



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: A Daring Faith in a Cowardly World – Part 1

Guest(s): Ken Harrison

Air Date: August 25, 2022

[Listen to the broadcast](#)

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

Dr. Tim Clinton: Welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host of the Family Talk broadcast. As a licensed professional counselor, marriage and family therapist, I'm honored to serve as the resident authority on mental health and relationships here at JDPI. I also serve as president of the American Association of Christian Counselors.

Thanks for joining us here on Family Talk today. Ask Christians what they expect to happen to them after they die, and most of them will say, they'll go to Heaven. If pressed, they'll probably say that they'll meet Jesus, hope to hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Truth be told, most believers know that they're not living up to God's calling on their lives. The truth is it's a different time with a lot of censorship and suppression, especially of conservatives and Christians.

Our guest on today's edition of Family Talk offers a roadmap for living the full Christian life in his new book, *A Daring Faith in a Cowardly World: Live a Life Without Waste, Regret, or Anything Unfinished*. His name, Ken Harrison.

Ken's the chairman of Promise Keepers and serves as CEO of WaterStone. It's a Christian community foundation that oversees donations of millions of dollars per month to build God's kingdom.

After he worked as a street cop for the Los Angeles Police Department in the notorious Watts/Compton area, Ken spent nearly two decades in the commercial real estate arena. A Colson Fellow, Ken has appeared on *Fox News*, *The Huckabee Show*, *The 700 Club*, and more. He's been married to his wife, Elliette, for almost 30 years. Together, they have three children. Ken, great to have you. Thanks for stopping by here at Family Talk.

Ken Harrison: It's always great to talk to you, Tim.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hey, Ken. As we get started, congrats on that new book, *A Daring Faith in a Cowardly World*. Pretty convicting and challenging. Went through it. Ken, I know this too. You have a real burden for men. A lot of people who know you know that you've got a little edge. You're not afraid to say a few things. You got a little fire inside of you. Ken, what seems to be changing? What do you think's happening in culture? What's happening inside of your heart?

Ken Harrison: Well, I think as far as culture goes, we're starting to see that standing up for truth matters. I mean, as our friend, John Stonestreet, has often said, that what was unthinkable 10 years ago is unquestionable today.

I mean, we could never have seen that they were going to take prepubescent girls who are going through a bunch of angst and be manipulated into thinking, "Well, maybe you're a boy, and maybe we should do things that will permanently hurt your body for the rest of your life."

Cut your breasts off. Take drugs that would hurt you. I mean, did we ever think we would get to this level of depravity? We were promised we would in Scripture, and yet we have to understand that God has given each of us a calling and a mission to stand for truth, to usher His kingdom here on this earth.

Again, another friend of ours, James Robinson, often talks about, too many Christians are waiting to be raptured. "Well, I'm going to get out of here. Too bad for all the rest of these people."

Well, that's not God's calling. God's calling is for us to stand for the truth, to plead the widow's cause, to correct the oppressor, it says, in Isaiah 1:17. Sometimes that causes conflict and confrontation. He calls us to be daring in our faith in this cowardly world, to rescue people from this horrible place we're in.

Dr. Tim Clinton: At our last world conference, there was a term called collective trauma. It's like, everybody's gone through this trauma. When you have trauma in your life, it kind of silences or shame... You lose your voice. You kind of lose your way. People are done with everything. They can't believe it.

They're starting to think, "Wait a second. America could be going a direction that we never thought or dreamed possible." What's the future for our children and our children's children, Ken? Maybe some of that's mixing together here. It's like, wait a second. We've got to say something. We've got to do something.

Ken Harrison: When do cultures collapse over and over again? When they lose a common foundational worldview. When people don't have the same value systems, then they turn on each other. We've seen this happen many times throughout history. It's happening in America right now.

We have been a nation built on a foundational Judeo-Christian worldview. It didn't mean everybody was Christians, but we all accepted that Christmas was a

great holiday. We all accepted that you should do unto others as you do to yourself, right, but now we see people who actually promote evil and call it good.

Elizabeth Warren, recently talking about crisis pregnancy centers, which I'm a big supporter of, who help women in pregnancy, wanting to shut them down to make sure that they just have abortions. We literally are losing our common foundational worldview.

