relationship, ups and downs. We had broken it off probably about five months. I got a phone call from a friend. He said, "Hey, Melissa has cancer." I remember just shock of all shocks. I mean, she was 20 years old at the time. You don't think about a 20-year-old having cancer. She was healthy, and she was vibrant.

I went down there. I walked into the room, in the hospital room. As I walked in, she literally was grinning from ear to ear. I mean, she was smiling. I was kind of shocked. She was so happy. I mean, she found out she had cancer.

I asked her. I didn't know what else to say. I'm like, "How you doing?" She just looked at me and said, "I'm doing good." She's like, "I've been sitting here, and God has been speaking in my heart. I realize if I die from this cancer, but if even one person accepts Jesus, it would be all worth it." I'm telling you guys, that will never, ever leave my mind because I couldn't imagine going through that type of scenario, knowing that you might not be on this earth any longer, and saying, "It's okay because if even one person accepts Christ." The reason why she could say that is because she knew why she was here.

She was here to love Jesus with all of her heart and to serve Him. She realized, "Hey, my life's not my own anyway. If someone can come to know Christ because of that, it's all worth it." We ended up getting married. After our honeymoon, we got to the doctor. He said that the cancer had returned. It was spreading rapidly and that she literally had weeks to months to live.

Four and a half months into our marriage, she went to be with Jesus. That, of course, is just the tip of the iceberg of so much that happened during that time in Bible college, going through the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, the whole time I was there. I had to really let this thing sink deep in my heart and say, "All right, God. This is what your Word says. I have to trust this because I have nowhere else to turn."

It's just been extraordinary to see what He's done. Like I said, there's so much more to that. He has been faithful. I mean, I felt times, and I was not going to get through it, to be honest. Step by step, God just directed me. He held me, whatever I needed. I mean, He was there. He's near to the brokenhearted. It's those things that, really, I had to rest in and say, "Okay, I really believe in Him through walking that."

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jeremy, when I was reading that particular piece of your story, I wrote down a few words, alone. I wrote down the word, fog. It's interesting. I wrote underneath that, the word, guitar, that God had told you to pick up your guitar. You actually wrote a song called *I Still Believe*.

Jeremy Camp: (Singing). I still believe in your faithfulness. Cause I still believe in your truth.

When that whole thing happened, even though that understanding that God is here, I still felt that loneliness. I mean, that's just natural. It's like when two become one and that gets taken away, there is just this separation that you can't explain unless you've been through that.

I was even at home with my family, but I still felt alone. All of a sudden, God spoke to my heart. I was just sitting there. I remember it was two weeks after she went to be with the Lord. He just said, "Pick your guitar up." I don't have God just speak to me like that all the time where it's like I really felt Him clearly say, "Pick up your guitar."

God kept pressing on my heart. I listened, and I picked my guitar up. All of a sudden, I started writing this song. It just came out. I remember not knowing... I was very honest.

"Scattered words, empty thoughts seem to pour from my heart. I've never felt so torn before. Seems I don't know where to start, but it's now I feel Your grace fall like rain from every fingertip, washing away my pain. I still believe in your faithfulness. I still believe in your truth. I still believe in your Word. Even when I cannot see, I still believe." Then the second verse goes, "Though the questions still fog up my mind, with promises, I still seem to bear." That's way deeper than what people understand because all these questions... I remember all the promises we had that she's going to be healed, she's going to be healed. Ultimately, she was. I mean, she's with the Lord, and she is rejoicing. She's more alive now than she ever was on this earth. You know what I mean?

People say, "You lost your wife." I'm like, "Actually, I didn't lose her. I know exactly where she is." You know what I mean, that whole term, even loss? It's like she's with Jesus. Yeah, she's not here anymore. Those questions were there, and it was. It was like I have these promises. I'm not going to know fully until I get to Heaven, the full scale of everything. What came out was, "Yes, Lord, I don't understand." It's like David. He always says, "God, why is this happening?" or, "Why are my enemies prospering?" His resolve was this, "But your mercies are new every morning. Your loving kindness endure forever."

All these things came out. He finally resolved. For me, I was honest. This is the pain. This is what I'm feeling, because you'll hear that in the verses, but I do. I still believe. I still believe.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I don't think we ever get over the loss of someone that we love. But you're right, God allows us to put a bridge over it and to bring honor, and glory, and mercy, and grace, and all that stuff that we need to keep going on. You also talked about a verse, Jeremiah 29:11, that God has a plan for us. Jeremy, in the midst of asking why and wrestling, how do you claim a verse like that? Speak to our listeners.

