



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Will the Church Decide America's Future on Election Day?

Guest(s): Eric Metaxas

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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: Well, welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh, and we are less than a week away from election decision day 2024, and how exciting it is to think about how the future of America hangs in the balance and how will we, as Christians, vote?

Well, on today's edition of Family Talk, you're going to hear a powerful presentation given by author Eric Metaxas. He's the author of the book, *Letter to the American Church, Bonhoeffer*, and a variety of others. He's also had a movie made about his *Letter to the American Church* book, and a couple of weeks ago at the gathering event here in Colorado Springs, Eric gave a powerful presentation asking the question, will the Church decide America's future on Election Day? We're going to hear an excerpt from that conversation in just a moment.

First though, I want to remind you, if you have not yet voted, and you are looking for resources to help you make the best biblical decision and to vote your values, I encourage you to go to drjamesdobson.org/countdowntodecision2024. You'll see interviews we've done with authors like Eric Metaxas, Riley Gaines, Kirk Cameron, and more. In addition, you'll also find information about Dr. Owen Strachan's new e-book called *Voting and the Church: Why Christians Engage The Public Square*. Dr. Strand, of course, is the Senior Director of the new Dobson Culture Center. You can get that free e-book by going to drjamesdobson.org/engage for the free e-book called *Voting and the Church: Why Christians Engage The Public Square*.

And now let's get into the opening of Eric Metaxas's powerful presentation, Will the Church decide America's Future on Election Day? Coming up right now, here on Family Talk.

Eric Metaxas: Let me get serious for a minute or two. So the Bonhoeffer story, what is the Bonhoeffer story about? If somebody asks me, if I meet somebody or an Uber driver, I say, "It's a story about a German pastor who got involved in the plot to

kill Hitler." Right? That's one version. But when I'm speaking to Christians, I say, "It's about a man who tried to get the Church to be the Church, who tried to get the Church of Jesus Christ to behave as though they believed in Jesus and loved him and wanted to serve him and were willing to stand against evil because they knew that he was calling them to do that."

Like most prophets, Bonhoeffer failed, right? At the time people thought, "Oh, he's kind of a hothead. We don't want to be too political." Well, I think there's a time for the Church to get political, and it's not because we make an idol of politics. Being political is not the same as making an idol of politics any more than loving your wife and your kids is making an idol of your family, right?

Many, many pastors of huge churches that just a few years ago I would've admired, who seem to think that being politically active or caring about America or loving America means you don't love Jesus. That's not just a lie, folks. It's a lie from the pit of hell designed to silence the people of God in this season, and I want to be clear that this is exactly what happened with Bonhoeffer and the German Church. It's exactly the same thing, and that's why it's all the more horrifying to see it happening in America.

I want to be clear. I don't think it's the Lord's will that we lose America. I talk about religious idols. What's the most demonic thing, right? Jesus didn't rail against Hellenistic philosophy or against paganism, he railed against the religious apart from God. That's the most demonic thing, right? If you're Satan, the most evil thing you do is get embedded with the most religious people, not the irreligious, but with the most religious. They knew the Bible backwards and forwards. How many American Christians know the Bible backwards and forwards? So they go to all these Bible studies, and they don't discern the will of God. They don't do the will of God. To know the Bible or to study the Bible and not live the Bible, it would be better if you didn't read the Bible. It would be better if you didn't read it and study it than to read it and study it and not do what it says and live to glorify the one about whom it speaks.

But that happened when Jesus came here. Imagine that the most religious people of the day who knew the Bible backwards and forwards, when God sends his son, they murder him. I mean, if you were writing a story, could you make that up? What a story. The most religious people, and they believe that they're going the extra mile in behaving in ways to please that God, and when He sends His son, they murder Him. That is demonic religion. That's a religion apart from the God of the Bible.

And so I think that's always the worst temptation, for religious people to be religious and to neglect the one thing God asks of them, to recognize Him, to recognize His voice, to know Him, to obey Him.

So Bonhoeffer, in the thirties in Germany, sees the rise of the Nazis, he sees this evil rising, and he knows that the Church has the power in that culture to stand against that evil, and so he does everything he can to get the Church to

understand, "Now, now, now you must stand, Church. You must link arms against this evil. You must recognize it for what it is." But most in the German Church, certainly not all, but most said, "No, thank you. We just want to do church. We just want to have a nice church service. We just want to preach the gospel." That's not what the Lord wanted. That's what Satan wanted. Think about that.

