



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: You Are Never Alone – Part 2

Guest(s): Max Lucado

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- Dr. 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: In Psalm 46, we are reminded that God is our refuge and strength and ever present help in times of trouble. Let that first sink in for just a moment. No matter what you're facing right now, God is there. He walks beside us and cares for us like the good shepherd that he's always been. Even as we sit in the middle of a crippling pandemic, God is with us.
- Roger Marsh: Today on Family Talk, we'll continue to learn more about this faithful characteristic of our God. Dr. James Dobson's guest once again is world-renowned author and pastor Max Lucado. In his 35 years as a writer, Max has had numerous New York Times bestsellers and has sold over 140 million books. He also serves as teaching minister at Oak Hills Church in San Antonio, Texas. In a moment, Dr. Dobson will continue addressing Pastor Lucado's newest book, which is called You Are Never Alone. The two will revisit more of Jesus' miracles that reflect his heart and care for us. Max Lucado also will open up about a painful childhood trauma that God delivered him from. This is an extremely relevant and touching conversation that we hope you'll enjoy. So with that, here now is our host, Dr. James Dobson.
- Dr. Dobson: I used to teach a Sunday school class many years ago with about 100 young married couples in the class, and I observed that there were people who came and visited us. And they didn't know anybody, and they were obviously a little uncomfortable. And I watched them out on the edge of the group, and I knew what they were thinking. "Does anybody accept me here? Does anybody want me here? Does anybody know I'm here?"
- Dr. Dobson: Most of the people in the class were seeing their friends that they hadn't seen for a week, and they hardly noticed these people on the outside. I observed the fact that whether or not they stayed and eventually found the Lord depended on somebody recognizing that they had a need and going out there and pulling them in. And we talked a lot about that, and the class grew because of it. People all stand around saying, "Who cares about me?" Let me go to another example

from the scriptures in your book. You write about Christ ministering to the lame man at the Pool of Bethesda and applied that to today. Explain that.

Max Lucado: That's one of my favorite miracles. It's hard to say you have a favorite miracle or two, but that one, just the fact that Jesus went there. You recall the Pool of Bethesda was the gathering place for the sick, for the infirm, for the crippled, for those in need of a miracle, because there was a belief that the angels would come and stir up the water, and whoever could get to the water first would be healed. Even the fact that Jesus is there is a powerful story. I mean, imagine. Here's God on Earth, and he goes to the place where sickness is concentrated. This would be like him going to, I don't know, to the rehab center, to the veterans' hospital, to a place where there's just so much struggle and sickness. And there he goes, and he sees this man. And he asked the man, "Do you want to be healed? Do you want to be healed?"

Max Lucado: Jim, I've been in the ministry for 40 years. I've probably walked through 1,000 hospitals visiting sick people. I've never asked them do they want to be healed. I assume they want to. Everybody wants to be healed. But you know what? Jesus could see that man's heart. And the man responded by saying, "Well, I don't have anybody to help me down to the water so that I can be."

Max Lucado: And Jesus said, "Rise up, stand up, take up your mat, and walk," as if to say, "Come on, let's move on." This is just my interpretation, Jim, but I think the man that Jesus was talking to there had gotten stuck, had gotten stuck. He'd gotten used to being a sick person. He had gotten accustomed to lying on his mat, and Jesus was saying, "Come on, let's move forward. You don't have to stay here, but you got to stand up." And I think we can get stuck. We can get stuck in the doldrums of life's challenges and difficulties, and we can forget there's the possibility of a new day tomorrow. And maybe that's what the message is that Christ is saying to us. "If you're lonely, if you're discouraged, listen, I'm here." Jesus says, "I'll walk into the middle of the world. I'm right here. But you got to do your part. I need you to rise up, stand up, take up your mat, and walk."

Max Lucado: And to that man's credit, he did. He did, and he was healed. He was healed.

Dr. Dobson: Yeah.

Max Lucado: And so we need to do that, too. Maybe somebody who's lonely, I would encourage you to respond. Maybe you could call somebody. Maybe you could take the initiative to reach out.

Dr. Dobson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Max Lucado: But don't think that you have to live tomorrow like you live today. Christ is present to help you get through this tough time.

Dr. Dobson: I love that illustration, and it again shows the compassion of Christ. As you talk, I'm reminded of other scriptural references. One was blind Bartimaeus. Remember?

Max Lucado: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Dobson: He was sitting with his little cup, waiting for people to drop some coins in so he could live another day. And he heard this crowd coming, and he must have grabbed somebody's cloak and said, "What is all this noise?"

