



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Jesus Who Surprises – Part 2

Guest(s): Dee Brestin

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Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: Thanks so much for joining us again today for Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and in just a moment, we're going to hear the conclusion of a two part conversation featuring Dr. Dobson and his very special guest, Dee Brestin. We've titled this program The Jesus Who Surprises. Before we get into that though, I want share with you about this special offer that we have available to you throughout the month of December. We have a matching grant in place to double your impact thanks to some very special friends of our ministry.

If you'd like to make a donation online, go to drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org, or give us a call, 877-732-6825. Now, regarding today's program, I've mentioned before, it's a popular broadcast for us here at Family Talk. In fact, it was part of the 2021 Best of Broadcast Collection Dr. Dobson and his dear friend Dee Brestin discussing how Jesus finds a way to surprise us. Dee Brestin is an author and a speaker. She's the head of Dee Brestin Ministries and she teaches others how to overcome their own struggles and reconnect with God.

But through her own loss, Dee discovered that Jesus was there by her side as well through all of her pain. Even though going through a hard time is very trying, can we be reminded of these words from Jeremiah 29:11, "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Those words from the Lord through the prophet, Jeremiah, were prophesied to the people of Israel as they're about to enter a time of captivity. And yet, in spite of the hardships on the outside, God had a plan for them that he was faithful to fulfill. God is always working in our lives too, isn't He? Even when we don't see it, even when the external circumstances make it look like all hope is lost.

Now, if you missed part one of the program or you're just tuning into our broadcast for the first time today, let me tell you a little bit about Dee Brestin. She is a writer, a speaker, and a teacher. She's the author of many best-selling books including *The Friendships of Women* and *Falling in Love with Jesus*. Dee

has also authored over 20 Bible studies, including *Proverbs and Parables*. She's a graduate at Northwestern University and also has studied at Covenant Seminary as well. Dee is a widow, having lost her husband, Steve, to cancer, but she remains eternally thankful for the love that they shared and also for the five children they raised and the many grandchildren that continue on in their legacy. Okay, without further ado, let's listen to part two of this special conversation about the Jesus who surprises on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Let's go back to Genesis. There's God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Dee Brestin: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: And you say in your book that they do a dance together.

Dee Brestin: Right. I love that.

Dr. James Dobson: Now, for a guy who grew up thinking dancing is evil, you got explain that one.

Dee Brestin: Okay. Well, the early church fathers had a name for this. It was paracorsis. You can hear the chorus or the dance. And what Michael Reeves, who is an Oxford scholar and theologian, says is that this is the dance of the Trinity. God, the Father loves the Son. The son is glorifying the Father. The Holy Spirit is illuminating them both. They are in a joyful dance. And because we are created in the image of a triune God, we too, crave relationship and have the ability to love.

Dr. James Dobson: You talked about that extensively in your book, that as we know in Genesis 1:27, God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created them, male and female, He created them.

Dee Brestin: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: So, what is being said there is God's nature is actually implanted at the core of our being. That's why we're so relational with one another. Tell us about your own journey. When did you find the Lord, Dee?

Dee Brestin: Well, my older sister came to Steve and me when we were first-time parents. She had just received Christ and she told me she had something really important to tell me. And she came and she started following me around with a great big black Bible, quoting me verses about Jesus. And she said, "Do you understand why Jesus died on the cross?" And I said, "I'm not sure, but I imagine you're going to tell me." And she explained the gospel. And even though we were a churchgoing family, I'd never heard the gospel that Jesus died in my place and that He had paid the price for me.

I was very uncomfortable. Steve and I were planning to build a really beautiful home overlooking some body of water when he became a doctor. And I remember I asked her, "If I gave my life to Jesus the way you're telling me he wants me to, would he ask us to give up this house we're planning to build?" And my sister finally after being quiet for about two minutes, looked up and said, "In your case, I think the house would have to go." I thought, "What?" She said, "Because our God doesn't want any other gods before Him. And you've been talking and talking and talking about that house. I think it's a God in your life. So yeah, I think it would have to go."

And I appreciate that. Sometimes I think we're so eager to get people over the goal line that we don't tell them the truth. It is true that salvation is a free gift, but when you come to Him, you have to come to him for who He is and He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords and He wants you to give Him your whole life. So, I really had to study because I didn't want to give my life to Him if He was a fairytale. I studied and I read and I cried out and He showed me and He showed my husband as well.

