

Transcript 172

Shea Houdmann

Welcome to the Got Questions podcast. Occasionally we like to have a guest on either with a new book that's coming out, a new ministry activity that's going on, something we'd like our audience to be aware of. So joining me today is Jason Jimenez. This he is the author of Hijacking Jesus and the president and founder of Standing Strong Ministries. So Jason welcome to the Got Questions podcast.

Jason Jimenez

Thank you for having me.

Shea Houdmann

So, Jason, tell us our audience for those who may not be familiar with you a little bit about you and your background and what is Standing Strong Ministries?

Jason Jimenez

Well really my background, I come from the Tucson, AZ originally and that's where I started my ministry as a young junior high director. And it was shortly after I lost my mom. She was suddenly taken in a car accident. And as anyone could imagine, when something like that just really hits you, it caused me to instead of run away from God, it caused me to run to God. And it was there that I started to have a lot of a lot more questions, a lot more questions surrounding what next? You know, suffering. Never blame God for the tragedy in my family's life. But leaned on him to ask him, what are you gonna do through this tragedy? And then that's when I started to pursue deeper questions, essentially kind of like the platform of Got Questions. You know, I had a lot of them. I wish I had your ministry when I was young struggling at the time, but the Internet, you know, wasn't really in existence at all. And it was through there, I started to find my passion to study God's word, it the, the validity, credibility of scripture. Started to investigate the resurrection. You know, had faith in Jesus Christ as a young man, but really started to grow.

Jason Jimenez

And then now through the years been blessed to be a pastor working with children, students, families, different churches. Moved out here to Charlotte, NC and went to seminary under Doctor Norman Geisler at the time. And that's when I started to add to my background from philosophy to theology to apologetics. And then the last 11 years has been traveling the country, helping Christians to stand strong right, in their faith, as the scripture says. Because a lot of us have a defeated attitude, a lot of us are not in emboldened. We feel very intimidated about issues of today. So my passion is really to try to take a lot of complicated issues and to not just simplify them, but to make them make better sense to the family dynamic. And also to come alongside the church and help do three things essentially, embolden Christians to stand strong no matter the cost. Equip them to know what they believe and why they believe it so they can defend in the culture. And ultimately engage the culture for Christ. So that's what we've been doing now. And we've been blessed to do it the last 25 years.

Shea Houdmann

That's excellent. It fits very well and with Got Questions and we're not exclusively an apologetics or worldview related ministry, but obviously a ton of questions we received have an apologetics component, have a defense of the faith or help people understand where and how they're thinking is often relationship, to how they're approaching God's word, how they're viewing the culture around and how they're viewing what's going on in the world. That's your minister is very helpful, can wholeheartedly, highly recommend it. So privileged to have you on today. I know you've written several books. And when we publish this episode and we'll have links to your books and Standing Strong Ministries in the show notes and the description on YouTube and at podcast.gotquestions.org. But your new book that's coming out, Hijacking Jesus, what led you to write this book in particular?

Jason Jimenez

Yeah, I mean that that's actually a simple question, but it's a really difficult one to answer because to be honest, it was like Shea, I was thinking, I mean, seeing internally even just in my own existence as a father for Gen Zers and seeing a lot of the conversations that my kids were having with their friends who are, quote on quote Christian, and then you add this level of wokeness and to what degree is that unbiblical? Right, you know, not just social, not social justice issues. And then you start seeing a altered or a fabricated Jesus that starts becoming centered within the preaching of particular pastors. And then you're looking at it and you're thinking, and this is even pre COVID, you're looking at a lot of these people who are teaching things that run contrary to what we would say as a historic Orthodox Christian or a biblical Christian. I I refer to us as in the in the book to distinguish us from progressive Christians. Seeing how many people are, were taking issue with Jesus being the son of God, the the second person of the Trinity, you know, saying ohh we we need to follow the example of Jesus, right. He was a beautiful person who had this self manifestation of this God consciousness, whatever that is, whether they take a a new age leaning or more of an inclusive woke leaning towards that interpretation or again some of your listeners probably are aware of the panentheism. You know like God is in the world as the world is in God.

