



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Missing Messiah

Guest(s): Mark E. Moore

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- Dr. James 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: If Jesus walked into the room right now, would you actually recognize Him? What if your Jesus is shaped more by the culture than by what we read in the words of Scripture? These are the questions that our guest today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk have posed in a brand-new book. It's called *The Missing Messiah: The Jesus We Can No Longer Ignore*. It's a fascinating read that makes you reflect on who Jesus really is, not only in the world, but also in your life. Welcome to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh, and delighted to welcome for this segment Mark Moore to the program today. Mark serves as teaching pastor of Christ Church in the Valley in Phoenix. He previously spent more than two decades as New Testament professor at Ozark Christian College, and his life's passion is to make Scripture accessible and relevant to people who are trying to make sense of Christianity, and that seems to be quite the endeavor these days for so many people. Mark teamed up with fellow pastor Kyle Idleman to write this new book, *The Missing Messiah*, and I'm really looking forward to diving into the subject a little bit more. So, Mark Moore, welcome to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. It's good to have you on the program, especially discussing this important topic today.
- Mark Moore: Thanks, Roger. Actually, I did not hardly recognize myself. You made me sound so good. Thank you.
- Roger Marsh: Well, Scripture says, let another man praise you, so I'm here to be your guy. Let's talk about this whole idea. I mean, cultural Jesus versus the Jesus that we know, who is our Lord and Savior and Redeemer of all mankind. We have a big problem I see in the church right now where there are a lot of people who are saying, Lord, Lord, and professing faith in Jesus Christ, but they really don't know. I mean, if Jesus did walk into the room, they wouldn't recognize it. What was the heartbeat when you and Kyle Idleman sat down and said, this is a book that needs to be written right now?
- Mark Moore: Yeah, it actually started before I even talked to Kyle about it. A friend of mine came in and introduced two ideas. One was kind of familiar to me. The other was brand new. So a familiar idea, John 17:3. Jesus defines eternal life as

knowing God the Father and the Messiah he sent. Okay, so eternal life, and most Christians don't feel this. Like, I didn't feel it this morning. Eternal life is not what you get when you get to Heaven. It's what you get when you get Jesus. It's here, it's now. So I think that's part of the problem that what we're missing is eternal life today, here, now, when it's at our fingertips. The other thing, Roger, that he introduced me to, and this blew my mind, he said, Christ and Messiah are not the same thing. And I said, well, excuse me, but they are. I mean, I've done my homework in the Hebrew and Greek, and Mashiach in Hebrew means the anointed one, and Christos in Greek means the anointed one. He said, yes, in the dictionary, they're the same, but they're not the same on the street. And so many people talk about Jesus Christ as if it's His last name. We've lost the meaning of Messiah, and I love how you introduced it. Many people say, Lord, Lord, but they don't really mean it. So what we've lost is a Lord, a King, a Messiah, and all we are left with is a Savior. Now, that's not enough to get us to Heaven. It may not be enough to make us flourish in our days.

Roger Marsh:

Boy, that's a powerful thought when you think about the number of people who have knowledge of Jesus. I mean, it's one of those things where if you've ever been, and I'm sure you've had these situations come up in your world as well, where you're around, you're in an event, and there's someone who is of note, who is going to be the speaker there, or maybe there's an autograph signing, whatever it is. And you hear people who are waiting to be around this person and they're talking about this person. They know all about all the movies he's been in, all the songs he's recorded, this, that, and the other thing. And then that person walks in the room and you watch that same person who knew everything about this person turn and look and kind of become gobsmacked like, uh, what do I say? Because then you begin to realize, yeah, you talk about them, but you don't really know them. Have we kind of created, I'll draw on Kyle's writing a little bit. Have we kind of created a fan culture in the church where we don't, we wouldn't recognize the Messiah if He walked in the room simply because we're so busy being fans of His?

Mark Moore:

I think that's a significant part of it. And it's actually, it's kind of worse than that. We haven't just made him fans. Again, Kyle introduced the Build-A-Bear concept in chapter one. We have made a Jesus, and a part of this I'm not even critical of because we need to be able to relate to Him, but we've made a Jesus that looks a lot like the physician we need to heal our boo-boos rather than the Lord we need to send us out to our actual significance and our calling. I think the real problem is not merely the fan culture, but also, we have made a Jesus in our own image and then worshiped that instead of Him.

