



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: You Are Never Alone – Part 1

Guest(s): Max Lucado

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Dr. Dobson: Welcome to Family Talk, a listener supported ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and thank you for tuning in today.

As you all well know, our lives have been dramatically changed over the past seven months due to the COVID pandemic. Millions of jobs have been lost and schools that have been shuttered. And all of this upheaval has forced people back into their homes. And despite the circumstances, some families, like mine, with Shirley, have enjoyed the additional time together, and I have not regretted a single day of it, but not everybody feels that way. And unfortunately, huge numbers of others live alone or live far from their loved ones. They are isolated from human contact and such individuals are all around us.

I remember a friend who told me one day about making a phone call and he hit the wrong number and an elderly lady answered. And when he realized his error he apologized and he started to hang up, and then the woman said, "Oh, please, sir, don't leave. No one ever calls me. Would you talk to me?" And it brought tears to my eyes. It does today. And all she needed was a kind word.

God made us as social creatures. That's the way we're designed and we desperately need each other, but those needs often go unmet. A recent New York Times article states that three out of five Americans 18 years of age and older describe themselves as lonely. That's a shocking 60% of the adult population. Where can they find encouragement during these times?

One of my favorite songs is from The Beatles rock group of the 1960s. That may surprise you. But the lyrics tell a story about a strange woman named Eleanor Rigby, whom not even her pastor, the pastor of the church, Father McKinsey, knew. Paul McCartney sang this, and the lyrics go, "All the lonely people. Where do they all belong? All the lonely people, where do they all come from?"

Loneliness. That is our subject for today. My guest has addressed this issue in a hope filled book that goes to the heart of it. He is Max Lucado, a New York Times bestselling author who has over 150 million books in print today. I don't even know anybody who has that. Pastor Lucado also serves as teaching

minister at Oak Hill Church in San Antonio. And he's joining me on the phone today to discuss his newest work entitled, *You Are Never Alone*. He and his wife Denalyn have been married for 38 years. They have three daughters and two grandchildren.

Pastor, you are deeply loved by millions of people who have been ministered to by your timeless books and teachings. And it's always an honor to work with you.

Max Lucado: It's my great privilege, Jim, and that's not an overstatement. I mean, you are one of my heroes and I could spend the entirety of our time together just remembering all the times that your words have touched my heart and ministered to me.

I entered the ministry in 1979 and one of the first things that our church did there in Miami, Florida was to show your first, I believe one of your first film ventures, that was filmed at Trinity University, here in San Antonio. And I come to... you recall Joey Paul, our mutual friend, who was the producer of that.

Dr. Dobson: He sure was.

Max Lucado: And I didn't know him. I didn't know you. I was just out of seminary. I was brand new in the church and I watched as you... I can still see you in my mind, in front of that large blackboard and all the people there in the room and how you so practically help people deal with the issues of the family. And I was a single man way back then, taking notes.

Dr. Dobson: Unbelievable. I had a tie about four inches wide, and I had sideburns that came all the way down to my chin, but that was a fun time. It was eventually seen by 80 million people.

Max Lucado: 40 years ago. Can you believe that?

Dr. Dobson: Isn't that incredible?

Max Lucado: You've been so faithful to the Lord all these many, many years, and you'd already been faithful, by that point. I was brand new into the ministry, but you had already logged a couple of decades of service, I guess. What an influence you've been.

Dr. Dobson: I said this to you before we went on the air that we're serving the same Lord, and that makes us brothers in Christ. And it's a pleasure. Let me ask you some questions about your book. I'm really excited about it, on the subject of loneliness.

You know, I wrote a book many years ago called *What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women*. And it was one of my better selling books and it

dealt with depression in women. And in it, I discussed an informal survey that I took, wherein I asked 10,000 ladies to rank order, put in the order of importance, 10 sources of depression in their lives. And the results were very surprising to me. The highest ranking issue was low self-esteem, but the second and third concerns were related, and it has to do with what we're talking about today. They were loneliness, isolation and boredom, and the absence of romantic love in my marriage. The issue of loneliness was linked to all 10 of them really. So it was obviously way back in the 1970s, and it may be more so today. Do you think the COVID-19 pandemic has played a role in the prevalence of loneliness?