Christians are sitting on the thing that as we bring back the church, we'll bring back the United States of America because we'll restore the common worldview that kept us altogether, made us into this incredible nation for so many years, which was a Christian worldview.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Ken, in the beginning of your book, you quote James Robinson, a dear friend to both of us, "Too many Christians are more concerned with God's kingdom to come than they are about the one that's right here, now. We should be thinking about what God is going to do through us." Ken, you alluded to James. He's had a lot of influence in your life. Speak to that statement and how that just kind of set the tone, if you will, for your new book.

Ken Harrison: James is a guy who... Most people don't know this, and I do talk about him in chapter three of the book. He was the product of rape. His mother was a hospice nurse caring for an elderly man. Her drunk son came in and raped her when she was 40 years old. She gave birth to James. She tried to have an abortion, but in the '40s, in Texas, it was a lot harder to get an abortion, and the doctor refused to do so. Then she realized that this was going to be a great man of God.

James becomes this massive guy. He was supposed to be the next Billy Graham. He was really at the top of everything. He actually is the man who talked Ronald Reagan into running for president in 1979. He had this huge impact, but James was really narrow-minded and hurt a lot of people in the way.

He has this time where he calls up Billy Graham to lecture him, which I can't imagine calling Billy Graham to lecture him. I guess James is at that level. Billy says, "James, do you know these people you're putting down?" James said, "Well, no, I've never met them." He says, "I want you to go spend the weekend with Oral Roberts."

James did, and they became great friends. James realized that unity was such an incredibly important thing and making sure that the truth we stand for is worth standing for, not just starting arguments over theology. James is really a powerful man of God. His whole thing is Christians are obsessed with God getting me out of here and not thinking about, no, our job is to usher in God's kingdom on this earth. That doesn't mean we're not supposed to look forward to His coming. We're told clearly that we are.

In 2 Timothy, Paul says that the crown of righteousness is for all those who love His appearing, but while we're here, our job is to rescue the hurting and the lost.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Ken, I want the audience to get to know you, personally, a little bit. You open up your book with a story about God getting your attention. I think all of us probably have had some maybe brushes with death, but you had a jet ski incident that really rocked your world. I think God got your attention.

Something that stood out in it was a verse that went through your mind, Romans 2:6, "He will repay each one according to his works." Can you back us up, Ken? Tell us about how you were living the Christian life, trying to do everything right, and then all of a sudden, God gets ahold of you in your core.

Ken Harrison: I preach all the time on the importance of identity, of knowing who you are and what you live for. For me, you mentioned earlier, I was a cop in Los Angeles, very violent area. I've been in a lot of shootings and high-speed pursuits. I had risked my life many times, but it was always in a flood of adrenaline.

At 30 years old, I'd left the LAPD. I was in commercial real estate and got hit with this jet ski. In the emergency room, the doctor walked in and said, "Well, here's the news, man. You've ruptured your liver. If less than 40% is ruptured, we're going to life-flight you to a trauma hospital, cut it out. It'll grow back. If it's more than 40%, you have five hours to live. Have a nice day." He walked out. I mean, his bedside manner was laughable.

For about an hour, I laid there on the gurney, facing death. During that time, I thought, "If I see Jesus in a few hours, what am I going to say?" I mean, I've been a cop, happily married. Never cheated on my wife. All that sounded pretty hollow. How was the world a different place because I was in it? Who got fed? What naked person was clothed? What unsaved person got the gospel? What suicidal person was talked off of the ledge because of me? I couldn't think of any. For an hour, I lay there thinking, "If I see Jesus, I'm not going to have much to say other than I was a really nice guy." I think that's the state of much of the church today.

I decided at that moment, I never wanted to be in that position again, that the next time I'm on the plane while it's going down or whatever the tone may be, I know that when that moment of death comes, I can rush into the judgment seat of Christ and say, "Where are my crowns? I did everything you gave me to do." That's a message I needed to get out there to people because what I've seen running Promise Keepers is that men are leaving the church in droves. Why? Because they're not getting an identity from the church because Ephesians 2:8-9 are those verses we all know so well, that you are saved only by grace through faith, and that even the faith we have to believe in God is a gift from Him. Completely total grace for salvation.

However, the next verse is Ephesians 2:10, "We are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works that were prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." You, Tim, and I, and everyone listening to this has a specific set of things that God has laid out for us to accomplish in our lifetimes. He will reward those of us who have done those. He will not reward those who haven't. There will be deep shame and sorrow.

