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Week 45: Rescue Life; last week

James Robison

Eric Metaxas

JAMES: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I am right here in the studio, rushed up here to talk to Eric Metaxas. He wrote *Amazing Grace*, how slavery was basically overthrown by the grace of God; *Amazing Grace*, John Newton, as much as Wilberforce, I think even more. And the author of the book I'm holding, who wrote *Amazing Grace*. And also wrote *Bonhoeffer*. And boy, did we see the miracle that could have saved the horrors that occurred in Germany under Hitler if the church had heard what God revealed to and ultimately through Bonhoeffer. It was written by Eric Metaxas. Well, here is Eric Metaxas' new book, *Letter to the American Church*. He is sitting here with me.

And Eric, I love you. And I want to thank you for *Amazing Grace*, I want to thank you for the miracle that you revealed so clearly. It wasn't just Wilberforce, but it was John Newton keeping *Amazing Grace*, keeping him in the fire. Then you wrote *Bonhoeffer*. You said to me when I talked to you, right before you came here and we talked yesterday, you said, "James, this is the Bonhoeffer message to America today." Do you believe that?

ERIC: You know when you say things like that you have to understand how it sounds. So I have to be very, very clear—crystal clear. There is no hyperbole in what I'm saying. The thesis of this book, the reason I know the Lord made me write this short book is because the silence of the church in Germany that led to the satanic evil of the Nazis in the holocaust is exactly the same as the silence of the church in America today, which will, without question, lead us to horrors unimaginable unless we repent, unless we cease being silent. I can't think of a more urgent message. I beg people—I beg people to take what I'm saying in this book seriously because of course, it is not me talking. When you title a book *Letter to the American Church*, I'm not arrogant enough to think that this is a

letter from Eric Metaxas. This is in the tradition of the letter to the Philippians. You know? You want to write exactly what you think the Lord is saying.

So I've never been more humbled in writing something because I thought this is so important and this has to be what God is trying to say. But what I believe the Lord is trying to say in this book is exactly what he said through Bonhoeffer to the German church, which they did not listen to. It was the prophet, the Lord always sends his prophets. And many years later we go wow, wasn't that prophet great! Jeremiah, Isaiah, they're so great! In their day they were not listened to, they were murdered. Bonhoeffer's message which was from God to the German church was ignored. And we saw what happened. I believe that the Lord called me to write the *Bonhoeffer* book, which we've talked about on this program years ago to help America see that is what happens when a church is silent.

So in this book, I'm basically taking what Bonhoeffer said and speaking it to the church in America today; and saying unless you repent of your silence, unless you repent of playing this game that you think you can be neutral when evil rises and you say nothing, God will judge you. There is no neutral ground. The German church tried to take that neutral ground and the enemy destroyed that nation and destroyed millions of lives.

I believe we're facing something extremely similar, and the church, most of the church right now is using the same excuses for their silence. They say things like well, we don't want to be political. They have all kinds of reasons. The same reasons the German church had in that day. When you see the similarity, I think most people would be shocked.

JAMES: You illustrate and give clarity to the understanding of the reality that there is only one force on God's planet, heaven and the earth is the Lord's. We were left here as overseers of this planet. The king is here; his kingdom is established in us. We can make an impact in this world and the only force that can overpower the deception and destruction of the gates of hell is what? The church of Jesus Christ.

That's what you're writing. You start, "What is the church? Does God ask us to see the future?" Of course, his will being done now, which is future too because we have nothing to do with the next kingdom, we have everything to do with this one. And we are not left here to get out of here, we're left here to see his will done on his earth.

ERIC: That's the amazing thing. People act like well, it is all about getting saved. Well, you're saved, now what? Now you're part of the church and the Lord expects you to live out your faith that you claim to have totally, fearlessly and self-sacrificially until he calls you to be with him. And I think that we've been so blessed in America, just as Germans were blessed that they thought, well, that doesn't apply to me. I can have a nice life and I'll go to church. Oh, I believe these things—I believe these things.

When the Lord requires something of you and you don't do it, the Lord knows you don't believe what you say you believe. So I talk about the deception of when we talk about faith. Luther, I wrote a biography of Luther, about the idea of faith. It is all about faith—it is all about faith. Yeah, it is all about faith if it's real faith; not fake faith where I say I believe stuff.