Max Lucado: Yes, sir. There's no doubt. There's no doubt. Even prior to COVID, loneliness was an epidemic. I think it's one of the consequences of such a technological society. We live in a world in which it's possible to live void of human contact. You can lead a virtual life.

When I was growing up, you couldn't fill up your gas tank without talking to a gasoline attendant. You couldn't go purchase groceries without interacting with the grocery store attendant. You couldn't do your banking without walking into a bank. But nowadays you can do everything in a cocoon, and many people do. And I think they're unwittingly leading themselves into a world of isolation and the relationships that they need are not being fostered and developed. And then overlay that with the pandemic in which we're told to hunker down and to bunker down and to avoid human contact, and it's just going to make the situation even worse.

And the consequences of this isolation, I think, are the reason that we're seeing such a spike in the depression category. I think the most alarming statistic I've seen, Jim, was just a report on CNN about two weeks ago, in which the young adult category, 18 to 24 years of age, of those surveyed, said that 24% of them said that they had thought about suicide in the previous 10 days.

Dr. Dobson: Oh. I have no doubt that that loneliness plays a role in that, if you really come right down to it.

Max Lucado: No doubt. No doubt.

Dr. Dobson: Right after the virus hit and we were all really frightened about what it meant and how we were going to catch it, especially those of us who are older. And I remember walking the streets with a mask on and seeing someone coming toward me and crossing the street so I wouldn't have to go past them. That kind of world, that's different. And there's been a failure, I think, to recognize it, and especially among young people. I wonder how many kids have been sequestered at home and going crazy because they can't get out with their friends?

Max Lucado: I know, and they're so [11:48 inaudible], and we were made to have that social interaction. I mean, one of the first statements in the Scriptures says it's not good for man to live alone. And so it's taking its toll on us. My heart really goes out to the younger generation because not only do they feel alone, they're seeing their dreams of going to college, or maybe getting a job, their plans that they had for the semester, everything is up in the air, and they're feeling very tenuous. They don't know how to press forward. Others of us who've been around, we at least know God gets us through tough times. But if you're young and you've never had that experience, it's a frightening thing.

Dr. Dobson: Well, your book has a subtitle. The title of the book is *You Are Never Alone*. It's a great title. And the subtitle is *Trust in the Miracle of God's Presence and Power*. We want to talk the rest of the day for how you tap into that power because on the face of it, are we sure that the scripture addresses what I feel when I am desperate for love and contact with other people? But you made the case in this book that the Lord not only knows that, but He has addressed it in His Word. And you give a lot of advice coming from Jesus' miracles. I don't usually think of the miracles relating to loneliness, but you draw meaning out of that. Talk about the first miracle Jesus did beginning with turning the water into wine.

Max Lucado: Isn't that a great miracle?

Dr. Dobson: Yeah.

Max Lucado: I think if I'd have been on the heavenly committee of determining what miracles Jesus should perform, I would do something a little more dramatic than save a wedding.

Dr. Dobson: Yeah.

Max Lucado: But that was the first sign. That was the first miracle. And there's a message in that. There's a message in that. And that is that the miracles of Christ are intended to reveal the kindness of Christ. If He's concerned enough about them, that He would perform His first miracle right there, how much more is He concerned about us in our day to day needs? The miracles that I studied there are all from the gospel of John. And you remember how the gospel ends? John says, "If I had all the libraries in the world, they wouldn't contain all the many signs that Jesus performed, but these were selected that you may believe, and that in believing have life in His name."

So these are life giving stories. They are life giving stories. And I love that you asked me to tell about the first one, because it's so unpredictable, that Jesus would start His miracles by helping somebody out of a social embarrassment, but that's just how much He cares about us.

Dr. Dobson: Hmm. I think about the woman at the well, when Jesus was sitting there at the well and she came out, she apparently had an ache inside of her. We can infer

it. And who knows what she was feeling. Her marriages had fallen apart. She's living with some guy that wasn't her husband and she was desperately in need of something and Jesus took time to provide it for her, and said, "I'll give you water that you will never be thirsty again." That is relevant to loneliness. Isn't it?