Dr. James Dobson: Dee, does it break your heart that you were in church for all those years, probably 16, 17 years-

Dee Brestin: Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: ... and never met the risen Christ? You didn't nearly know who He was. And does it break your heart that so many other people are attending church and they're thinking that they know Him, but they really don't?

Dee Brestin: Right. We have so many false shepherds, Dr. Dobson, who are not teaching the gospel, not teaching the truth, and they are going to be so accountable. And it does break my heart and I think we have a responsibility as believers to get the message out. And I think it's important that we help them also believers to make sure it's not just in their head, it isn't just a matter of repeating a creed. It has to go to their heart. And one of the things we do in *The Jesus Who Surprises* is we tell about how to teach your children to go on the "God Hunt." And this is something we learned from Karen and David Mains when we were young parents-

Dr. James Dobson: I knew them well.

Dee Brestin: Yes, they had a wonderful program. And they said it's kind of like hide and seek. You're watching for God at work in your life. It might be an answer to prayer, or unusual timing or circumstances, or it might be something as simple as a beautiful sunset or seeing a rabbit across the road. But each night at dinner, we would say to our children, "How did you spot God today?" And usually, it was something simple, but if it was big, it would go up on the bulletin board above our dining table. I remember the first time our youngest, Annie, had a real answer to prayer that made her realize God was real. And her second grade

teacher, she said, was very angry with her because she couldn't find her library book. And we looked and looked and looked for that *Mr. Popper's Penguins* everywhere, but we could not find it.

And when I tucked her in bed that night, I prayed that God would help her to fall asleep and that he would give her a good dream. Well, she had a great dream. In that dream, God showed her exactly where *Mr. Popper's Penguins* was. It had fallen behind her third shelf in her closet and was wedged behind the books. And she got up in the morning and she ran to her closet, opened the doors, spread the books right where they were in her dream and there it was. And she came running down the stairs saying, "Jesus did it. Jesus did it." And that's how you get it from their head to their heart. They have to experience Him and we have to help them to see Him.

Dr. James Dobson: That is a wonderful story, Dee. Hey, let's suppose that we're talking to somebody right now who is saying, "I've been in church all my life." Or maybe they'll say, "I've never been in church," but in either case, "I don't know the Jesus you're talking about." Tell them who this Jesus really is.

Dee Brestin: He is a personal God who wants a relationship with you. He wants intimacy with you. He compares Himself to a bridegroom who dances over you with singing. He wants to communicate with you. And one of the ways you can do that in the most common way is by starting to get in the Scripture. And one of the things I've learned, let's say you are reading a chapter in the gospel of Mark. First, you read a verse, but then you meditate on it, you contemplate it and you say, "What do I learn about God here? What do I learn about myself? Is there a sin I need to repent of? Is there a word of comfort?"

And that's when the verse may catch fire and you may experience the presence of God. It's a simple thing that anybody can do. But you also experience His presence by learning how to just be alert to be amazed at the people He brings across your path, or the ways if you pray something specifically, He could just astonish you with an answer. And that's the way we need to live. And it's the most exciting way to live, because we do belong to a God who is personal and who wants to have a relationship with us.

Dr. James Dobson: You referred yesterday, you didn't use these words, but you referred to the struggle that continues after you come to know this Jesus. Satan will still try to get a toehold in your life. And you said something to the effect that we kind of sugarcoat the gospel and we don't tell them the difficult times because you still have them. And in fact, in your book, you dealt with Romans 7, where the Apostle Paul, kind of lays out a paradox of Christians and the life that we live, there's still a battle for our souls. Satan doesn't give up on you and verse 18, 19, 20 are troubling to me.

I have worked through them, but it might be helpful to talk about them for the people who are listening. Paul wrote, "I know that nothing good lives in me." This is a man who is committed to Christ. "That is my sinful nature. For I have

the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do. No, the evil I do not want to do. This, I keep on doing. Now, if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it." I'm sure that Scripture has caused a lot of people to kind of bump their head. Give us your take on it.