Roger Marsh:

Mark Moore is my guest today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. We're discussing his brand-new book called *The Missing Messiah: The Jesus We Can No Longer Ignore*. And we have a link for the book up at drjamesdobson.org. I love the way you described it. You actually have a chapter in the book called "Christ Is Not Jesus' Last Name." I've heard that. There was one famous comedian who had a routine where he said, you know, for the longest time, I thought my brother's last name was, and he, you know, used the Lord's name in vain. But

anecdotally here in the culture, though, as Christians, we do need to really search for the actual Messiah, not the Sunday school Jesus or the Palm Sunday and Easter and Christmas Jesus that's shown up in all the pageants. Talk about what that search involves. I mean, a lot of times people would say, you know, I'm looking for Jesus, but wait, I already found Him. So why do I need to keep looking? Talk about how we make that transition from you know, the guy who knows all about Jesus to actually start searching for the true Messiah?

Mark Moore:

Well, hopefully this book is kind of an open door to begin the journey. That's how you start is by actually looking at who the Messiah was. And for all the Bible nerds out there, like you are my people. We put in some appendices that have all the prophecies about what Messiah would be and all of the, not just the prophecies in the Bible, but the expectations from Jewish culture as well. So there's a lot of like background Bible nerd stuff to help us see what Jesus was really up to. And if I were to simplify this, like cookies down on the bottom shelf, I think there's three things that we're missing today because we're missing the Lordship of Jesus. Yes, He's our savior. We get it. We're going to Heaven. Good. But we're missing Him as a living Lord, and that manifests in three ways. One is when we think about salvation, we think about a distant future, going to Heaven someday, and we don't think about a partnership and an obedience to Jesus today. That's the problem because we're robbing ourselves of great joy and significance today. Second problem I see is that sin, if Jesus is your Savior and not your Lord, sin becomes what He saved me from. It's very personal and very individualistic.

But if you read the prophets, and particularly the messianic prophecies, sin was about social injustices, widows and orphans and foreigners and immigrants. And if we allow ourselves to miss the corporate nature of sin because we're focused on Jesus saving me, we will go to church and not go into the world and make a difference. And the last thing is we have made Jesus my Savior. A Savior is for me and not our King. And when we individualize our faith, we screw everything up in the church. I'll just give one example, maybe two. When you read the Bible, do you read it individually or corporately? Well, every book of the Bible was intended to be a corporate document publicly interpreted. Here's another one. In every church I've been to, the most individualistic time is communion. And yet that was intended to be communal. So living life alone and doing faith alone has robbed us of the power of the gifts of the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit, and the fellowship of believers. That's a problem.

Roger Marsh:

Boy, it certainly is. And as we talk about the customization, you know, I've heard guys like George Barna refer to what we have in the culture right now as this kind of syncretistic approach. You know, Jesus is one of many options at the buffet table and you get a little of Him and a little Buddha and you put it all together and that's kind of what spirituality looks like to a lot of people. But you guys break it down a little bit further than that. I love your talking about...Kyle describes it as a Build-A-Bear mentality or a Starbucks order or something like that. One of the quotes in the book, *The Missing Messiah*, even, "we select the soft hands that heal in comfort, but we don't look at the calloused hands of a

carpenter who made tables and then flip them over.” You know, I mean, that's something that we have to reconcile as believers. And I think about right now in the culture, there are a lot of people who are in the public eye who are professing faith in Christ, which is wonderful and hopefully living it out, which is even better. But then you get into an election year and you see a politician saying, hey, you know, this is what I think Jesus is. And one of your quotes from the book, *The Missing Messiah*, “we construct a partisan Jesus who conveniently agrees with our political platform.” Talk about why we should be looking at that and saying, boy, if Jesus agrees with all my political points, then maybe I've created a Messiah that I like rather than knowing the Messiah who He really is.

Mark Moore:

Yeah, Roger, you have nailed one of the most obvious pain points of a Jesus that we make in our own image. This political divide, let me tell you why it's an issue for me. The single most provocative statement Jesus ever made was, love your enemies, period. And he's not just talking about Democrats loving Republicans or vice versa. He's talking about Jews loving Romans that were invading. They were occupying their country. It was a poignant reality. And so if we can't even start with love your enemy or go into all the world and make disciples, how are we going to be true disciples of Jesus? This divide, and the reason it concerns me at an even more visceral level is... There's a wonderful book called *The Righteous Mind*, not written by a Christian, but it identifies the five ways we make decisions. This is true of all humanity of all time. Of those ways we make decisions, those on the conservative right of every culture and time tend to give a balanced evaluation to all five. Those on the kind of liberal left, again, of all culture of all time, tend to prioritize freedom and mercy. So what happens is if we don't understand what the other is doing, we will not just miss good moral opportunities, we will miss the heart of Jesus. And so by dividing, our political divide is actually truncating our full experience with Jesus. And that to me is the most devastating thought. I want all of Jesus, even if that requires all of me.