Dr. Dobson: And they said, "Well, there's somebody coming this way. I think he's Jesus."

Dr. Dobson: He said, "Jesus? Jesus of Nazareth is coming by me? He's coming my way?" And he began screaming. And, of course, the disciples were embarrassed, and they didn't want him to create a ruckus there, because the scribes and the Pharisees were undoubtedly there. And Jesus turned and walked right to him, and the man was given his sight. What compassion he has for us.

Max Lucado: Yes. Just the extraordinary compassion and kindness of Christ. It is. Again, I'm so sorry that our world is having to go through this pandemic, but maybe this pandemic is what it takes for us to finally turn away from all the diversions and the sources of entertainment. And we're being reminded that they cannot meet our deepest needs.

Dr. Dobson: Mm. You also refer in the book to the power of, "I am," the name of God. Tell us about it.

Max Lucado: Yeah. Well, Jim, the presence of Christ on the stormy Sea of Galilee is a picture that Christ appears in the middle of the stormiest times of our life. And in that chapter, if you don't mind, I'd like to share a story that I really just shared publicly for the first time in this book. And that is when I was 12 years old, I was sexually molested by a man in our small West Texas community. There was a man in our community who expressed that he liked young men. He wanted to help young men. What none of our dads knew was that this man was a predator. But this man would take me and my four friends, there were usually five of us, on weekend camping trips. And one time as we unpacked the pickup truck and the tents on a Friday afternoon, we saw that he also had brought several bottles of whiskey. And that weekend was a nightmare.

Max Lucado: Jim, that man not only made his way through the whiskey, but he made his way through every sleeping bag of every boy. We couldn't leave. We were just kids. This was way back before people had cell phones. We were out in the middle of nowhere in the West Texas prairie. And it was a nightmare. He told us not to tell our parents, that our parents wouldn't believe us. And, as you know more than anybody, Jim, kids don't know how to process that. I was 12 years old. And I didn't. I didn't tell my parents.

Max Lucado: I got in on a Sunday evening, and the church where we attended had had a special communion service that day. And so that evening after my parents went to bed, I thought about that communion service. And I thought what I had missed and how I needed Christ. And I don't know how I knew to do this, but I created my own little communion service. I went into the kitchen. I couldn't find any bread, so I found a piece of potato. I couldn't find any grape juice, so I took some milk. And if you can picture a little freshly-bathed 12-year-old boy who's feeling so dirty and full of shame. But I had my own Eucharist, and I called out to Christ. And, Jim, Christ came to me. He came.

Dr. Dobson: Oh my goodness.

Max Lucado: He came. He healed me. He healed me right there. When I shared that story, one of my editors asked, "Why have you never shared this story?"

Max Lucado: And I said, "Because I was healed so immediately that I didn't have to go through counseling or therapy. It was not a factor." Now I realize that's different than somebody who's in an abusive home. Mine was a one-time event, but it was still horrible. But Christ healed me. And I told the story because I want people to know that's the kind of Christ we serve. It was miraculous that he came and he came near that 12-year-old boy in that West Texas kitchen. I felt his presence there. And that moment has been fuel for the fire of my faith for all my many years. And that's why it's with such confidence I tell people, "Draw near to Christ. Draw near to him. You may feel all alone. You may think you're all alone. And I was all alone there in that kitchen. But Christ came to me, and trust him. He will help you, too."

Dr. Dobson: Honestly, you have never shared that until you wrote it in this book?

Max Lucado: Never shared it. Never shared it. In fact, I had to call my daughters, who were all grown, and give them a heads up because I said, "I don't want you to read this first in the book." To be honest, I don't know what I thought, Jim, but as I was writing this on loneliness, that was the loneliest weekend maybe of my life, but it was such a story of the presence of Christ that I felt like I was ready, and I wanted to share it.

Dr. Dobson: Did your parents never know it?

Max Lucado: No. I never told them. I never told them. But word got out about that man. God bless him. I don't know what ever happened to him, but I do know he moved. I think the word got out from some of the dads of my friends. They heard about it. And somehow that man, either he was encouraged to leave or he knew to leave. I don't know whatever happened to him. I don't.

Dr. Dobson: Oh, man.

Max Lucado: I pray that God touched his heart and called him to himself. But I never talked to my parents about it.

Dr. Dobson: Because of the prevalence of pornography and especially child pornography, many, many, many millions of people have been through that experience. It just breaks my heart, because you never forget it. You dealt with it-

Max Lucado: You never forget it.

Dr. Dobson: ... by taking it to the Cross when you didn't even know the meaning of that, the Lord rescued you, but others live with it-

Max Lucado: He did.