Satan is delighted if you just preach the gospel when the Lord wants you to do more than just preach the gospel. The Lord wants you to disciple your people, not just preach the gospel, not just worry about how many people do we have here. To disciple an army of spiritual warriors dedicated to serving the Lord, that's what the Lord wants. The enemy just wants us to do church. So you had many German pastors who had the opportunity to stand against the satanic evil of the Nazis, and they said, "No, thank you. We don't want any trouble. We don't want the Gestapo or the FBI to kick down our doors or the FBI." Did I mention that?

Can you imagine that in America we wouldn't even be able to crack that as a joke? The weaponized government and big government always sees people of faith as the number one enemy. Always. We are the threat to big government because when the state says, "The state is God." We say, "No. God is God." That's always going to be the case, and that was the case in Nazi Germany. The Nazis weren't exactly going to advertise that they were anti-God, much better if they could keep the Church sleeping. Just keep sleeping a little bit, keep sleeping a little bit. We don't want to wake you up. We want you to keep sleeping.

I think of the image, I may have mentioned this last year, the image of Gulliver being tied down by the Lilliputians, right? He's sleeping, and if he wakes up at any moment, he can rip up the stakes and crush the Lilliputians, but if he keeps sleeping, and they keep, they're tying him down with dental floss or twine or whatever it is, but if he keeps sleeping, at some point it's over, he wakes up, and he can't move. That is what Satan wants the church to do. Just keep sleeping a few more minutes, a few more minutes.

The Nazis did this effectively. They managed to keep enough in the Church sleeping, enough in the Church, distracted, enough in the Church saying, "Oh, we don't want to be political. We don't want to stick our necks out. Let those hotheads stick their necks, let them take the guff, let them take the heat. We just want to do church." The Nazis knew that they would continue to do things and continue to do things, and at some point if the Church didn't wake up as Bonhoeffer was trying to exhort them to do, that at some point it's over. And that was basically by 1934, Hitler takes power in early '33, and by 1934 it was over.

So Bonhoeffer was trying very hard. There's a window where if the Church will stand, if the Church will stand, but most in the Church, they couldn't understand what was at stake. And I think imagine if you'd been able to show them a film in

1933 or '34 of what was going to happen 10 years in the future. What happened? The death camps, the systematic murder of millions and millions of innocents. They probably wouldn't have believed it. Who could believe that a civilized culture, a Christian nation, could ever do such a thing? It's one thing to drop bombs, but systematic murder of millions of innocents, that can never happen, and it never could happen until it actually happens, and it happened because of the complicity of the Church. Just as evil today is happening because of the complicity of the Church.

And some of you go to churches with a pastor is not in this war against evil, and you tithe God's money to that ministry, and I'm here to tell you that that's wrong. I'm here to tell you that when the Germans did it, it's easy for us to judge them, but we can look at the results of what they did. If you'd gone to these churches in '34, in '33 and '34 and said to these men of God, because these are not devil worshipers, they were not big Nazis. They were men of God who were complicit, who were persuaded that Romans 13, "Don't rock the boat, just preach the gospel. Just do church. We have a nice church here." If you could convince them and say, "Listen, look, what's going to happen. If you do not stand up, brothers and sisters in Christ, if you don't discern now what is at stake, look what's going to happen." We know it happened. It actually happened, but we'd like to think that well, maybe that happened in Germany that couldn't happen here.

I'm here to promise you, to promise you, that if not enough Christians vote in this election, you're going to be very sorry. You're going to say, "Oh, I didn't know." Except now you know. Folks, the Lord cares about our souls. It's not like the Lord doesn't care. He warns us. He warns us. He warns us. Why does He warn us? Because at some point it's too late. It's over.

When Jesus cursed the fig tree, is that the Jesus that you know? He cursed the fig tree. He didn't say, "Well, there's grace for the fig tree." He cursed it, and it withered and died because it did not bear fruit. The Church of Jesus Christ that is today not bearing fruit, those churches that are not bearing fruit, I believe they're already cursed. I believe that as they try to cling to the people that are going, that those people are more and more thinking, it's irrelevant. I mean, and not to say about evangelism. Imagine non-believers out there seeing the world going crazy, wondering, "Do Christians believe anything? Are they going to stand up against this madness of transgender madness that men can become women?" I mean everybody in America knows men can't become women, and women can't become. Everybody knows that you don't need to be a born again believer to know that.

