



## Coach Approach Ministries Podcast

### Episode 24: Celebrating Jesus

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#### [Intro Music]

**Brian Miller:** Welcome to the Coach Approach Ministries podcast where we help people find their way with God by training the best Christian coaches in the world. I'm Brian Miller, strategic director for Coach Approach Ministries, CAM for short, and I'm joined here today by Chad Hall, the president of CAM, and Bill Copper, executive director of CAM. Welcome guys.

**Chad Hall:** Hey Brian.

**Bill:** Hey Brian. Good to be with you.

**Brian:** Good to have you guys. In today's episode, we want to talk about celebrating Jesus. We are a Christian organization, and as we enter the month that much of the world celebrates Christ, it only makes sense to us that we send out a challenge to our listeners to celebrate Jesus. We're also going to have a webinar on December 15th at 11:00AM Eastern Time called "What Difference Does Jesus Make to Coaching?", and in that webinar we're going to be more specific about how Jesus applies to coaching. How he speaks into coaching, but today really we just want to share our hearts and talk about what Jesus has really done for us. Who wants to start guys?

**Chad:** I will gladly start. First of all, what a great topic. I think a lot of times what we do as a ministry is we do a lot of ministry. We do a lot of ministry in Jesus' name, but we rarely get the chance to give a personal testimony. That's what we used to call this back in the days when I attended the Baptist Church, this was testimony time, and so it's good to give testimony. I think your question, Brian, about really what does Jesus mean to me personally, if I could summarize it probably in one sentence, Jesus gives me an orientation other than myself. For me, that's really important because I need an orientation to life that is not me-centered, it's not family-centered, it's not me and my tribe, or something like that. For me, the incarnation of Jesus, Jesus coming near, the teachings of Jesus, how to live life in obedience and goodness. The sacrifice of Jesus not only as an example, but as however that changed something cosmically I'm not really sure, but I know it did. The resurrection of Jesus, that there is life beyond this life. Those are deeply powerful and meaningful truths. I think every person gets up each morning and thinks, "What's the truth that steers me, that guides me, that orients me to this day and every other day?" For me, that truth is Jesus. Jesus says, "He is the Way. He is the Truth. He is the Life." I have found

that to be true sure as the world needs it. I guess I could go on and on for an hour, I could probably end up preaching a sermon, which probably isn't what we're here for.

**Bill:** I hope your sermons are not an hour too.

**Chad:** Well, maybe we should move along.

**Brian:** Depends on the quality of the listener.

**Bill:** Spoken like a pastor.

**Chad:** That's right. I think for me it's that left to my own devices I will be selfish and implode upon myself, and I'm pretty sure that's a definition of Hell. A lot of people say Jesus releases me from sin, and that certainly is true. One of the ways I think about that is that Jesus releases me from me, and how really incredibly freeing that is. Super grateful. Probably a testimony very similar to you guys and probably lots of listeners who are listening to this podcast.

**Brian:** Chad, how did you find Jesus?

**Chad:** Like a lot of people, I grew up in a Christian home. Had parents who modeled what it meant to be. I would say in love and, if we can make a verb, in faith to Jesus and demonstrated that in their own way. Then as part of a local Christian community, the church. I heard the Scripture opened weekly, I heard Christ preached regularly, and then really as a small child, a horrible, sinful nine-year-old, I came to faith in Christ in terms of making a public profession. I like to think I have been continually making that profession at different levels in terms of depth and sincerity ever since. Sometimes it's slow growth, but it has been constant.

**Brian:** That's great, that's great. My story is similar to yours I think in some ways and in some ways not. I was raised in Sunday School, I think you said you were raised in church. I went to church, my mom took me to church, and I'm seven and ten years younger than my brothers and for whatever reason my brothers didn't go. I really didn't question why that was. My brothers didn't go and my dad didn't go. And sometimes people think, "Yeah, yeah your dad didn't go," but my dad was and still is just full of goodness. My dad is a good, good guy. Served his country faithfully, served his community faithfully. Whenever there was anything needing done in the community, he did it free or for cheap, probably too cheap. The only time I ever heard my dad swear, was when he cut himself or hit his thumb with his hammer or something awful.