Jeremy Camp: I'll start with this. A lot of people, they ask, "Why?" I finally came to a point where I did say, "Why?" There's a point when it's okay to say why. People don't understand this aspect of Jesus on the cross. He did say, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

What did Jesus do? The quick resolve was this, "But into your hands I commit my spirit," the quick resolve. Sometimes it's not quick, but we learn from our Savior. He said, "Okay, God." He didn't forsake Him, but He had to turn His back, and He couldn't look upon sin. There's a point for us when we say, "Why?" God's never left us, and He's not going to leave us. He never leaves us or forsakes us. There's a point when we have to let go and say, "Okay, God. You know what you're doing. You are in control. I'm seeing negative, but it's what your Word says. 'Hey, the plans I have for you are good.'"

I know that what we think is good is maybe way different than God saying, "Okay, just trust me. I know what I'm doing. I see the whole end result." For me, it's like a picture that was shoved up against my face. I don't see clearly at all when a picture's shoved up against my face, but as time goes on, I can see a little bit of what that picture looks like, a little bit of the clarity, and go, "Oh. Okay, God. Now that I've seen."

When she says, "One person accepts Christ, it's all worth it," when I've seen thousands of people come to know Christ, it's unbelievable to see the fruit of that. Some people say, "Well, it doesn't matter. It still hurts. How can that be good?" There's a point when you have to just let go and say, "Okay, God, but I surrender. But I surrender," and watch what He does when you let go and allow Him to heal your heart because some people want to stay in that grief. It's like, don't stay in that and allow Him to heal your heart.

Trust me, He knows what's best. He does. We think that we know what's best, but He knows what's best, and He loves us. Nothing can separate us from His love. The thing is that He showed us that great love, but we have to trust that, trust that He loves us so much.

Dr. Tim Clinton: If you've ever been to a Jeremy Camp concert, you know that healing and that joy pours out of him. Jeremy, an event that took place at Liberty University, Julie was hosting Extraordinary Women. There were about 10,000 women in the Vines Center. You're going to do a concert as a part of that event. But Jeremy, your music... Who's influenced you the most when it comes to just what you do on that stage?

Jeremy Camp: Growing up, my father... He never went and did music big time. It was just more local stuff. What he knew is that when he was on a stage, he saw it as a platform, a platform to share what God had done, and to share the gospel, and to share his testimony, and to minister.

For me, that's just been my influence. When I get on stage, I see it as an opportunity, and minister the gospel, and minister truth, and minister hope. I'm like, "Okay, God. You give me an opportunity here." Because I don't look at it as, "Ooh, look at all these fans," or, "Look at all this." I mean, people can get excited, and that's great. For me, I'm like, I know why I'm there. I know that God has called me to minister. I love music, and music is a part of my life, but Christ is my life. If I can use that to minister, that's what I'm going to do.

God is challenging me. He really asked me the question, "Are you really surrendering all?" I think it's something we can all ask ourselves. It made me dig deep in my heart because it's very logical and easy right now for me, if I want to just keep doing music, and keep doing the same thing, and touring over and over again.

It has really made me stop and just say, "Okay, what's going on? Are you really laying everything down before me?" We live in a very me society, very narcissistic and very selfish. People, when they hear a challenge or laying your life down, it's kind of like, "I don't know. I kind of just want to hear these really feel-good songs."

Those are great too. Don't get me wrong. I've written those as well. I'm just saying, but we have this tendency to kind of step back and go, "I don't know about that." It's rough. Reckless is a term that people at first go, "Whoa, what does that mean?" It's kind of a negative connotation.

God really spoke to me through that because it was one of those things when I'm thinking about surrender. I looked up the word, reckless, because I've been hearing about reckless abandonment for the Lord. It basically says, "Doing something without being concerned with the consequences," is kind of the general term of reckless.

You're like, "Yeah, it kind of seems like, I don't care. I'm just going to go do whatever, and whatever happens happens. It's all good." I thought about that. It's negative, but when you do that for Christ, when you're reckless for Him, it's what true faith is. It's saying, "All right, God. I don't know what's going to happen, but I know you're calling me. I'm going to go and not be concerned."

There's a quote that God gave me. It's like, "Reckless living is when you're fully obedient to God," and that obedience overwhelms the fear of what could be the consequences.