But they're wondering, "I wonder if those big Christians are going to talk about that because that's in their Bible." They may not have anything to back it up except what they know, common sense, but our Bible says we're made in God's image, male and female. Will we stand against that? Will we stand boldly against that? Will we stand against government that is trying to impose a satanic agenda on our children? Will we stand? There are many pastors in this

country that won't stand against it, that refuse to stand against it, and the most horrible thing is they have religious reasons for not standing against it. It's pietism.

There are a lot of Christians that they're almost glad to say, "We're under judgment. It's all going to burn." They're kind of happy to see that. Well, listen, if that's the Lord's, well, we praise the Lord in all circumstances? But what if the Lord is calling us to stand and fight just as He had called the German Church to stand and fight, and they said, "No, thank you." There were about 18,000 German pastors at that time, Lutheran pastors. By 1935, only 3000 were standing strongly against the Nazis, willing to go to concentration camp, willing to suffer just as actual Christians have been for 2000 years, willing to die. How many Christians have been martyred? How many Christians have been persecuted? The German Church had become soft. They didn't want to be persecuted, and they said, "We're not going to bother." 3000 of the 18,000 were standing strong.

Now, on the other end of the spectrum, you had 3000 that were totally pro-Hitler, but the most horrible thing is the 12,000 in the middle who seemed to think even though they're not really pro-Hitler, they're not for this, they're not for that, they didn't feel the need to speak up. They didn't feel the need to risk persecution. Folks, I'm just here to tell you, that's not the Church of Jesus Christ. I don't know what God does with those people or with the pastors. I don't know.

I hope the Lord has mercy, but I cannot guarantee it because the Scripture says, "Faith without works is dead." So if you claim to have faith, but you don't behave like you have faith, if you claim to believe Jesus defeated death on the cross, but you don't act as though he defeated death, then the Lord knows you don't believe he defeated death. And if you don't believe he defeated death, you have no faith, and you're not saved. That should be chilling to us. It should have been chilling to the German Church, but they were so suffused with the idea of grace and faith on the Lutheran model that they had forgotten the cost of actual faith, of actual grace.

Bonhoeffer wrote a book called *The Cost of Discipleship*. He said, "Yeah, it is about grace. Yes, it is about faith, but do you know what grace is? Do you know what faith is? If you know what faith is and grace is, you will live your whole life to obey God, to please God who did that for you. You'll live utterly differently." But they had become very comfortable, and I'm afraid that that's the state of many, many churches today. We've heard names thrown out here. There are many pastors who have all kinds of religious reasons not talk about this. And I'm just here, since I don't have a lot of time, I could just cut to the chase, the reasons are garbage. They're theological garbage. They don't have a leg to stand on. That's not the will of God.

I believe the Lord is calling us to stand and to fight. We have election coming up, and I say in the new book, *Religionless Christianity*, I say really bluntly, this is the third existential crisis of our history. The first was the Revolution, the second

was the Civil War. We are now in the third existential crisis of our history. If we lose, we lose everything. We lose everything. This is not the Spanish-American War. It's not the Korean War. It's not the Vietnam War. This is an existential crisis where we will lose America, and I would like to say to the pastors who are not preaching to their congregations and making it clear that Patriots have bled and died so that you could vote. It's like George Washington. If you said to George Washington in 1776, some of you know the history, "How's it going, George?" His answer would be, "It's going very, very poorly indeed, very poorly. But if Providence be with us in this cause of liberty, we will fight on, and we will pray and fight, and the Lord will determine our future."

But to not fight, to read the tea leaves and fatalistically say, "It's not looking good, let's go home." That's not the voice of God. It was the Lord's will this nation would come into being for His purposes. This is not some jingoistic rant. This is for God's purposes, for the gospel to be spread throughout the world, for every good thing for the Lord's purposes that this nation would come into being. But in Washington's day, there were many people who sat on their hands who were not willing to fight. Many of you know, not many fought in the revolution, and plenty of people were perfectly willing to sit on their hands to see which way the wind was going to blow. And if a few patriots die, and we win, great. We get a free country and self-government. That's nice, but we're not going to do anything about it. And if it goes the other way, they won't come after us. We didn't do anything. That's shameful. But that happened. That happens in history.

And it's happening now. You get many people, they're just not willing to stick their necks out, many pastors, and again, I know some of you tithe God's money to those pastors, and I say this to you because God has given you the power to influence these pastors, and when people all across the country have been talking about this, people say, "What can I do? What can I do?" Well, I honestly say, "For the sake of your own soul, get out of that church. Do not continue giving to a church that is not in the war that God has called us to be in."