And faith, I was going to—this book, *Letter to the American Church*, I was going to title the book, not kidding, *Faith Without Works is Dead*. Because we have a lot of people who claim they have faith and the Lord says, well, I see your fruit, I see your heart. If you believed that I defeated death on the cross, you would live differently. And it is exactly what *Bonhoeffer* writes about, he talks about cheap grace. And it is a prophetic word that the Lord gave him. And I believe that it didn't work on the German church. They did not hear it.

But my prayer, my hope, is that exactly what the Lord spoke through Bonhoeffer would be heard and heeded by the American church. And I will say again, if not, we are going down precisely the same path. And people say I can't believe it, I can't believe it. Trust me when I tell you the Germans did not believe that that future was even possible. But it happened and we are no different than the Germans.

JAMES: Erwin Lutzer, one of my good friends, a guest here frequently, told the story about the church singing louder in Germany when the trains came by with the Jewish people headed to be annihilated, even with their families, and the church sang louder so they didn't hear their cries. Today it seems like we just continue to persist in singing louder while we're headed right over the cliff under demonic control and a greater force coming to destroy the freedom that we have known because of the way our nation was birthed with truth and biblical principles.

We are right now under a power that can totally overthrow us and put us in the dark and take away every freedom we have ever known; the stage is set for that. And the only forces, as I said a moment ago, that can stop this overthrowing power is the church of Jesus Christ, the body of Christ supernaturally united with one head leading. You write this chapter about 12,000 pastors. Tell us the significance.

ERIC: It's a chilling—this is really—I didn't even know this when I was writing my *Bonhoeffer* book. When I started writing this book and I dipped back into my *Bonhoeffer* book and into that period I realized something, and I said this is chilling because this is exactly where we are today—exactly!

In Germany, in the '30s, there were about 18,000 protestant pastors roughly. In 1933, when Hitler took power and began to instantly try to transform that whole culture in every way along Nazi lines, he included the church. He said well, the church is part of the state. We pay the pastors. We don't have separation of church and state. So that's when folks like Bonhoeffer said wait a minute! No. We must stand against this. We cannot have the government dictating to the church. We answer to Jesus Christ.

So they wrote this thing called the Barmen Declaration; maybe 5,000-6,000 pastors signed it, very brave. By 1935, only 3,000 were standing strong. In other words, the Nazis persecuted the church and bullied and threatened the whole culture in such a way which we're seeing today, that if you don't play the game, you're going to get it. You'll get

canceled, you'll get sent to a concentration camp, you'll lose this, you'll lose that—brutal persecution, cultural persecution. But by 1935, only 3,000 who had signed the Barmen Declaration were standing firm. So of the 18,000 pastors, by 1935 you have 3,000 standing firm. On the other end of the spectrum, you have about 3,000 standing strongly with Hitler happy to crush the church, or happy to give the church over to the devil or whatever it is.

But in the middle, there were 12,000 pastors that basically would not commit one way or the other. That is the nightmare that they thought it would be safe. We won't take a position. We don't want to be "political." We don't want to confuse the gospel and politics. We're just going to keep our nose down, preach our little stuff on Sunday mornings, and when we leave this building, we're going to bow to the authority of the state. That lie which you hear over and over, you're hearing it again today, they bought it because it was the safe path.

Many of them, there are all kinds of reasons people bought into it but the point of that chapter and in many ways the point of the book is that it was the silence of those 12,000 that enabled the Nazis to crush the 3,000 heroes, to marginalize them and put them in concentration camps and do whatever. It was the silence of that 12,000—their failure to stand with the heroic 3,000—because many of those 12,000 kind of knew what was right; but they said we're just going to be quiet. We're pastors, we don't want to be involved in anything political because people will criticize us as being political. And Romans 13, oh that's so clear!

Well, it is not so clear. Bonhoeffer understood that it was not so clear. Bonhoeffer in fact in his book *Cost of Discipleship* says he was disgusted with what he called the theologically based restraint of all these pastors, he said, which is nothing but fear. They're using these excuses to stay out of trouble. They're playing this little religious game.

And so one of the things I write about in here is like, so, if the Gestapo comes to the door

and asks are you hiding a Jew in your basement? If you're a religious Christian who doesn't want to get in trouble, religious in the negative sense, you'd say, oh, yeah, I'm hiding a Jew in my basement. Help yourself to the Jew; torture and kill the Jew, but I don't lie. I'm justified before God. It is the most religious in the negative sense, legalistic response which breaks God's heart. And many in Germany said we're going to take that path. We're just going to "preach the gospel," we're going to stick to our little sermons.