Jason Jimenez

And the more I started to investigate this and looking at quote on quote credible, you know, conservative churches, I'm seeing this buy into a progressive movement and really hijacking Jesus in a church that many people believe if they go on their website and say ohh while their their statement of faith is you know, is Orthodox, it's it's biblically sound. But they're really not preaching it from the pulpit. And that started to disturb me. And when I look at Scripture, I see that most of the New Testament is dealing with false doctrine. And sadly, as you and I know in the day we're living where a lot of people are biblically illiterate and again, no fault of their own sometimes, right? But there's just this massive population of ignorance to what the Bible teaches and who Jesus Christ really is. I felt I needed to do something. Not just for my kids generation, but also as a pastor and an apologist, saying we have to defend the the, the person and the two natures of who Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. Because progressive Christianity, of course.

Jason Jimenez

Then I started read a bunch of books on this for the last few years and nothing's new under the Sun. It's just like, you know, kind of a new way of introducing these issues, new faces. But seeing how prevalent it's becoming in these conservative denominations, where liberalism at the time, right? They were going

mainline, so they were starting their own churches where progressive Christianity they're trying to take over the existing congregations and churches that have however long they've been in existence, have been teaching that the Trinity is right is an essential doctrine. And that Jesus Christ is the second person. It's only through him through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that one could be saved. They put their faith and trust in that, and seeing how people are hijacking that very message. So that's why I wanted to write this book to help people who are now being caught up in this elusiveness of progressive Christianity to understand the false teaching behind it. But then also Shea recognizing the people that are confused or have family members and are having these debates because in all my travels, that's what we're now talking about and wanted to give them material of how to properly, historically, biblically, theologically and spiritually respond to certain things where they're hijacking Jesus.

Shea Houdmann

You described progressive Christianity is elusive, and I think that's an excellent way of putting it. So, but you're trying to nail you down here. Give me a definition for what is progressive Christianity?

Jason Jimenez

Yeah. So this is another thing that is very difficult and I've talked to a lot of people who've been investigating progressive Christianity for quite some time. Obviously, bear in mind, when you're going to give a definition, a lot of it's going to be in line with liberal theology, right, liberal beliefs, to some extent. But they really have other essentials that they hold on to. But as we do kind of give a working definition, we have to understand that when you're dealing with post modern thought that is grounded within progressivism and Christianity, you can't nail them absolutely if you will. They don't like these particular beliefs right in in air quotes. They try to stay away from them. So I want the audience to understand that because I'm I don't want to speak for progressive Christians, but in giving a working definition as I do, I call the a new theology on the block is in the chapter when I talk about what progressive Christianity really is.

Jason Jimenez

But before I do that like I I wanna, I wanna say this. I have an image in the book. I want people to visualize if they can, if they're watching or listening. And what I first show is this is biblical Christianity. OK, so let's let's understand this first. This will help. We have 6 doctrines, if you will centered on Jesus, the person of who Jesus is. We believe absolutely without compromise that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. We believe #2 that Jesus Christ was virgin born, God Incarnate, was virgin born through the Holy Spirit. #3 doctor doctrine according to you know the teachings of Jesus we see in Scripture that that makes the foundation of what historic Orthodox Christianity is. We believe that he performed miracles, right? That not only were fulfilled with prophecy, but also confirming that he was the son of God. #4 we believe in the atonement of Jesus that he died cross for our sins according to the Scriptures, First Corinthians fifteen three. #5 We believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Right. And ultimately his second return.

Jason Jimenez

Now progressive Christianity. Not all progressive Christians but progressive Christianity denies, they reject all six of those. I think that's important, Shea, for us to understand that first and foremost, so that when we then start defining, OK, well, if they deny and reject those, it isn't Christianity. So we can't be

fooled with this term progressive to make it seem like they have something new because that's what they try to, that was the other thing why I wrote this book. The nuances, the way they play the game, how they fool to see people, which again Satan is the father of lies. He's the great deceiver. And they're pretending like we've removed all the lacquer. All of the veneer, you know, with lacquer that we've removed from Jesus, the rigidity of all these doctrines and literalism has damaged us. Right. And all this orthodoxy stuff. We know we need to be about orthopraxy. So when progressive Christianity starts defining themselves. They say that truth is not relative. The Bible is to be taken metaphorical. We don't hold to a God who is imminent or transcendent, but a God who is within. That's where that pantheism comes in.