Max Lucado: It really is. And who knows, but I've often thought the reason that she went to the well at noon as opposed to typically they would go early in the morning or late in the day when it wasn't so hot, that maybe she went just to avoid the stares of all the other women. Here she is a five time divorcee, and living, shacking up with a man. And yet there Jesus receives her and He talks to her and He helps her. And He says, "If you knew the gift of God, you would ask Him and He would give you water that will never run out." I think you're right, Jim. I think that's a picture of Jesus drawing near to somebody who's lonely and in need of affirmation.

Dr. Dobson: If there ever was a person who needed a friend, what about the woman who was caught in the very act of sex? And He was so compassionate to her, and I would love to know what He wrote in the sand with His finger when He sat down. Wouldn't you like to know that?

Max Lucado: What an engaging story. He leaned down, and He started drawing in the sand with His finger. You know, I've got a sermon I used to preach on that when I was traveling, and I would tell everybody, "I'm going to tell you what Jesus wrote! Don't let me forget!" You know and I was always working with the crowd. And finally, at the end I would say, "What was it I was gonna tell you?" and somebody would inevitable shout, "You're going to tell us what Jesus wrote in the sand!" And I'd say, "Yeah, He wrote 'No more.' No more condemnation. No more condemnation." I don't know. Nobody knows, you know? But He could have. Maybe that's what He wrote. But you're right, she was lonely. She was lonely and all by herself, and yet He came to her defense.

Dr. Dobson: And the bottom line is He said, "Go, and sin no more." What a Lord.

Max Lucado: Yes sir. These stories that we find in the gospel of John, these and all of them throughout the gospel. I think it's important to state this doesn't just tell us what Jesus did, but these stories tell us what Jesus does. And in this day and age in which people feel lonely, they feel like the Samaritan woman, or they feel like the adulterous woman. They feel all by themselves. These stories tell you, if you draw close to Christ, you cry out to Christ, this is what's going to happen to you. You're going to sense His presence. You're going to sense His presence. I don't want to ever think that this pandemic is good. There's not much good about it, but if there's anything that's good is it's causing us to turn to God. And I'm sensing, Jim, I'd love to know what you think. I'm sensing that people are turning to God in these days.

We had a prayer service here in San Antonio, out in the biggest parking lot in town at the AT&T Center. And we did it, people could come in person, or they

could watch online. We had 200,000 people watching online, from all over the world.

Dr. Dobson: Oh, my.

Max Lucado: And it was pretty simple prayer service, Jim, it wasn't anything fancy. We just had a platform and a microphone, a cross and a prayer altar. We're said, "We're just going to meet and pray." But people from all over the world were tuning in and turning their hearts toward God. I'm wondering if something might be happening these days.

Dr. Dobson: It feels to me like it is. And I hope it's the precursor to a third great awakening.

Max Lucado: Amen.

Dr. Dobson: That's what Shirley and I have been praying for that. Unless there is repentance and a turning to God and His word, it'll just be an emotional experience. I pray it'll be more than that. And that there will really be a return to Him. And perhaps that's what is coming.

One thing is certain, people will say, "Well, we need to get back to the way it was." It will never be the way it was. You can't back up on a freeway. We've gone down the road. We're different people because of having gone through this, and it will either result in good or evil. And unless we turn to the Lord in the midst of it, we could run aground.

In your book, you refer to the phrase, "an ever present help." And you said it reflects God's character. Spell that out for us.

Max Lucado: Hmm. Isn't that a great statement from the book of Psalms?

Dr. Dobson: Yeah.

Max Lucado: "God is an ever present help in the day of trouble." He's ever present. So this tells me that God is ever near me. And He's present, present to help, present to encourage, present to strengthen. This tells me that no matter where you are as you're listening to this conversation, you can say with certainty, "God is right here. God is here."

Dr. Dobson: Yeah.

Max Lucado: You can stand on the promise that says, "Never, will I leave you. Never will I forsake you." I know that we draw such strength from being able to shake hands or give hugs or to have the eye-to-eye contact. I know that. But who's to say that God can't replace that with the presence of Himself and do for you what you would have received, and typically receive, through those moments of social interaction? I hope that we return to something like that. But like Jim just

said, it's never going to be exactly like it was. And so in the meantime, learn to trust in the ever present kindness of God. Open your heart to the possibility that He can do for you what people cannot, and open your mouth and talk to Him, and open your Bible and listen to Him. He truly is an ever present help in the time of trouble.