If the Bible says weeping and gnashing of teeth, which means anger and sorrow, at the judgment seat, before they go into heaven, based on what we've done with our lives. I want every crown, and reward, and co-heirship. Jesus says, "If you suffer with me, you will also reign with me." I want everything that Jesus has to offer in this life and the next.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Ken, what do you say to the person who's listening, and they hear that? They believe that God has a purpose-filled life for them, but they're not sure they have an audience or that they have real influence. You guys are on, talking on the radio, but I live in Hansonville, Pennsylvania. You know that. I don't feel like I have much of an influence. What about faithfulness? What does Ephesians 2:10 mean to me if I live there?

Ken Harrison: That's such a great question, Tim. That's the problem in the church, is we tend to elevate people who do big things. That's never who God elevates. There is not a more godly, noble thing you could do than raise godly offspring. Malachi chapter 3, God says He hates divorce. Why? Because He wants godly offspring. For a mother listening to this, who's going, "Well, I'm not a cop, street cop, and I'm not a wealthy business guy, or I don't run a big foundation. What about me?"

God has given a specific set of things for us to accomplish, and He's given us gifts to accomplish those things. If you're a type-A guy like me, running around, writing books, and doing all these things, well, that's my call, and that's my gift, but that may not be somebody else's call and somebody else's gift. Your gift may be to be an intellectual, and to read, and to give people wisdom. It may be to raise really godly kids. It may be to be an activist and get involved on your school board, all of what we opened up with, and saying, "What are you teaching to our kids? How dare you! I'm going to get involved in seeing what you're teaching to our kids."

It may be just being a really good businessman who runs a good business, treats his employees well, is generous with his employees, where they say, "There's something about that man," because it was Dwight Moody who said, "1 out of a 100 people will read the Bible. The other 99 will read the Christian."

God has a calling for each of us to accomplish. We'll be judged based on what we did with the gifts He gave us to accomplish the things He gave us. Let me finish that with this little story from J. Vernon McGee. Some people may remember him. He was a preacher in Los Angeles back in the '30s.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Oh yeah. I remember J. Vernon.

Ken Harrison: He has a story he tells about a pastor who's real famous, who dies, and goes to Heaven. Jesus puts him in the car and drives him out to his mansion. They drive up to this huge mansion. The pastor looks at it and goes, "Oh yeah, that looks like the kind of mansion that I should deserve because I was so amazing."

Jesus says, "Oh no. That's not your mansion. That belongs to the widow, Mahoney." He's like, "Widow Mahoney, who was that?" Jesus says, "Well, she was the woman that was in your church, praying all the time for 40 years, but you never knew her." Oh, okay.

He said, "Well, if that silly widow got that, I can't wait to see my house." Jesus drives him out, way out to the suburbs. Drives up to a little cottage. "There's your house."

The pastor says, "Jesus, I did all these things, and I was the best-selling author, and all of this. I can't believe. How did I get this little house after all I accomplished?"

Jesus said, "Well, you accomplished all that, not because of your own skill, but because of the prayers of the widow, Mahoney." I think that nails down a lot of what your question is asking, that there's going to be a lot of people we see at the judgment seat of Christ, getting a lot of crowns. We're going to go, "Who the heck was that person?"

Dr. Tim Clinton: I don't know if Andy Stanley led with this quote or if he's the primary source of it, but he's often quoted as saying, "Your greatest legacy may not be what you do, but who you raise."

Ken, you write to the mom who's out there who is laboring over a couple of kids, trying to figure it out, and feeling exhausted. You never know when the next Moody, or Wesley, or a Graham, or somebody's being raised up to be used by God to influence the world.

Ken, I want to go a little deeper with you. In your book, *A Daring Faith in a Cowardly World: Live a Life Without Waste, Regret, or Anything Unfinished*, which is an amazing work, by the way. If you don't have a copy of that book, you need to get your hands on it. Every Christian needs to be reading this book for such a time as this.

Ken, in there, you get real transparent. You talked a little bit about, as you retired as a police officer in South Central L. A., you moved to Colorado to hunt, I think, hike, fish, whatever, going to get away and do your thing. While you're there, you felt like the Holy Spirit began to really minister to you and ask you a challenging question. Ken, you want to take us there? What started happening?

Here you are, shutting it down, but God's saying "No, no, no. You're just getting started. You don't know that."

Ken Harrison:

Yeah. There's a lot to that. I'll try to make it as quick as possible. I really did what the devil tells us a good Christian should do. I'd made enough money. 45, I was pretty old. That was 10 years ago, so it doesn't seem so old anymore. I was praying one day. I've always been a man of prayer, and I was in my closet. I've got a special place I go. I turn out the lights and just fall before the Lord.