Dee Brestin: We are in a battle. When we first come to the Lord, it's a complete gift, but sanctification is a battle. We have a seismic battle with the evil one. You may feel like you're really getting trampled upon, but he's after every believer. He is after crushing the church and he is going to try to get you to back away from God. And when you get discouraged because you failed, he's going to get right in there and say, "You can't do it," or he's going to tell you when things go wrong, you see, God doesn't love you. I remember my daughter Sally, and I went to see Max McClean in *Screwtape Letters*, CS Lewis's novel about the devil.

Dr. James Dobson: Yes.

Dee Brestin: And there was a scene in the play that was so important, where there's the main devil and he's sending letters up to *Screwtape*, his little apprentice on earth. And there's like a bank tube on the stage that goes up and down and a little demon would climb up and open this bank tube. And if the news was good, if the client was backing away from God because of suffering, she would laugh and leap to the floor and do cartwheels all across the stage. But if the news was bad, if the client was actually in the midst of his suffering and feeling of failure, pressing harder into God, she would scream and claw the air and fall. And I don't know how she didn't break her back, but she would fall to the ground.

And I remember when we left that theater, I said to my daughter, Sally, who at that time, was struggling with infertility, I said, "What did you learn from the play?" And she said, "I learned that I have an enemy and that he wants me to despair, but if God never gives me a baby, I am going to trust Him. And Satan is going to scream, clawing the air and falling to the ground." And we do have an enemy and we have to remember that God understands when we fail and if we confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins. And so yes, we fail. Yes, we do not do what we want to do. Yes, we are in a battle, but He is for us and Satan is against us and we need to move toward God or else Satan has won if he gets us to back up and give up.

Dr. James Dobson: So, you have to draw close to him and live in community with Him.

Dee Brestin: Exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: You get too far away, you don't read the words, you don't go to church, you don't talk about Him, you don't think about Him, Satan will flip you on your backside.

Dee Brestin: Exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: Why is it important to see Jesus as the bridegroom, concept that most men are uncomfortable with, I think?

Dee Brestin: I think so, that's true. I did ask Michael Card that question one time. I said, "How do you relate to the metaphor of Jesus being a bridegroom as a man?" And he said, "Oh, I love that question because I don't think God gives us any picture that is not appropriate for both genders." He said, "I think about how I love my wife and cherish her and would do anything for her and that melts my heart with the love of Jesus." He said, "I don't want to become so sexualized that I cannot relate to this metaphor."

I wrote a book called *He Calls You Beautiful* on the Song of Songs, Dr. Dobson. And I think the Song of Songs is a beautiful picture of marriage, but we miss it if we don't see the main point that it points to Jesus and how he loves us and dances over us. And there are so many pictures of Christ in this. Jonathan Edwards, the Puritan is such great intellect, said, this is no common love song. He compared it to Psalm 45, which Hebrews says is about Jesus. And Psalm 45 is the royal wedding song. He said, there are 30 similarities between that and the Song of Songs. The Song of Songs is about marriage, but don't stop there. It is about a God who loves you, who cherishes you, who dances over you, who is better than 10,000, the fairest indeed.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, He is certainly a masculine Jesus. There's nothing that would contradict that and He wants us as men to keep our masculinity. You talked about Steve, your husband, right before he died, praying for your children's future spouses and grandchildren that they might come to know Him. And talk about God's faithful response to that prayer.

Dee Brestin: Yes. We would often pray the Psalms in bed during that time when he was so sick. And we memorized Psalm 103, which is the one who with, "Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all his benefits." So we'd begin and remind each other of different ways God had worked in our lives. And we kept going through that Psalm and there's a place in that Psalm where it talks about how we are like the grass of the field. And at that moment, I feel like God told both Steve and me that He was going to take Steve home. And that was very sobering. And Steve then after that, started praying, he said, "All right, God, if you are taking me home, you've promised to be a husband to the widow and a father to the fatherless."

And what he prayed at that moment, was that we had three daughters still in the nest who were unmarried. He said, "If it is your will for them to marry, I'm asking you to give them godly men with godly fathers in-law, who could be fathers to the fatherless." It was a very bold prayer. And after Steve died, each of our three daughters married pastor's sons.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh really?

Dee Brestin: With very godly fathers who have been fathers to the fatherless. And one of our most fun surprises as I shared, Sally struggled with infertility and we prayed and prayed and prayed for Sally. And I remember it was the fifth anniversary of Steve's death and I was speaking at Moody and she came over and I expected her to be very sad because it was the anniversary of his death. And I opened the door, she was grinning, she came running in and she said, "I know it's a sad day, but it's a great day, I am pregnant."