It was usually just the one word and he was done. My dad was just such a good guy, so being raised in church and in Sunday School, the church part didn't work for me very well. Usually what I would hear was stuff like a lot of good people in Hell, and I was like my dad's one of the goodest guys I've ever met. I just didn't like that kind of talk in many ways. I remember you said you were saved at nine. I could have been. I remember being in a revival meeting, and it wasn't all that hot and heavy, but a revival meeting. And they were asking questions, and the way I remember the questions they were asking like, "Who here likes ice cream? Raise your hand." I raised my hand. "Who here loves watching sports?" I raised my hand. There were just three or four questions that were just like, "Oh, yeah." And then they asked, "Who here hasn't been saved?" And my hand just went right back up. I was just in the mode, and we

had our eyes closed at the time as well. So, the rest of the service, I kid you not, for like thirty minutes: “There’s a boy in the back who hasn’t come up yet, there’s a boy in the back.” And I waited it out. I was thinking, “I like ice cream. You fooled me.”

**Chad:** You kept waiting for the boy in back to go forward. Where is this kid?

**Brian:** I got it quick, I started to figure out it was me, and that pressure of you need to get whatever this was they wanted me to get. But the truth was I loved Jesus, and Sunday School, I know it’s been phased out a lot and I’m not sure it shouldn’t be phased out a lot, but Sunday School taught me about the Bible and about the characters in the Bible and especially about Jesus. I just fell in love with Jesus. I got to where I really couldn’t stand the church. It was cold and heartless in many ways, and how could the church be cold and heartless when Jesus is so warm and gracious? He tells you the truth, but He does it with such a warmth that you welcome it. I did find a church coming out of my teens, coming out of my high school that was much warmer, and yet still told the truth. That helped me a ton. So I ended up going to Austin, Texas and I worked for IBM.

I was a computer programmer coming out of college, and I was going to a Baptist church. I’ll tell you why I was going to a Baptist church: cause that’s the only kind of church they have in Texas. I think it’s the law. I’m not positive about that, but it seemed like it. So I’m going to this Baptist church, and it’s huge, it’s the biggest church I’ve ever been to, and it was fine. It was fine. Except that during church it just felt a little light. Everybody was dressed so nice. It just seemed like there ought to be a little bit more to it than this. If the Church is the Body of Christ. It’s not a good reflection of Christ for me. So I was driving home church, and it was probably my usual habit just kind of talking to God, saying, “Man, I just wish the church was just kind of stronger than this,” and then I don’t know if it was audible because no one else was in there to tell me, but it was the most clearly I’ve ever been able to hear from God. He said to me, “Do something about it or shut up.” Oh. I was just enjoying complaining about the church, I didn’t want to do anything about it.

**Chad:** Where was the warmth in that? I mean really.

**Brian:** What kind of God says “shut up?” My mom wouldn’t have put up with that kind of God at all. It just struck me as, “Oh man, yeah.” Things kind of changed my path there, and I became a pastor. I just feel like Jesus has always let me walk close to him. I was going to say he’s always walked close to me, but I think he’s always let me walk close to him. He’s put people in my life that have brought him around, and like you said, I just do not want the center of my life to be anything other than a gracious, loving, sacrificial, truth-telling God that I find wrapped up in Jesus who came down to the Earth to walk among us and to live with us and to love us and to guide us. I am so overwhelmed by that story that I truthfully, when people say “All gods are the same,” or whatever I think, “Are you kidding me?” This story just seems so unique and resonant and real to me that I just can’t believe anything else and don’t want to.

**Chad:** You know Brian, that really resonates with me, the idea that the Christian faith really is story. I kind of think the Bible is the truest story. You know it’s true because it’s so muddy and twisting and turning. Even the heroes of the story are villainous in many ways. It’s the truest story and Christ is the truest character in that story, the truest person who’s ever lived. I think what we’re all looking for is

we're looking for a story to live by not just sort of a made-up story or a mythical story although certainly myth has power, but I love the way you put that. That Jesus has let you walk close to him. He's the truest person who's ever lived, he embodies the story, he's the hero of the story. The idea that the God that's described in the Bible would come close, that's what we celebrate at Christmas. It's that God has come near. Not just near to the planet, but near to you.

**Bill:** Brian, as you're talking, and Chad I'll ask you to chime in on this as well, the shift for both of you was to go into professional ministry, to vocational ministry, and I'm wondering how that added to, took away from, changed in any way that sense of wonder and awe about Jesus.