We are not to make an idol of politics. We're not to make an idol of America. We're not to make an idol of Donald Trump, but we're going to have the discernment of our faith calling us to stand for God's purposes in history. And the German Church failed to discern that. And do you understand? They never recovered. How many years ago did that happen? They never recovered. Germany never recovered from that profoundly shameful moment. The German Church certainly never recovered from that moment, and we will never recover if we don't stand now.

We are in a grave, grave place now in the Church. Now, I have enough hope that there are enough believers and enough non-believers who understand what is at stake. What we've seen in the last four years is so staggering, it doesn't seem conceivable that it could be close, but in part, because of the failure of the Church, it's close. In part because millions of Christians won't vote, it's a very, very sobering thing because the Lord commands us to love our neighbor. And if you have the ability to vote to affect the fate of a nation, and you say, "Well, I'm

not going to vote." God's going to judge that. I'm here to tell you. God is a judge. It's not complicated. It wasn't complicated when the Jews were being sent in boxcars to Dachau and Treblinka and Auschwitz. It's not complicated. You can do something, or you can do nothing, and what you do is a reflection of your faith. I think it's over.

Now we praise the Lord in all circumstances. No matter what happens, we praise the Lord. No matter what happens, we look to the Lord, but that doesn't mean it's the Lord's will that the Nazis take over. It's not the Lord's will that we lose this Republic. It doesn't mean it's the Lord's will. It would be the Lord's judgment.

I think just to have a picture of what the devil's idea of the Church is. I mean, if you go to China today, and they'll say, "Yeah, we have some official churches. You want to go to a, you're like a Christian, you want to go to official church? There's an official church. Go to that building on Sunday. You could do whatever you want in that building. Do your weird religious rituals. We don't care. When you come out of that building, you will bow to the secular authority of the state." If you take that deal, you're no Christian, and there are many Americans who have already taken that deal with our own government. They say, "Well, we don't want to give you any trouble." There were many Germans who took that deal with the Nazis. "We don't want any trouble. We will hang the swastika flag out. We'll say, hallelujah. Tell us what we need to do just so we can keep preaching our little gospel."

But I don't know what dead demonic gospel you're preaching in your church if you don't care about what God cares about. God is the one who cares about these moral issues. God is the one who cares about sex trafficking on our southern border. God is the one who cares about liberty for all people around the world, that we've been a beacon of liberty, and it is his will to deliver us. It is his will to preserve freedom. And I really believe that just as Washington was able to be preserved in 1776 to fight another day and another day and another day, so that we could win the war and win freedom, I believe it's the Lord's will that we would escape defeat and fight on and fight on and fight on to the Lord's glory. Amen.

I know that the Lord has called me to the culture. We're creating a lot of TV series. I mentioned the Bonhoeffer movie. We're creating a lot of TV series. I have a lot of hope that we, as the Church, might be able to undo the grave, grave damage that's been done in this culture that has given these false narratives to generations of Americans that there's probably no God, and America's not that great, all these lies that we have been living with for decades and decades. I believe it's the Lord's will that we, the people of God, would overturn those narratives and that we would have in Lincoln's phrase, "A new birth of freedom in America." And that we would not only see revival, but that we would see reformation in the Church and that all those dead churches would go away like that fig tree, but that the Lord would preserve for himself a church

that would live according to his will and that people would see that, and many people would get saved.

I believe that that's the Lord's will, but in order to do that, we have to get across the East River. In order to do that, we have to avert this existential crisis. So whatever we can do to do that so that we can, a year from now, be talking about all the other things that God has put in front of us, I exhort you as my brothers and sisters in Christ, ask the Lord what you might do knowing that the stakes could not be higher and that you'll forever regret not doing what you might do if you don't do it now. This is the hour of the American Church. You're the Church. God bless you.

Roger Marsh:

Will the Church decide America's future on Election Day? That is the question that Eric Metaxas has been presenting to us right here during the past half hour on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. That's a presentation that Eric gave a couple weeks ago at the gathering here in Colorado Springs, Colorado for a group of people who are deeply committed to loving America, loving the Lord, and the support of the JDFI.

When you go to our website drjamesdobson.org, you will find a variety of different materials all designed to help you make the best decision possible on Election Day. You'll find videos, short reels, blog posts, even a link for Dr. Owen Strachan's, new book called, *Voting and the Church: Why Christians Engage The Public Square*. Again, you'll find all that information and more when you go to drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024. And now for Dr. James Dobson and the entire staff here at the JDFI, I'm Roger Marsh. Join us again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

Announcer:

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