Roger Marsh:

Well, even and especially since it does. Mark Moore is my guest today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. *The Missing Messiah* is the new book. It's up at drjamesdobson.org. You know, one of the things that I've been, I grew up in the church. My dad was a choir director. I mean, I just, we were there every Sunday. We were pan-denominational, wherever we were called, we went. So I'm not Baptist or Lutheran or Presbyterian or anything like that. Whoever's preaching sin and salvation and law and gospel, we're right there. But I was very painfully aware of the fact that there were a lot of people who used to sing in the choir who were okay musicians and some people who were really gifted. But then I also, as I got older, began to realize there were a lot of folks who were there because they liked to sing and not necessarily because they loved the Lord. And it got me thinking, I wonder how many of us look at the church and the congregations on the whole. And what is influencing the modern life in terms of who Jesus is, who the Christ is, who the Messiah is, is really more not the culture shaping us, but what's happening inside the walls of the church. You have a quote in your book where you talk about mastering the art of getting people ready for Heaven, but neglecting the invitation to bring heaven to earth.

And you've been kind of talking about that. Expand upon that, if you will, how that miscommunication has really infiltrated and influenced modern church life.

Mark Moore: Well, you touched on something, Roger, that is close to all of us. We want a Jesus that's comfortable for us. And you're not going to get away from that because humans are humans and we're innately selfish and we innately have needs. And God actually designed us to have those needs fulfilled. And I want to be careful here because you say people came to sing because they like to sing, not because they love the Lord. It can actually be a very positive thing that the desires of your heart will draw you into good behavior. So the desire to sing can draw you into good behavior. What you're observing, though, is like this is center lane of the book. I want to give all our listeners a simple litmus test to determine whether you are missing the Messiah. Okay, here it is. Go to your prayer life and just think through your prayer closet or your prayer list. How many of the prayers would fall, and I'm going to give you two categories. How many of your prayers fall into the category of, Lord, this is what I want from you, and how many fall into the category of, Lord, what do you need from me?

Roger Marsh: Wow.

Mark Moore: It's a simple test, right? And personally. I'm still on the other side, even though I wrote the book. I'm still working towards making Jesus a Messiah. But here's why I think this is really crucial. And I'm going to quote a secular psychologist. Jordan Peterson has identified this in his own clientele as a psychotherapist. When someone is having mental health issues, they're having depressive issues or whatever issues. He says the most important thing for you to do is become useful to someone else. Our happiness is dependent on being useful to other people. So when we talk about making Jesus Lord, that's not just good theology, it's good psychotherapy. And when our prayers say, Lord, what do You need from me? He can then engage us in the kingdom of God as part of His armory to expand the gospel around the world. And at the same time, not only does Jesus advance and lost are found, but I find meaning and purpose. So making Jesus Lord is actually more important to your mental and spiritual health than making Him your savior.

Roger Marsh: Boy, that is such a powerful statement that immediately took me back. Personally, I'm sure a lot of our listeners are processing that. My son, who's the youngest of three in his family growing up, he had two older sisters, was the last one. If there's a tough way to find a solution, Jake will find it. The most difficult way, you know, come up with a bloody nose and say, when did that wall get here? That's the question, okay? So, but when he got his first job, his sisters had gone to work, you know restaurants and clothing stores and stuff like that when they were in high school, he was just really hesitant to get into it. And we were all kind of encouraging him to do it. He finally got a job at a restaurant as a food runner. You know, he was the guy when the order was up, big party of 10 people or whatever, put it all on the tray, take it out, get the orders right, that type of stuff. So I texted him after his first day of work. I said, how did it go today? And he wrote back these words. He said, dad, it felt so nice to be useful.

Mark Moore: Wow.

Roger Marsh: I thought, what? I mean, I thought, oh my goodness. I mean, he got it right away. But as you were describing that whole thing, you see the benefit of it. As Christians, we are designed to serve others. And I think we see Jesus a lot more clearly when we are. Now, that's not to say, and I know you're not saying this in this book, *The Missing Messiah*, that, well, if you just go out and put in a good word for God today and do something good for the kingdom, then that means you can see the Messiah. But it really does help transfix us. I mean, it makes us more like him every time we are doing things that are useful for the kingdom in that second category of prayer.

Mark Moore: Yeah, and I love what you said about that. And let's actually take that one step further, because the greatest moral danger of our day, my opinion, is individualism. I mean, yes, there are certain sins that we can talk about, but our culture has been driving us for over 200 years into radical individualism. That isolation was punctuated in COVID with an 800% increase of mental health issues because we were isolated. And this is the real wow is if you look at the stats, they investigated, the Barna Research Group investigated every category, religious, non-religious, rich, poor, black, white, Hispanic, Asian. The only group whose mental health improved during COVID was those that stayed faithful to the local body of a religious organization.

Roger Marsh: Interesting.