Dr. Dobson: ... all through their entire lives. It changes them. It warps them. And the fact that we still allow that kind of material to be out there influencing people. Whenever a child has been abused in this way, always, always there is pornography in the garage or hidden someplace in the home. There's no exception to that. It's always there.

Max Lucado: And pornography normalizes that behavior, doesn't it?

Dr. Dobson: It does.

Max Lucado: It makes people think, "Okay, this is normal. This doesn't really hurt somebody." But boy, anybody who's been on the receiving end of that... Sexual intimacy is such a personal, personal thing that God said he only wants us to use it within the protective covenant of a marriage. He knows what's best for us. He knows that if we use that expression outside of the protective covenant of a marriage, it can do damage, and especially when it's an attempt of violation.

Dr. Dobson: Yeah.

Max Lucado: Yeah, my heart has gone out many, many times to people who have grown up in homes where that was a regular event. A person can spend a lifetime trying to get healing from that type of abuse.

Dr. Dobson: It also destroys marriage, because there's nothing that you can experience as a man and woman that can compete with airbrushed nudity and all the things that they're designed to capture your mind. And it happens. What I'm so thankful for is that at 12 years of age, you were terribly vulnerable, and that could have warped you for life. I just thank God that he took care of you in that situation.

Max Lucado: Yeah. And I thank God for my parents, even though I never told them about that. But, look, they were taking me to church. They had raised me going to church, and I knew somewhere along the line I had been taught that whenever

you're brokenhearted, go to Jesus. What if I was not being raised in a home that attended church? I wouldn't have known what to do with that pain. I mean, how did I know to create, to stage a little communion service?

Dr. Dobson: Yeah.

Max Lucado: It's just the craziest thing? Well, it's because my parents had been taking me. So to people who wonder if they should take their children to church, you don't know when they're going to need it, and you don't know what message they're going to hear that they're going to need. And so please keep raising them in the community of faith so that when and if something like that happens or some other type of challenge, they'll know to turn to Christ.

Dr. Dobson: So you did grow up in a strong, Christian home?

Max Lucado: I did, Jim. I did. My dad, God bless him, raised us to all attend church. He raised us not to drink. My brother and I disobeyed that, and we both got ourselves in a lot of trouble in our late teen years, but I came back to faith. I returned to Christ when I was 20 years of age in college. Do you remember Abilene Christian University out in West Texas?

Dr. Dobson: I received an honorary doctorate from there.

Max Lucado: I thought you did. All students had to go to Bible classes, and my dad sent me there because he knew I needed some help. And, sure enough, through the influence of one of the Bible professors, I came back to trust Christ and by his grace become a pastor.

Dr. Dobson: Dr. Royce Money was a great friend of mine. He was president there for many years.

Max Lucado: Wow. Royce is a good friend of mine. Carl Brecheen, Paul Faulkner. I don't know if you recall those names. They were teachers in the marriage and family therapy program at Abilene Christian, and, boy, they spoke so highly of you. Dr. Brecheen has gone to be with the Lord. Dr. Faulkner's still here. But they sure spoke highly of you all those many, many years ago.

Dr. Dobson: Well, we're right down in the end of the second program we started last time, and we should end with this question right out of your book. "How does Christ's death and resurrection connect to the concept of trusting in God's presence?" That's a quote from the book. Tell us how.

Max Lucado: Well, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are the miracle that we need. The death of Christ on the cross is the demonstration of God's love for us and the action of God to justifiably forgive us for all of our sins. He dealt with our sins. When Christ cried out from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He was feeling in himself the full consequence of my sins. He

paid the penalty. And then when he cried out, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit," then that separation that he had felt for my sins, that had been paid for. That had been paid for. There was a miracle there.

Max Lucado: The curtain temple being torn in two from top to bottom, as if God were himself saying, "I'm going to tear the curtain away and be no more separation between me and my creation." But then Christ was placed in the tomb, and on the third day, he rose from the grave. He rose from the grave.

Dr. Dobson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Max Lucado: And when John went into the tomb and he saw that it was empty, that's when John said he believed, because the absence of the body is the presence.

Dr. Dobson: Oh yes.

Max Lucado: And since Jesus rose from the grave, we, too, we too will be raised from our grave. And that's the hope. The greatest miracle is the miracle that is yet to come, the miracle of heaven. A graveless, tearless, and sinless existence, and maybe God is getting us ready for that moment right now. That's going to be the great miracle in which all the disease, all the death, and all the discouragement is going to be gone forever.

Dr. Dobson: Max, does that mean literally that Jesus would have died on that cross if I were the only human being? Would he have cared that much for me?