Jason Jimenez

Roger Mosley has a book *Kissing Fish*, and he probably has the best description where most progressive Christians hold to at least 80 to 100% of what he says in his book about what progressive Christianity really is. And that's what he teaches. He teaches that truth is relative, that Jesus was inclusive, that same sex marriage is not a sin that they hold to LGBT movements as they believe Jesus did. People who hold to the Bible to be literal are actually presenting Jesus in a falsehood. So we are actually the, you know, they would say that Paul was the original hijacker. Jesus never intended to for us to, to worship him as God. So that in his sense is progressive Christianity. They really want to make sure they tie in the social justice as the Kingdom of God, IE as the gospel. And so that's how they will refer to themselves. And if you go to progressivechristianity.org, they have more or less what they would refer to as like an eightfold path tenants that they subscribe to for the majority to kind of give guidance to somebody who would say they're progressive Christian. But then at the end of the day. And in his book *The Shift* by Colby Martin, he's saying how you how he left conservatism to progressivism, he says, I'm not trying to give you a road map because everyone's journey is their own. And so again, at the heart of progressive Christianity, though they deny those fundamental teachings about Jesus, right. And then they affirm inclusivity, LGBT, truth is relative, the Bibles to be taken metaphorical. They're anti supernaturalists. They will say all of our experiences of God, self consciousness or self manifestation is a collective that we're all merging to the oneness. And that's a huge belief system that's advanced through social justice. That progressive Christianity teaches.

Shea Houdmann

Kind of how I introduced that question, trying to define progressive Christianity is kind of like trying to nail jello to the wall. And that there's no, so much freedom within the umbrella of progressive Christianity that you can perfectly understand what one progressive Christian believes and the next one will, I don't believe any of that stuff. I believe this. So it's it's not something you can universally define. Like if you say someone this person is a Calvinist, well, OK, you then you definitely know some things that person believes, not so with this. In my experience, type of questions we receive, the whole concept of like, well, my Jesus in air quotes would never say something like that. I would never do something, would never want something like that's sort of how I have to defined it. I'm describing to people because it's it's very subjective. It is you basically to determine which teachings of Jesus or the Bible do you accept. You become Lord over the Bible rather than God's word being something you your submit yourself to. It's essentially making yourself God because you're the one who gets to determine what is true for you and to varying degrees to others. Even though they would deny that. And yet they're very quick to deny certain things that people say, while also saying that all truth is

relative. So it's it's a big subjective, post modern mess that when you really try to dig into it, it becomes confusing and distracting, and it can definitely lead people astray. And you, once you're there, you nothing really know how do I even get on this road? And so that's what makes it so hard to nail down.

Jason Jimenez

Yeah. And that's and and to your point, this is devastating to a lot of families because I can't tell you how many times now, even when I was writing the book, I would teach on Hijacking Jesus as I was writing it to get people's responses, and that's the whole thing is you can't nail down some of these things. That's why I start with what they reject first to distinguish between what we as Biblical Christians, believe that that holds to the historical nature, right, and evolution of Christianity without compromise from the beginning. And I think that's so important, Shea, because part of the of the blindness or the ignorance that takes place or lack of defense is people's inability not just to the elusiveness of progressive Christianity, but also their inability to articulate certain doctrines that is Christianity. And you and I know from guys like Doctor Michael Green, Alistair McGrath, when he studied their theology, they would say when when we articulate the historic Christian faith, it's the person of Jesus Christ.