But anybody who knows the Lord knows that's not what God calls you to do. God calls you to speak his truth wherever you go, fearlessly. And the German church did not do that. They hesitated, they had their reasons. By the time they realized what the Nazis were doing it was too late. It was game over.

And so what I'm saying is that today in America we are in the early '30s and anybody who would say I'm exaggerating, I beg them to consider the details because I know that this true. This is not like well, I have some interpretation. We are hearing the same silence from pastors around this country who are saying that I don't want to offend anyone in my congregation. I'm going to keep my nose out of that. There is a time in a culture when you can do that. If it was 1985, and you say well, listen, we've got some Democrats in our audience. We're just preaching the gospel. But when you have cultural Marxism coming into schools and into the culture, which many churches are allowing in, critical race theory, you can look in any direction, transgender madness, a government demonizing half of the population publicly, there are things that if you do not speak now God will hold you responsible for your silence.

And the reason I wrote this is because I believe that there are still people that can be reached, there are still some among the 12,000 who could be awakened. And it is my prayer and my hope that they will, that they will repent. Because you know if somebody came to you in 1840 and said, don't mention slavery. Just stick to gospel-related issues because we've got some slaveholders in our audience and our congregation making—you say wait a second, I have an obligation before God to speak on that issue. And if it offends someone, I'm not sure what I'm supposed to do. God will judge me if I'm silent

on that issue. If I'm silent on the sanctity of the unborn, God will hold me to account. Where do you get this idea that I'm just supposed to stick to John 3:16 for every sermon? But that's the lie and it is a diabolical lie that has been pushed on the church. And many in the church have said, oh okay. Now I have my reason I can be quiet. I don't have to take that on.

I say, James, it is precisely because of that, that we are where we are. If somebody says to me today, why is America in free fall, falling apart in any direction? We've never seen anything like it. I would say frankly because of the silence of the church. God will judge the church for its silence. We're the ones who are supposed to know better. We are the ones that know the difference between a man and a woman. We're the ones that are supposed to believe that Jesus defeated death on the cross. So we say these things with no fear. We say these things with joy, that innumerable lives will be affected.

So the idea that we're supposed to avoid politics or that we're supposed to—this is not wisdom and that's why I wrote the book. You can tell, there's deep sobriety and humility that I have in writing something like this because I thought, people in Germany didn't believe that this hell could happen to them. They were convinced this can't happen. I think that there are many Americans that believe the same thing. That if I just keep quiet it will all be okay. That's not what history shows us and I don't think that's what the Lord says.

JAMES: Let me try to summarize and I want you to listen closely. *Bonhoeffer* is a long book. *Amazing Grace* is a long book. I was amazed, this is a very brief book, but it is a powerful book. It is like a letter from our Lord to us in America at this moment in history. And the future of freedom here and around the world depends upon the church's response right now. The one force, the gates of hell, Jesus said, cannot prevail against is the body of Christ, the church. But that's the body of Christ born from above, connected to one another in supernatural unity like body parts submitted to the one head Christ standing against the forces, against all the forces of deception, dissension, division, and destruction.

I believe that right now we begin to correct course or we're over the cliff—freedom's gone! Now I think it is going to happen very rapidly too. But I also believe if the church would come together in supernatural unity that Jesus prayed for, submit to the one head, and speak the truth not only in love but that New Testament group of Christians, those apostles, they turned the world upside down because they proclaimed another king than the government or any other power on this earth than Caesar. There is only one king, the church is the only one that can present that.

This is a letter, I'm telling you, you can read this fast. We'll send it to you. You can go online right now and get it. They probably can get it in print online, but you can order the book right now. You can get it normally in a day. But we'll send it to you if you simply help us do what we give you an opportunity to do, to put your arms around the broken and the suffering and see them free, we'll send it to you. I want you to read this. You can read it. This is the kind of book you can read in one day. And he wrote it that way deliberately. I believe that it is not just a draft from Eric Metaxas, I believe it is from God and used somebody gifted to write who recognized the greatness of God in a man that could have saved the horrible holocaust.

I want to say thank you. Eric, we're going to show our viewers something that every day they know we're going to give you an opportunity to become someone's miracle. By the way, together we become the miracle that freedom must have. But I want you to right now, I want you to look at a situation and see if you are the answer to the prayer, the heart cry, and the need that you see. Watch closely. You respond as God directs. We're going to send you this book because I tell you what, it is going to impact you and help, I believe, correct our course. Watch closely.