Dr. Dobson: May I ask you to bring that down to the individual who's listening to us right now. And he or she is convinced there's not one human being on the face of the earth that loves them, or cares for them, or even knows that they exist. There are people listening to us who are out there who absolutely have no sense of human contact and love and have an arm around their shoulder. Does the Lord have something to say for that discouraged individual? The one for whom everything has seemed to go wrong?

Max Lucado: Yes. And I believe that the fact that this person is listening to you and I have this conversation, is God's way of saying that. The fact that you're listening to this conversation today, it's God's way of saying, "I'm talking to you. I love you. I care deeply enough about you. In fact, I care so deeply enough about you, that I took an old redneck, drunk West Texas boy, and converted him 40 years ago." And Jim, I know you probably weren't as rowdy as I was, but here you bring us together in this conversation as a way of speaking words of hope and love and life to people. So I would say to you, if you're lonely, if you're discouraged, receive this message.

I recall a story, Jim, in a book by Dale Carnegie, you remember Dale Carnegie?

Dr. Dobson: I sure do.

Max Lucado: In one of his books, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.

Dr. Dobson: Right.

Max Lucado: In that book, he tells a story about a lady who visited his church a few years after the Depression. And she told how her husband's unemployment had turned to devastation and how he turned to drinking and how he left her alone with four little kids. And finally one day she just gave up and she turned on the stove and she took her youngest child and got into bed. And she was just going to take her life. She was going to inhale the fumes from the oven. And she forgot to turn the radio off in the kitchen. And the radio station turned to an old gospel broadcast. And the broadcast opened with the song, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." "What a Friend we Have in Jesus."

And she said, "I remembered Jesus is my friend. And the fact that that song was being sent into my room was enough to convince me to get up, turn off the oven, and to redouble my efforts." She made it through the Depression. Her children grew up healthy and all because that song was coming over the airways. And so I think about whoever might be listening to you and me have

this conversation. This is a message from God to you. What a friend you have in Jesus. He cares about you. Receive that message today and believe Him.

Dr. Dobson: Oh, that's wonderful stuff. That is absolutely wonderful.

Max Lucado: Thank you, Jim.

Dr. Dobson: Max, is it all right if we continue to talk to you, stay on the line with me, and we'll let people hear what we're going to say next time?

Max Lucado: I'm happy to. Thank you very much.

Dr. Dobson: The name of the book is *You Are Never Alone: Trust in the Miracle of God's Presence and Power*, by Pastor Max Lucado. I said at the beginning of the program that he has 140 million books in print. There's a reason for that, because he's got something wonderful to say, and I urge you to go out and get this particular book. Thank you Max, for being my guest. We'll continue talking in a moment.

Max Lucado: Thank you, Jim. It's my honor.

Roger Marsh: This is Roger Marsh, and what a wonderful message of encouragement we've heard today here on Family Talk. Our God is with us through the most difficult storms, even in the midst of this global pandemic. Visit today's broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org, and you can connect with Pastor Max Lucado and learn more about his brand new book. It's appropriately titled *You Are Never Alone*. Again, that's drjamesdobson.org, and then click onto the broadcast tab at the top of the page.

Well, that wraps up this edition of the broadcast. Be sure to join us again tomorrow, as Dr. Dobson continues his conversation with Pastor Max Lucado. You won't want to miss that discussion, coming up on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Have a blessed day, everyone.

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

Dr. Clinton: Hi everyone, this is Dr. Tim Clinton, Executive Director at the Dobson Family Institute, wanting to remind you that our ministry is listener supported. You're contributions allow us to continue to fight for families everywhere. You can partner with us by going to drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org. Or call us toll-free at 877-732-6825. That number again: 877-732-6825. This world – you know this – needs a serious transformation of the heart. Your gift can help make a difference. I hope you'll stand with us, and thank you for being a friend of the family.

Roger Marsh: Hello everyone! Roger Marsh here for Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. The news comes in all shapes, sizes, and formats these days, but how do you cut through

all the noise and get to the heart of the matters that effect your family? Well, come to Dr James Dobson's Family Talk and sign up for Dr. Dobson's monthly newsletter! You'll find clarity on tough issues, encouragement for daily life, and trusted principles to help you build strong, healthy, and connected families. Go to drjamesdobson.org and sign up today. That's drjamesdobson.org.