Max Lucado: There is no doubt. There is no doubt. The scripture says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his Son." If you had been the only sinner, if I'd been the only sinner. That's how much he loves us. We can forget that this life on Earth is just a grain of sand, just a puff of smoke compared to the eternal existence that awaits us.

Dr. Dobson: Mm.

Max Lucado: And he's ready for anybody. It's not his will that anyone should perish. He wants everybody to come to eternal life, but he doesn't force anybody. He doesn't force anybody. And he knocks at the door, but he waits on us to open it. And so he does. Every person who can hear your words and mine is receiving an invitation to spend forever with him. And all you need to do is say yes to him. Say yes. Just say, "Lord, I accept your gift. I accept your forgiveness. I call upon you as my savior. I call upon you as my Lord. And I trust you." And he receives us. Whoever confesses with his mouth that Jesus is the Lord, that person will be saved.

Dr. Dobson: You're telling me that it's free?

Max Lucado: That's exactly what I'm telling you. Yeah. That's exactly what I'm telling you. It's free. Just accept it. Accept it and trust it. Salvation is a miraculous gift of God. The sanctification is that lifelong process in which he turns us more and more into his image, but we're not saved because of what we do. We're saved because of what Christ did for us.

Dr. Dobson: "Pastor Lucado, you don't understand. I've done all these wicked things. God could not forgive me. You don't know what kind of life I've lived. You could never forgive me." What do you say?

Max Lucado: God does. God can see our life from beginning to end, from birth to hearse, from start to finish. He knows not only the things we've done, he knows the things we will do. Yet he can forgive, and he is able to forgive. He is able to forgive, because he sent his Son, and his Son never, never sinned. Not one time. "Can anybody convict me of sin?" he invited, and nobody could. And so he died on the cross as a sinless man, but he took the place of sinners like you and me. He took our place. He knew no sin, but God made him become sin for us. He took our place, and he paid the price of sin so that we can stand before Christ on the day of judgment completely cleansed from beginning to end. And he declares forgiveness. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Dr. Dobson: Max, that's more important than anything else we've said, and I hope that it goes out there and sticks in the heart of the person out there who feels absolutely worthless. "I've accomplished nothing, nobody loves me, nobody cares, and my life has been a wreck." That good news is there for every one of us, and you've just put it in such beautiful terms.

Dr. Dobson: Thank you for being my guest today. We've been talking to Pastor Max Lucado and his new book, *You Are Never Alone: Trust in the Miracle of God's Presence and Power*. Get this book, especially if you have heard something today that resonated in your hearts, and I pray that there are thousands of them. Max, I love you as a brother in Christ. Thank you for being my guest. Keep up the good work. And I can't tell you how much I appreciate you being with us these two days.

Max Lucado: And the same here, Jim. God bless you. And thank you for all these many, many decades, the countless number of broadcasts that you have sent out. They've got to be in the hundreds of thousands by now. May God bless you and Shirley and give you strength every day of your life.

Roger Marsh: Well, these have been two very powerful additions of Family Talk. Max Lucado always has profound wisdom to share, so we're glad he's been our guest on today's broadcast as well as the previous edition of Family Talk. Our goal with these programs is to encourage you along this crazy journey of life. If you're struggling right now due to this pandemic, we hope and pray that the message from these interviews has ministered to you directly.

Roger Marsh: Now, if you're seeking additional prayer, we are here for you. Simply call (877) 732-6825, and a member of our team will be happy to pray over and with you. Again, that number is (877) 732-6825. And to learn more about Pastor Max Lucado and his new book, *You Are Never Alone*, visit drjamesdobson.org. On today's broadcast page, you'll also see how you can request a CD of this entire interview. You'll find all of this when you go to drjamesdobson.org and then tap onto the broadcast menu.

Roger Marsh: Finally, we'd love to hear what you thought of this insightful conversation, and the best way you can do so is by using our Facebook page. Find Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk on Facebook, and then comment on the broadcast post. Right now, thousands of other listeners are there sharing their thoughts about this meaningful discussion, so join in the conversation by visiting our Facebook page. Go to our profile by searching for Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk on Facebook. We look forward to hearing from you there.

Roger Marsh: Well, that's all the time we have for today. Thanks for tuning in and for supporting the mission and ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. Your faithful generosity continues to allow us to fight for marriages and families all over the world. Learn how you can partner with us by calling us at (877) 732-6825. That's (877) 732-6825. Or you can go online to drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org.

Roger Marsh: Be sure to join us again tomorrow for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Have a blessed day.

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