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: Tonight there will be children in various parts of the world who will not

be tucked into a warm bed by a caring loved one, who will not experience the security and safety of a permanent place they can call home. Instead, they will be found in streets filled with drugs and violence or down alleyways teaming with strangers who could harm them. And for some, they will find themselves trapped in broken homes of grinding poverty and despair.

All of this becomes a breeding ground for the unimaginable, human traffickers who will target these children, kidnap, and force them into the sex slave trade. For most of these children, the sexual abuse will produce physical and emotional scars that will haunt them for the rest of their lives. For others, they may either die in captivity or simply disappear never to be heard from again. These are the realities that no child should ever have to face—but they will.

Every minute, two children will be exploited by a sex slave trader somewhere in the world. Who will be the next victim?

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: You and I, as the people of God who understand the importance of faith, family, and freedom are the only hope those children have.

Eric Metaxas and I have been talking about God's letter, his message to the church which is the only power that can stand against the force of the gates of hell, and create a hell on earth for people, for everybody if possible. That's what the enemy does. But the only force that can set people free is the power of God flowing through his people who are connected to one another, who believe his truth, and allow him to be the head, and get his arms around those he gave his life to redeem.

That's what we're doing for these children. This is the last week. I'm praying today for the greatest miracle outpouring that we've ever seen. We're going to send it to every one of

you that help. This is a very important read. You can read it in a day. And boy, we've got some important decisions right now ahead of us. We're also going to send you one of the most beautiful books I've ever seen. What does your Jesus look like? This is a table book you're going to enjoy looking at and seeing Jesus.

But what you're going to do right now when you respond, and you take advantage of a love gift of \$320,000 to match whatever you do because people say we want to set these precious children free from sexual trafficking, and we can do it. And I'm asking God for the greatest outpouring, regarding setting these children free and getting them in the—let's say—where we've reached them and we rescue them and then we begin to restore them. And we train them and give them a future. This is a miracle!

Now you think about it. It takes an average to rescue one, \$128, but it's going to be doubled. So if you give \$128 you rescue two. Now you always know this. I try to get you to think big! Because God is big, and he does things so much bigger than we normally ever imagine or consider. Would you consider \$1280 to help rescue ten children, now 20 children? Think about it! That gift will rescue 20 children from this bondage. And at the same time, we're praying for God to protect and preserve our precious freedom here in America and around the world because it's being threatened, perhaps as great as at any time in history—certainly in my lifetime.

Please! Go get your bank card, use it like a check, write a check, and make it to *LIFE*. Dial that phone number and give us the number and make the gift God put on your heart. Or you can go online. Please, use that bank card like a check but make the greatest gift you can because you are giving freedom—you really are. You're setting captives free. Thank you so much for doing it right now.

Begin video clip

ANNOUNCER: *Innocent children and young people longing to be loved and cared for are being abducted and sold at the hands of violent predators, forced into the evil industry of human trafficking.*

Through Mission: Rescue Life you can reach out to warn children who are at risk for sex trafficking, rescue those already enslaved, and restore young lives and give them a future. With a generous \$320,000 matching gift now your gift of \$128 to help reach, rescue, or restore one child can be doubled to help two children. Your \$64 gift will be matched to help save one child from the horrors of human trafficking. And a \$32 mission rescue gift will be doubled to \$64.

With your gift today, we'll send you "I Hear His Whisper." Each entry in this beautiful 365-day devotional will encourage you with words of comfort, joy, and love as you encounter God's heart and hear his gentle voice.

With a gift of \$128 or more, you'll receive "What Does Your Jesus Look Like?" This captivating book by sculptor, Scott Stearman shares compelling stories and beautiful images revealing how we can be the image of Christ to a watching world.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280 which will now help save 20 children. And you may request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Let the Children Come." This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: I want you to remember this is the last week. We are sending, if you'd like to have it, for any gift, Eric Metaxas' book, *Letter to the American Church*. Eric, I love you. Let's stay real close. Thank you for the wonderful things you say about The Stream because that is a gifted group of writers that are an illustration of people coming together

for the glory of God. Thank you for being an encouragement to us.

ERIC: Thank you for your friendship, my brother. I appreciate you!

JAMES: Thanks for writing this letter. This is a letter from God, I believe that, and you can read it fast. Thank you so much for caring. I pray with all my heart you care deeply about the future of freedom. What we do will determine freedom's future.