- Dr. Tim Clinton: Jeremy, what we need is we need a new breed, people who are radical for Christ. Let's hear that title cut called Reckless.
- Jeremy Camp: (Singing). I find myself forgetting what I say that I believe. The promise of your Word is all I need, is all I need. I want to be reckless, cause you are endless. I want to be shameless and shout your greatness.
- Dr. Tim Clinton: We've been talking a lot about Jeremy's life. By the way, he's no stranger to suffering. Jeremy, God gave you someone new. Her name's Adrienne. It's a beautiful story. By the way, she also is an artist, right?
- Jeremy Camp: Yeah, she's amazing. I mean, she's an artist, musically. She can do art. She's creative. She loves Jesus with all of her heart, man. It's awesome.
- Dr. Tim Clinton: You guys, too, have battled a little bit there. The miscarriage and a few other things have just made life a little challenging. You know what, Jeremy? I also read a story about your little brother.
- Jeremy Camp: My brother just... I couldn't imagine. He has Down Syndrome. His name's Josh. He's 24 now. I'm like, well, first of all, I couldn't imagine not having him. It

doesn't even compute in my mind. He's my brother. It's not just he's my brother with Down Syndrome. Growing up, I remember he would not feel good. "Mom, I don't feel good." She said, "Okay. Let's pray, Josh." We'd pray. I remember he'd look up to my mom after she would pray for him. He'd go, "I feel better."

What I love about that is that he automatically... Because he was praying to the Lord and asked the Lord to make him feel better, he looked up, and he was like, "I feel better, Mom. I feel better." I love that childlike faith, and watching him grow up being so joyful, loving on people, and just didn't have any guile or anything.

He loved people. He loved just life and so much joy, and he loves music. It's been an amazing thing. I will say, I can't wait until that day, with Melissa, and with our little baby we lost at 14 weeks, and with Josh, that he's going to be fully rejoicing, and not have Down Syndrome, and be able to think clearly. We're going to see our little baby, and Melissa, and loved ones that we miss.

It's all the hope that we have, is that one day, there's going to be no more tears, no more pain, no more sorrow. We're going to be with our Savior. It's all worth it. "Therefore, do not lose heart. Though outward man is wasting away, our inward man is being renewed every single day. This light, momentary affliction is nothing compared to what's in store for us in Heaven." I hold onto that hope.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jeremy Camp, up close and personal. Jeremy, we're with you. Like in Ecclesiastes 1, sometimes the crooked can't be made straight in this life, but there will be a day.

Jeremy Camp: (Singing). But I hold onto this hope, and the promise that he brings. There will be a place with no more suffering. There will be a day with no more tears, no more pain, and no more fears. There will be a day when the burdens of this place will be no more, we'll see Jesus face to face.

Dr. Tim Clinton: The fire does something to each of us. If you've been through it, you know what we're talking about. The hope or the prayer is that you come out on the other side as gold. The apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4, it's about verse 8, "We're afflicted in every way." Man, are we.

"But we're not crushed. We're perplexed but not driven to despair. We're persecuted but not forsaken. Struck down, not destroyed." Always caring about, in the body, the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be made manifest. Where? In our bodies. He is the great overcomer. He gives life to each of us every day, just enough light for the step I'm on.

Roger Marsh: I'm Roger Marsh. This is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. You've been listening to Dr. Tim Clinton's interview with Grammy-nominated artist, Jeremy Camp. Jeremy has a compelling story of relying on God's faithfulness through the rocky storms of life.

Last fall, Dr. Tim Clinton caught up with Jeremy Camp at the 2019 Harvest Crusade in Southern California. Here now is their brief conversation around the release of Jeremy's new movie, *I Still Believe*.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jeremy, it's great to have you back.

Jeremy Camp: Thank you for having me.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hey, what a story career. It's amazing.

Jeremy Camp: And crazy.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It's crazy. You seem like you're on a vertical.

Jeremy Camp: Yeah, me and my wife were talking about it. I'm at the point now where you can start talking about, well, not retiring but slowing down. Maybe it's been 17 years, and I've been doing this for 20 years. God's like, "No, I'm not done with you yet."

That's why I wrote an album called... The new one's called *The Story's Not Over* because it definitely is just... That's what it is. He's like, I still have things for you. I still want to use you, and I still want to glorify My name through you." It's been amazing.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Well, coming up, you've got a big deal happening. Tell us a little bit about it.