Mark Moore: And what's happening is with the algorithms that are driving everything from social media to AI, they are catering to us. So we have an avalanche of, how do we even say it? The zeitgeist. It's in the air. We have an avalanche of impulses telling us it's about you. It's about your needs. It's about your customization. If we don't attend to the body of Christ. The value of this book is in knowing Jesus for sure. But the difference between a savior and a king is a savior is for you. A king is for a nation. And in this case, an international nation of believers in Yahweh, the Messiah. When you're not connected to a group of people, sociologists call it a symbiotic community where I need you and you need me. And less and less people are. You are endangering not just your mental health, but your physical health. What we know is that people who are disengaged from communities, they're isolated, have, I believe it is a 24% higher rate of heart attacks, a 30% higher rate of strokes, a 32% higher rate of type 2 diabetes, this is scary, a 40% higher rate of dementia. Making Jesus Messiah and King is not just about getting to Heaven. It is about living the robust life to the full here and now. So I don't want to take us away from the biblical argument, but the biblical argument and the psychosocial argument turn out to be the same benefit.

Roger Marsh: Powerful. Powerful insights from Mark Moore today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk as we're talking about *The Missing Messiah: The Jesus We Can No Longer Ignore*. The book is up at drjamesdobson.org. We are talking to parents and grandparents in particular who are wringing their hands. You should see the emails and hear some of the phone calls we get from not only parents, but

grandparents too, who are watching their young ones and saying, I don't understand. I don't understand what's happening here. I mean, it's a whole different vibe. It's a whole different way of thinking. Even the ones who are "good church-going Christian kids," it doesn't make any sense. And I was reading the chapter in your book called "When Jesus Got Weird." And all of a sudden, I love that acrostic, by the way. Can you walk us through that? We've got Western, Education, Industrialization, Riches, and Democracy. It really does help us understand why sometimes we can kind of culturalize our Christianity and then people would have really passionate disagreements about who Messiah really is.

Mark Moore:

Yeah. Those are the things that have marked us in the Western world. And we attain our personal values from those things. So by Western, we mean in the Eastern world, people are more driven by shame than by guilt. The Western world is more guilt than shame. The difference is guilt is when I cross a line and it's individualistic. Don't smoke or don't get drunk or don't sleep around. Guilt is when you don't live up to a line. You don't meet your father's expectations. And it's not sin per se. It's like it's the community orientation. In the West, we're guilt-oriented, not shame-oriented. And obviously with education, we are prioritizing education, but look what's happening at the university system. It is priced, medical prices and education prices have skyrocketed well beyond virtually any other element that we're paying for: food, gas, homes. And so it's kind of been priced out of our expectation. And yet, if you don't have a college degree, you are endangering your future economic status. All of that's in the air. It's in the water. It's what we breathe. And we have capitulated to the values of weird culture rather than biblical culture of community, of service, of sacrifice, of humility. If you obtain your values from the WEIRD Western system rather than the biblical values. I mean, God knew what you needed and He designed a culture to feed you, not just for your eternal life, but for life here and now. So again, knowing Messiah is part of the, it's the only solution to every problem that we're facing. You mentioned politics. How are we going to overcome political divide? If you don't have a singular Lord, you and the other are devoted to, you have no reason to be united. If you're talking about social media and how it's overwhelming our kids. Social media purposely arranged their algorithms with the identical algorithms of a slot machine. It's designed to be addictive. How are we going to overcome that? By being addicted to something other than our own algorithms. Anyway, I'm rambling on but you can feel my passion in this. Find people that together you worship Jesus Christ because worshiping alone will isolate you and you'll only have Jesus as a savior. He calls you to be His Lord.

Roger Marsh:

Great words of wisdom from Mark Moore today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Again, the book, and I'll give you the full title this time because I think it's so very, very important to keep this in mind as you are looking to growing deeper in your faith and your walk with the Lord. It's called *The Missing Messiah: The Jesus We Can No Longer Ignore*, written by Mark Moore and Kyle Idleman, and it's up at drjamesdobson.org. Mark, great to get to know you.

Thank you so much for the work and your passion in this area as well. We appreciate you being with us today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Mark Moore: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Well, we were never meant to follow Jesus alone. Not by ourselves anyway. God has given us the church as a place to worship, to serve, and to build the kind of relationships that help us grow deeper in our faith. And as you've been listening to today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, hope you appreciated and enjoyed my conversation with my guest pastor and author Mark Moore. He and Kyle Idleman have written a brand-new book called *The Missing Messiah: The Jesus We Can No Longer Ignore*. It's a book that encourages Christians to take a fresh look at who Jesus really is, and what it means to follow Him as Messiah. For more information about the book, and if you'd like to revisit today's program again, you can go to drjamesdobson.org or jdfi.org. They are one in the same.

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Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of all of us here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thanks so much for listening today. Be sure to tune in again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

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