All of a sudden, I heard His voice, in a very distinctive way, say, "Ken, I did not put you through all I did and teach you all I did so you could ski and hike for the rest of your life." I joke when I tell this story. I say, "My first answer was, 'God, I'm a Baptist. You're not supposed to talk to me.'" I was really pretty shocked. It was so clear. I said, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" He said, "Are you willing to be as ambitious for My kingdom as you were for your kingdom?" Then it came with a warning. It said, "Be careful of your answer. It's going to cost you your life."

I said, "I don't know." I started to whine at God, "I'm sick and tired of running huge companies. I'm sick and tired of firing people, and being sued, and confrontation. I just feel like I've earned the right to take it easy for a while." God said, "That's okay, but you'll miss my full blessing." I had this vision of the fact that I could head my big ranch in Colorado and do all the things that were great for 50 years. Then I would get to Heaven and see what I could have accomplished, had I followed Him completely, had I given all, and I would've had weeping and gnashing your teeth at my wasted life.

It still took me two hours. I really, really didn't want to give up my life. I'd finally gotten where I wanted to be. It was a big deal. I finally said, "Lord, whatever you have. You said you want it all. I'll give you all, whatever it takes." Then he said, "I'll tell you what I have for you when you're ready." Then He made me wait several years while He trained me and gave me humility because He knew this day was coming. He knew the amount of enemies I would have, the amount of hate mail, letters threatening my life I would get, all that stuff, because I'm exercising a daring faith.

What does Jesus say at the end of the Beatitudes? He says, "Blessed are you when people persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you. Rejoice because great is your reward in Heaven." Well, I'm seeing both of those, that there are lots of people who hate me for this message. God's blessings have been unbelievable. The power, the prayer, the joy in my marriage, my godly kids... I see His blessings all over because it came to that moment of saying, "Ken, are you going to have your white funeral? You're going to give up all of your rights to yourself or not. It's your choice. I love you either way. One way is the narrow road to great blessing and joy, and one road is the wide road that so many people in the church are on that doesn't lead to those things."

So many people in the church, going, "How come I don't have power? How come I don't do miracles? How come I don't have the joy in my life?" Because you got to get to that point of saying, "I'll give up everything." That was the thing that God put me on my knees and said, "Are you going to do that, Ken? Are you not? Here's your moment of choice. Which way is it going to be?"

Dr. Tim Clinton:

I wonder if God's speaking to you. Maybe you're driving a truck down the middle of the highway somewhere. Could be you're at home, taking care of your kids, but you're hearing that voice of the Lord. You feel that nudge in your spirit, and God's saying it's time. Something has to happen.

You're listening to Family Talk, a division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host. Our special guest, Ken Harrison. He's the CEO of Promise Keepers. Brand new book out called *A Daring Faith in a Cowardly World: Live a Life Without Waste, Regret, or Anything Unfinished*. You say in the book, "We've taught a weak and feckless Jesus who runs a weak and feckless religion." Ken, you said we've been lied to. What do you mean by that?

Ken Harrison:

Let's take the visual of Jesus, for one. People might ask, why I am saying this, and I'll tie it together here. Jesus was a stone mason. The Romans came into Israel, and they cut down all their trees. The great trees we see about in the Old Testament, they were gone. If you were a carpenter, you worked with rocks. You would've, all day long, moved heavy rocks, twisted them around, chiseled them.

In other words, Jesus was a buffed-out man. He was a strong, strong man with big thick, strong hands. Then He has these disciples. The top four of them are all fishermen. Fishermen, they were hauling up heavy nets, day and night, over and over again. They were strong, big backs, big shoulders.

Jesus is this strong guy with a bunch of really strong disciples walking around behind Him. He's the Son of God. Why does that matter? Because it changes the visual in our head. Satan has purposely made us see a frail little Jesus that's about to fall apart at any moment. He looks like a 60s heroin addict. No. Jesus actually says, "No one takes my life from me. I give it away." You look at Jesus going through the temple. You look at how many times the pharisees tried to grab Him, and He just throws them off and walks away.

That strong Jesus gives us a visual. Isn't it so much more beautiful now when we see Him with the prostitute, wiping His feet with her hair and her tears? This big strong man, the love He puts on the people... That Jesus loves you. The Jesus we now see in Revelation 1, John, who knew Him better than anybody has ever known Him on earth. Jesus comes down. When John sees Jesus in His resurrected body, he falls on his faces as one dead.