Jeremy Camp: Oh my word.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Everybody's waiting for *I Still Believe* to come out.

Jeremy Camp: Yeah. What's been crazy is how fast it all kind of came about. It wasn't like it felt rushed because God placed everything together with the actors, people. I mean, everyone kept wanting to sign on. Shania Twain signed on as my mom. Gary Sinise, who's Lieutenant Dan, signed on as my dad. This kid, KJ Apa, and Britt Robertson all were like, "We want to be in this film."

I really do feel like that it was God's just favor on it. I really believe God's going to use them to reach this generation. I can't believe it's happening. It's pretty surreal. I know that when I've shared my story for years, I've seen the effect of it, and I've seen how God has used it. To know that that's going to be in a film that's going to reach more people than I've ever reached before is kind of bizarre.

Dr. Tim Clinton: The trailer is out. It's really moving. It is. What's the walkaway? What do you hope happens when somebody shows up and watches *I Still Believe*?

Jeremy Camp: Honestly, it's those who have been experiencing doubt with the Lord and going, "God, where are you in the midst of my hardships?" Or, "God, I'm struggling here, or doing this, or going through a trial," and seeing that there's always hope at the end of that.

Pain is universal. Everyone experiences pain. That's just a fact. Really, what it is is everyone wants hope. You can experience pain either with Jesus or without Him. This is just saying, you can't get through what you're going through unless you have Jesus.

I pray that people who are going through struggles, that are fighting, saying, "Okay, I don't know if I can deal with this," go, "Okay, Lord, I'm going to lay down at your feet and watch you come through," and those who don't know Jesus at all would go, "I want that. Whatever they had, which is faith in Christ, no matter what is going on, I want that." That's the goal. People would walk out of there more in love with Jesus or come to know Him.

Dr. Tim Clinton: These two by-lines tip the scale on it. One love can change your life, and one life can change the world.

Jeremy Camp: Gosh, just hearing that makes me emotional because it really was. Her faith and her dedication just to love Jesus no matter what she was going through in the midst of just crazy times, it did so much to my heart that after she went to be with the Lord, God started giving me songs, the songs God has used, and through her life too.

Writing those songs about God's faithfulness and goodness has literally reached the world. I think for me, I've been in 42 countries now, and I've shared my testimony in 42 countries. I've been in all 50 states. I have to say, "Wow, God, you've done what you said you were going to do," because I remember Him telling me, "I want to use this to reach the world," and He did. He still is doing it. It's Him, not me. It's Him. I should be done by now. You know what I mean? I mean that.

Dr. Tim Clinton: No, I know that. I know what you're saying. God's put His favor on you. Shania Twain, a few others in this thing... How'd this all together?

Jeremy Camp: Why? This kid, KJ Apa. He's in a big TV show that I never had seen it.

Dr. Tim Clinton: He plays you.

Jeremy Camp: He plays me. He's one of the teen heartthrob right now. He signed on because he really saw the story and said, "I believe in the story." Well, because he signed on, everyone was like, "Oh, this must be legit." I feel like it was God's hand upon him going, "I want to do this." I feel like God led him to do it and that everyone else was like, "I want to sign on."

We had even some of the people that are doing kind of the side parts. Someone who's a star in a TV show called *Manifest*, someone who's a star, a TV show called *Roswell*, this kid star that was in *General Hospital*, and all these different things were like, "I want be on this too." It's just God's hand of favor. I really believe He's going to use this to reach this generation.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jeremy, we're going to close out. I want to give you the last word as we wrap today's broadcast.

Jeremy Camp: I do want to encourage you that no matter what you're going through, that God is faithful. You just keep pressing in because He's not going to leave you or forsake you.

Roger Marsh: This is Family Talk. You've been listening to Dr. Tim Clinton's interview with Grammy-nominated recording artist, Jeremy Camp. I'm Roger Marsh. I hope Jeremy's testimony today really touched your heart. He experienced unbelievable pain and loss early on in his life, but continued to believe in God's faithfulness.

You can learn more about his story and his musical career by going to today's broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org. If you've been inspired and encouraged by this broadcast, be sure to request a CD copy of it as well. You can do so when you visit our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org.

Now this will allow you to revisit the program or to share it with someone who needs to hear it. You'll find all of this content and more when you visit our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org. Well, that's all the time we have for today. Be sure to join us again tomorrow for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Have a blessed day.

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