**Brian:** Wow, that's a great question. It's funny, as you said that I remember my kids saying to me one time that "If you weren't a pastor, you wouldn't have such high expectations of us," and I clearly remember I said, "Oh, that's not true at all." I think my faith was the same at IBM as it was as a pastor, but certainly what a blessing it was to get to spend time getting paid to study about God and to talk about God. That part of it, not pastoring anymore one of the parts that I really miss is to just dive into the text, to see just the reality of it. When people question the Bible to me, I'm like if the Bible was made up, Moses would have been able to fly. David would have been so pure that he would have zapped Bathsheba with laser eyes and it would have been over, but the Bible's so genuine about people. It lifts up women in a time when people were not seen as equal in any way, and it even lifts up the foreigner often and says, "This is the hero for God." I'm telling you if I was making this stuff up the foreigners wouldn't be the heroes, my family would be the heroes. I'm just saying, it just seems like such a genuine book to me.

**Chad:** In response to your question Bill, at nine I publicly became a Christian. At nineteen I was reading, I won't go into the whole story, but I was reading a Sports Illustrated article, and Brian, you talked about talking to God on the way home from church and you're complaining, there was something about this article where, just as clear as day, "You know Chad, if this true, if this whole Jesus thing is true that you've been professing for the last decade, if it's true it should change everything, everything." Honestly, I was nineteen and I was wondering, "What do I do with my life?" I was a computer science major for a while until we got to logarithms, and then I thought about going into teaching until I realized that that was working for the Man.

By the way, no criticism of teachers out there, but you are working for the Man. I was open to, "What's my career path, what's my vocation?" It was in that moment where God says, "If this is true, it changes everything, including what you do for a living, what you do to make money, what you do to put food on the table." At the time I could only imagine serving a local church. I thought you were either going to be a pastor or a music leader because those were the only two roles I ever saw in church. I thought I was going to be a music leader, but if you guys have ever heard me sing, you know... I mean God is a God of miracles, but that would take a miracle.

**Brian:** Or a missionary Chad, I'm resonating the same way. I went into pastoral ministry because I didn't want to go overseas.

**Chad:** That's right, you could be a missionary. Fortunately, God did take that one off the table for me after about a year of deep prayer, but for me it has been this unfolding like when Peter's on the rooftop,

God lays before them all this bountiful, what I think of, this awesome Thanksgiving spread, not yet cooked. This is kosher too. For me it has been this unfolding of “Yeah, you could serve in the local church. Hey, you could also serve in the denomination, and that’s ministry. Hey, you could also serve on faculty to the seminary. That’s ministry. You could be a coach and a trainer of other coaches. Hey that’s ministry.” Like Brian, worked in software. “Hey, that’s ministry.” What I do think has happened for me is that serving the local church I have an incredible, deep appreciation for pastors, and I see right through it. I can’t think of a more difficult, more challenging job than being a local church pastor, and I know there’s a side to it that nobody else sees, and you’re just like everybody else in some ways, and there’s a lot of pressure and other things. As far as my personal walk with Christ, I think it has been enhanced through serving the local church, and I think there were years where it was whatever the opposite of enhanced is, challenged, because vocational ministry, especially serving a local church, it can be a tempting substitute for a real relationship with Christ.

**Brian:** What was the word you used besides enhanced, what was the opposite? I missed it.

**Chad:** Challenged.

**Bill:** That last thing you said Chad, it’s kind of part of my story. I could say the same things that you guys said, early age, family, tradition, both of my grandfathers pastored at different times. Was in church, my mom was the organist so I was in church from the time I was minus nine months old and right up on the front row and did all the things you were supposed to do and loved it. It was part of who I was, both in my participation, my growth, my accepting Christ, my service, I checked off all those boxes and didn’t think of it cynically, just going through those motions. They were real to me. It meant a lot to me, and then when I got into an area of vocation ministry and it wasn’t as pastor. I’m in, I tell people, wholesale ministry instead of retail, but I can look back and see times when I let that be a substitute for my own walk with Christ. For all of our talk and belief about what Christ does is brings grace, frees us up and those kinds of things, I lived and I think a lot of live saying that it’s all about grace and faith, but checking off those boxes and keeping score in works just in case.