Jesus has to pick him up. Why? Because He's so terrifyingly powerful. That's who Jesus is. That's the Jesus who says, "I love you no matter what you've done. My grace will cover your sins." That gives us a whole different visual to our faith.

That's the Jesus who says, "Tim, will you give me all? I love you either way. You have my unmerited acceptance, no matter what, because of my grace. However, you don't have my unmerited approval. Will you give all to serve me? If you do, not only am I merciful, but I'm also just. If you do, I have some incredible rewards to give you in this life and for eternity, if you'll follow me."

Dr. Tim Clinton: Ken, in your book, you press in a little bit, looking at some of history and those who had to stand strong in the times of challenge. You tell the story of Hugh Latimer, and Nicholas Ridley, and Thomas Cranmer, three British Christian Reformers. What was it? In 1555, Bloody Mary, the Catholic queen had... Was it Latimer and Ridley, burned at the stake? Ken, tell us a little bit, why you put that in the book and what it meant to you.

Ken Harrison: In the book... Every chapter starts with a story, and then it ends with the rest of the story where I tie it together. Mostly, I try to use every man's stories, but there's a couple like these guys that are unbelievable.

The story of Thomas Cranmer is he watches the other two guys burn at the stake, and it was brutal. One of the guys actually wouldn't burn. He was crying for someone to put drier wood under him, so he'd burn faster because he was in so much pain. It was a horrid thing.

Cranmer sees this and runs around recanting everything he wrote because he doesn't want to get burned at the stake. He was forced to watch. Finally, they bring him into Oxford, and they put him up on a stage where he's going to fully recant everything he's written, but God got ahold of him.

When Cranmer gets up there, he gets filled with the Holy Spirit, and he actually stands solo fide, faith alone, grace alone. They rip him off the pulpit, and they rip him out where they've already got the fire burning to threaten him, to burn him at the stake.

He walks up, and he puts his right hand to the fire. He stands there till it burns off. Then he turns to the crowd. He says, "I wanted the hand that betrayed my Lord to burn first." Then he stands up there, and he burns to death.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Wow.

Ken Harrison: That's the kind of faith. Well, you and I will ask ourselves, do I have what it takes? That's the Holy Spirit. None of us have what it takes to be that person, but we have what it takes to empty ourselves out of ourselves, to be filled with the Lord so that when the moment of testing comes, whether it's being burned

at the stake or whether it's just standing up for Christ in a place of business, even though it might cost us a little bit, that's when we respond in the right way.

God says, "I am just." In the book, I go into specifics about, what are the rewards? What are the promises? I'll tell you. A friend of ours who's a big theologian who loves to argue... He is usually right. He actually said to me, "I read your book, and I wanted to hate it. I actually wanted to argue it. I went in with your book, and I had a pen ready to argue with it."

He said, "When I got done, it completely changed my theology." He goes, "Dude, you don't give any opinions. It's all Scripture because now I can't unsee it. Everywhere I look, it's rewards. It's rewards. It's being judged for what we do."

Jesus says in Revelation 22:12, "Behold, I'm coming quickly, and my reward is with me to give to everyone according to what he has done." Well, He's not talking about salvation. He's talking about what we did after our salvation. What's our reward going to be?

Dr. Tim Clinton: Ken, give us a closing word on what being courageous really means to you in a cowardly world.

Ken Harrison: Courage comes from... We all have fear, but what do we do despite that fear? Will we obey God in the fear, or will we give up? That is the whole definition between being a coward or being a hero. What do you do with your fear?

Dr. Tim Clinton: Our special guest, again, today has been Ken Harrison. He's the CEO of Promise Keepers, brand new book, *A Daring Faith in a Cowardly World: Live a Life Without Waste, Regret, or Anything Unfinished*. Ken, delightful conversation. Can't wait for tomorrow. Thank you for joining us.

Ken Harrison: Thanks, man.

Roger Marsh: I'm Roger Marsh. You just heard part one of Dr. Tim Clinton's conversation with Ken Harrison on the topic of Ken's new book, *A Daring Faith in a Cowardly World*. Make sure you join us again tomorrow as they'll continue that conversation and Ken will give some more encouraging advice about how we can be courageous men and women of God.

If you missed any part of today's broadcast, be sure to visit drjamesdobson.org/familytalk, and you can listen to it in its entirety right there. That's drJamesdobson.org/familytalk. Or, give us a call at (877)732-6825. Well, we're all out of time for today's edition of Family Talk. Please join us again next time. Until then, keep fighting the good fight.

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