Jason Jimenez

So for me, because there's so much confusion on other issues, I said no. If you reject those six doctrines, the divinity of Jesus, his virgin birth, his miracles, you think about this and his death, resurrection and 2nd coming. That's not Christianity. And so often when you have these conversations because, like you said, it's trying to nail Jelly on the wall, people give them a pass. And say, well, they feel more free to this inclusive Jesus, this all loving Jesus. And that's where a lot of the debate is headed. And so you have a lot of these people who've surfaced in the church for quite some time and people have not really addressed it. And that's why even though you can't, like you said 100%, say, this is what progressive Christians believe. And I respect that. And I'm not trying to speak for them, or speak down to them, but I am defending what the Bible teaches. And that's where we need to start. And then through that like you said, through this relativistic, post modernistic, pantheistic understanding through progressive Christianity, through that lens, you will see that this is a false religion.

Shea Houdmann

It's it's not Christianity at all, it's it's the only thing about Christ that's in it is essentially most would say I love the teachings of Christ. I love the sermon on the Mount. I love the gospels up. And once you get past the birth narrative and before you get to the death and resurrection, everything in between, that's the Jesus I know and love. But they're rejecting his person, who he says he is, and only embracing his teachings, which is not, it's not the definition of Christianity for sure. It's not historical, biblical Christianity. It doesn't save by any stretch of the definition. It doesn't fit the rest of the New Testament.

Shea Houdmann

In the parts of your book that probably impacted me the most that I have the opportunity to read and really think through, it's their whole view of the Bible that impacts it. That's obviously the only place we, there's supernatural revelation is only available in the near inherent form in God's word, and once you deny the inerrancy of Scripture or the authority of Scripture or the inspiration of scripture, everything else becomes subjective. You can choose to accept parts of the Old Testament, parts of the new, you get to pick and choose which you believe. And that's what they're doing with Jesus and only accepting his

words. Sort of like a red letter Bible. It's like I'm I only believe in the words that Jesus said, minus these could go hold Jesus seminar. I don't really believe Jesus even said this and this. I only think he said this is. You become azura. The judge of scripture. You're the one who determines which books belong to the Bible, which words belong in the Bible, which ones you can submit to. And your understanding can completely different from the next guy. And that's what's most frustrating in conversations I've had with progressive Christians is there's no objective standard by which to have a conversation with them. If they're making themselves the judge of Scripture, I don't even know where to go. So with that said, in your experience, someone is seeking to point a progressive Christian towards the Lord Jesus Christ in his his deity, his death, his resurrection, the second coming, who he truly is, what he truly did, what he truly taught, what is the best way to point them towards the the one true Christ?

Jason Jimenez

Yeah, that's a powerful question and I really appreciate it because I, I do think what's happened is that people, they get into arguments and they're really not pointing people to the real Jesus, if you will. You know, one of the best things and it, you know, comes from a previous book I wrote called Challenging Conversations and trying to teach people to be an advocator of God's truth. And typically, sadly, what we've seen in our culture today is we have the aggressor and that gets all the noise and all the press. And again it's a it's a small majority within the Christian faith, right, but unfortunately that small number becomes the majority voice in the tactics and the attitude. Well that's unchristian. Or to speak the truth in love. Ephesians 4:15. And so we don't want to be the avoider. So when they, when it does come up, when you have a progressive Christian who's like giving pushback and denying the very divinity of Jesus, and rejecting the Gospel of John completely and metaphorically interpreting everything else. Because they haven't answered everything, I want people to understand that. So when you are talking to a progressive Christian like you said, it will vary. Depends on their views, depends that their influence comes from David Gushi, or if it comes from Brian Zon. You know somebody, maybe it's lighter toned in the progressive Christian faith versus somebody who's a lot more engaged like Peter Eames or Brian McLaren. So people got to keep that in mind.