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, no kidding.

Dee Brestin: And then we found out just three weeks later, that my daughter, Anne, was pregnant. And then two weeks later, my daughter, Beth, was pregnant. And then a month later, my daughter-in-law, Julie, was pregnant and they all gave birth to little girls in the summer of 2010.

Dr. James Dobson: All four of them.

Dee Brestin: Jesus certainly surprised us with these four little girls.

Dr. James Dobson: You got a fertile little family, don't you?

Dee Brestin: Oh God gave us more and beyond what we could have imagined. He surprised us.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, I've really enjoyed this conversation with you. I want to end by talking about Isaiah. I think that's one of my favorite books of the Bible and I never tire of reading it. But show the connection between Jesus who was still what, a thousand years away and in the flesh and Isaiah, what's that linkage?

Dee Brestin: Well, Isaiah gives such a clear prophecy in Isaiah 53 of both Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. I mean, the details are amazing. And many people said, well, this must have been written after the crucifixion, because the details are so vivid. And they said that because the earliest documents we had were after until the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered and those were before Jesus was on earth. And it just gives you such credibility in the Scriptures. The other thing that just completely warmed my heart was Isaiah's pictures of Heaven. Because when I thought about Heaven, I thought about the pictures in Revelation and they're so symbolic and they're a little scary to me, Dr. Dobson. Streets of gold instead of wooded areas and no seas and no night and no stars, I thought, I don't know, it'll be good to be with Jesus and Steve, but it sounds a little cold this celestial city.

But in Isaiah 65, it's the picture of families living in houses and making vineyards and working and loving and laughing and no more tears and no more death. It's a new Heaven and a new earth joined together. I'd like to think that the best of this earth will be reformed and we will live in it. The very favorite place you love on earth, I would like you to think of it being completely perfect and there will

be no more sin. We won't be hurting each other. It's this picture of family with Jesus and the best of creation. And there will still be meaningful work, which I love, and it just takes my breath away. And I think if Isaiah was so right on about Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, will he not also be so right on in his picture of Heaven, in Jesus' return?

Dr. James Dobson: The Scripture says, "It will be more wonderful than anything that has ever entered the mind of man." We've never even contemplated it. And you know what? When He says that, I take Him at His word. I don't try to second guess what He's put in that new world, but it must be worth waiting for.

Dee Brestin: Oh my goodness, I can't even imagine, but it will be wonderful.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, thank you Dee again. I don't know how many times we have been on the air together. You never disappoint. You've always got something new to say. And the title of this new book is *The Jesus Who Surprises: Opening Our Eyes to His Presence in All of Life and Scripture*. And that's written by Dee Brestin who has been my guest again today. Dee, as you turn out these books, I want you to call me and let me know because I always enjoy talking to you.

Dee Brestin: Thank you so much, Dr. Dobson. You're a treasure in my life.

Dr. James Dobson: Keep up the good work in bringing people to Jesus.

Dee Brestin: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Well, what an inspiring conversation today here on Family Talk. You've just heard part two of Dr. Dobson's interview with author, speaker, and Bible study leader, Dee Brestin. I'm Roger Marsh, and throughout this month of December, we are presenting the most popular Family Talk programs from the past year, along with a few others that we just have to share with you. If you would like to have a copy of the entire six CD set of this Best of Broadcast Collection, drop us a line. Go to drjamesdobson.org/bestof2022. That's drjamesdobson.org/bestof2022. Now, if you prefer this on digital download, be sure to indicate that as well. Everything you need for making your request will be right there on our homepage. And this Best of Broadcast Collection is our way of thanking you for your suggested donation of \$50 or more in support of the ministry here at the JDFI.

In the Best of Broadcast 2022 Collection, you'll hear 18 of our most popular programs from the past year. We encourage you to keep it for yourself or give it to someone you love. And remember, if time is of the essence, you can always make your request known by phone. Any of our audio programs, books, or other resources are available in our resource center as well. Just dial 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. Thanks so much for letting us be a part of your day and for listening to today's edition of Family Talk, the program you trust for the family

you love. I'm Roger Marsh. Join us again tomorrow for another edition of our Best of Broadcast 2022 Collection, right here on Family Talk.

Announcer:

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