It was never more real for me than when I went through divorce a few years back. The whole notion of, “Gosh, I’ve done the right things for nearly all my life,” I’m the old man in this group and I did it right for a long time. What I found was, particularly around a lot of church colleagues both in my church life and my professional life that they really were keeping score. Now, I’d failed the test. That wasn’t true for everybody, you guys were some of the exceptions to that, thankfully, but the whole idea that Jesus brings grace, that really comes true when you really need grace. You really discover that. I think that’s been my story the last few years. As much as I believed it, and honestly did, and preached it and taught it, you don’t really appreciate grace until you’ve received it. Like you, I’ve always loved Jesus, I don’t know if I’ve ever really loved Jesus like I have the last few years because of the grace I received.

**Brian:** Wow, that’s it. When you just need it the most, and it’s there. It probably even surprised you a bit. Sometimes when I pray for things and it happens, I’m surprised.

**Bill:** And we’re not supposed to be.

**Brian:** We’re not supposed to be.

**Bill:** Brian, I would say both sides surprised me. I was surprised by the lack of grace, and maybe it's because I was keeping score and thought that in the balance the good outweighed the bad and those kinds of things, but so much more surprised by the grace and the graciousness of you guys and others. It just makes who Jesus is much, much more real than the rest of my fifty years.

**Brian:** Bill, talk about the realness of it. You talk about how he's more real. How are you experiencing that?

**Bill:** I live with guilt a lot because of that scorekeeping, and what I learn more and more, Chad brought this up earlier and you did too, the story of our heroes in scripture. Man were they bums. Man did they mess up. I think that's the realness of it, to say, "That guilt that you're experiencing and you're heaping on yourself over and over, that doesn't come from Jesus." Jesus is the one who calms that, he's the one who reminds you and brings that peace. As I said earlier, you don't appreciate grace, we talk about it a bunch, but when that's all you've got, Jesus brings it.

**Brian:** I appreciate you being so vulnerable about that. I think that's what makes us good coaches as well. You've got to set aside judgement to be a good coach. You just have to. We appreciate you sharing that. That's our story and we're sticking to it. If you want to know more about how we think Jesus affects coaching directly, we're going to have a webinar on December 15th, "What Difference Does Jesus Make to Coaching?" 11:00AM Eastern, you need to register for that. You can go to our website at [coachapproachministries.org/webinar](http://coachapproachministries.org/webinar) and you can sign up for that webinar.

**Bill:** Hey Brian, before we go, it may be helpful for people to know and not get that webinar which is open to the public, hopefully we don't get that confused with the webinar that is just for members of our CAM community of coaches. So the week before, I think it's on December 8th, not sure about the time yet. We're going to have a Christmas party, and so if you're a member of the community of coaches I don't want you to get those two confused. December 8th we're going to have an online webinar Christmas party. If you can't imagine what that would look like, join the crowd, we're not exactly sure what it's going to look like either, but it's going to be a whole lot of fun. Then the December 15th, that's the more "How Does Jesus Make a Difference in Coaching." That one's open to everybody.

**Chad:** We hope you all enjoy both of those.

**Brian:** The fun part is the December 8th one, the three of us are going to be together at Bill's Daytona Beach home, and I know I'm really looking forward to getting down there. The other thing I just want to bring out as the three of us have shared our hearts and our faith, I can tell you right now it's brought the three of us even closer together. This is just even a skill to use with your groups, with your teams. We challenge you to celebrate Jesus with those around you, whether it's a ministry organization or not a ministry organization. I'm not saying get up on the cafeteria table and say, "Listen up folks, I'm talking about Jesus today," but just to find a real genuine way to share your heart and the story that Jesus has played in your own life. That's going to bring benefits all the way around not only to glorify Jesus, but it's going to impact you as well. So we want to thank you so much for joining us for this, I think very special podcast. You can find out more about us by going to [coachapproachministries.org](http://coachapproachministries.org) and downloading our free eBook, *The Beginner's Guide to Christian Coaching: How to Have Powerful Conversations That Really Make a Difference*. We'll see you next week.

*Coach Approach Ministries Podcast*  
**Chad:** See you everybody.

Episode 24

**[Outro Music]**