Jason Jimenez

But at the heart of it, when somebody is saying, hey, Jesus to me, so for example, and this would be helpful. I didn't feel like it was enough to help Christians like, here's what we believe, you know, historically, biblically, theologically and spiritually, about those six doctrines that we mentioned centered on Jesus, the person of Jesus. But I also then say, OK, well, if progressive Christians, for the most part reject those, then who is Jesus to them? Well, it really is 3 false portrayals. So let's say you're you're talking to a progressive Christian who believes that Jesus was more of a Mystic. Well, one of the biggest things you want to do in that case to point them back to the real Jesus is where did Jesus ever talk about this self consciousness? This self-awareness? Where do you interpret that in scripture, right. And if they're saying, well, you know, we have that in the Gospel of Thomas, he said, well, Gospel Thomas was clearly written after the canonical gospels. And if you're going to look at a reliable source and you're going to reject the canonical gospels, that's being inconsistent historically. So it's OK for people to make mention of that, to show that the source that we have, actually John, is a lot more credible then, looking at the Gospel of Thomas, that contradicts the majority of what we see in the Synoptic Gospels. So when you do that, you you want to show them that the language that a Mystic tries to use does not align to the actual teachings of a monotheistic Jew who is fulfilling prophecy.

Jason Jimenez

Now the other false narrative that you'll see quite often now from a progressive Christian is a second category. And in this little in that second category, let's say you're talking to progressive Christian believes that he was a woke teacher. What they don't like to do is they don't like to actually look at the teachings of Jesus. They like the Sermon on the Mount Jesus, but they don't like the Mark 7 Jesus, who's actually calling out sin that defiles the heart. And so that's what I actually do with these progressive Christians because I want to, it's not just catching them in a lie. This is not a game. This is about someone's soul. And someone's advancing a false view or narrative of Jesus, and it is our responsibility and duty to love that person. Speak the truth of love. But defend the gospel like but we see Paul the Apostle do. So when when somebody's using Jesus as a woke teacher, I then consistently show them actual teachings of Jesus, and then when they're picking and choosing, that's where you can start narrowing in saying it's interesting how you pick and choose Jesus and that becomes the bobble head Jesus. And you actually are, again, you're falsely interpreting what you're seeing in Scripture, right? You're downplaying or downgrading certain passages and you're uplifting in your, you know, your improper hermeneutics. You know the Isa Jesus. So I when they use the Sermon on the mount, it's OK. Let's use Matthew 5 through 7 and let's actually go through Matthew 5 through 7 instead of just judge not lest you be judged. And you know, love your enemies kind of thing. Right. So that's a helpful thing to do is just all they have to do is stick to the actual teaching of Jesus canonically.

Jason Jimenez

And then the last one is the revolutionist. And that's the this is the biggest false portrayal I should say, of Jesus in academia. Yeah, you know, he was just an insurrectionist, right? He was trying to reform Judaism. It failed. He was captured. He was, he was publicly humiliated. It left the disciples absolutely defeated. And so they felt like they had to do something about this. Hence, they started a religion known as Christianity. And so those are the original hijackers. You know people like James to Paul and the rest of the disciples. That's what the progressive Christians say today. You know, the Paula Frederickson's of the world, the Brian McClarens of the world. You know, the people I mentioned before. Brian Zones. And that one then is if you actually look at the teachings of Jesus, you don't see Jesus advancing a revolution. And John six when they're trying to force him to become king, what does Jesus do? He doesn't receive the power. He runs from it. Right? When James and John want to strike lightning and judge induce Jesus said no and he says he he who fights with the sword will die by the sword. When a man came to him and says, tell my brother to divide the portion, right, you know my fair share. I want my fair share. That's socialistic. Jesus denied that. He did not accept that. And on and on we go. Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, rendered to God what is God's. So they try to make Jesus out, to be this insurrectionist. This rebel, this revolutionist, this guy with socialistic leanings. And that is a false betrayal.

Jason Jimenez

And we as Christians have enough evidence in the canonical gospels that are reliable sources that are early and abundant in their coherence, that in the cooperation of them and with eyewitnesses, accounts that we can defend those things with great fervor. And that, I think, is the biggest thing, Shea, is that a lot of Christians don't know that. They kind of when they say, oh, you can't interpret that that way. It's just metaphorically speaking. And then that's it. It's the end of the debate. So I encourage Christians to study the actual teachings of Jesus. Clearly, the progressive Christians who have read Jesus take him out of context. And if we let them, this now becomes the interpretation now of the text. And so if you take

all three of those false portrayals of Jesus, the Mystic, inclusive teacher, and the insurrectionist, or their revolutionist, that is the majority view combined now in America. And so if Christians clearly look at the the teachings of Jesus and somebody saying, oh, this is what Jesus meant or Jesus never said that, we can challenge them with multiple attestation that that is not the case. So again it just depends on the progressive Christian and what their their specific view of Jesus is to help really direct them to have that discussion.

Shea Houdmann

Well said, pointing people towards Jesus rather than focusing on hypocrisy, like what you said earlier and people's souls are at stake. In this conversation winning an argument is not the goal. And winning, winning the argument will turn people away more than it will attract people. And most people into apologetics love First Peter 3:15. Always be ready to give an answer for the reason that you hope that you have. But they forget the second part to do this with gentleness and respect. If you win a battle but lose the war and the war is for people souls. And I detect that heart throughout your book. And even hearing you today, you can tell your passion is to actually reach people, not just to win arguments. So I commend you wholeheartedly for that. For again this is the Got Questions podcast with Jason Jimenez, the author of Hijacking Jesus. Highly recommend the book. For anyone who's curious about what progressive Christianity is or has a friend or loved one who's in that movement that they want to try to understand and reach, excellent book, I'm highly recommended. But Jason, before we close me this last question, what is the best way for someone to learn more about you and your ministry based on what they've heard from you today?

Jason Jimenez

Well, one thank you for this opportunity. Love Got questions, love the ministry. I've used it for years as a pastor apologist, as many people have, and my family enjoys it. So thank you for that work and and and what an opportunity it is to partner together to help equip Christians to know not just what our faith believes and to defend it at all costs in, in love and and grace and truth, but also to help those people like you said who are misguided and are falling prey to progressive Christianity. So if yeah, people are interested to know more about what we do to come alongside the family and the church, they can go to our main website which is StandStrongMinistries.org. Or they can look me up, Jason Jimenez apologist and they can get all the various different books that we have put out. But we're excited about this book, Shea that's coming out that is really addressing an issue that is again, when when, when you think of the greatest hijacking that took place in in, in September 11th of 2001. And again, I'm not equating progressive Christians as those terrorists. What I'm saying is, when you have a a property or territory, right and it's under a certain rule or influence and you have a movement or an ideology that is intentionally trying to infiltrate itself, that is a hijacking. Especially if it's if it's threatening the very existence and sustainability of something.

Jason Jimenez

And so this is this is this is ruining families. And there's a lot of arguing that is going on in homes and I could not stand idly by and not do anything about this. And one is I love Jesus. I love our Christian faith. The hope that you and I have, which is a living hope, the blessed hope that we have one day he will return. And we have a responsibility. And when I had so many people come and say, where is a good resource, obviously there's great resources out there, but I didn't see a resource like Hijacking Jesus that

put it in perspective of #1. How did we get here? How did this all start right? And see the movement of Satan through the years. That is #2 led to these hijackings of Jesus and denying from his divinity to his second coming. But then thirdly, let's look at the false betrayals of who they make Jesus out to be, as though it's like the liberating one. And I wanted to address those things in those three areas. And so the book will be out soon and people can get the book anywhere where they get books, anywhere they're sold. And I encourage people to do that and to share it and get the word out. And so thank you for your support and helping us do just that.

Shea Houdmann

Again, the the book is Hijacking Jesus. It's an excellent book. I enjoyed it. Highly recommend it and I learned some things from it in the sense of understanding the movement, its origins, and what they're really going for. What's their? What's their end game in the sense of what they're even trying to do, whether intentionally or unintentionally, is they're tempting to hijack the Christian faith, creating the both Jesus and the faith in their own image, rather than in the image of Christ. So Jason, thank you for joining me today. I thoroughly enjoyed our conversation. And again, we'll include links to where we can learn more about Stand Strong Ministries, Jason Jimenez, and Hijacking Jesus and the the show notes in the description on YouTube and also at podcast.gotquestions.org. This has been the Got Questions podcast with Jason Jimenez, author of Hijacking Jesus. Got questions? The Bible as answers and we'll help you find them.