



Jesus Mean and Wild: The Unexpected Love of an Untamable God

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Examining Mark's gospel, this book reveals, not a safe, nice guy Jesus, but a militant Messiah with a powerful love who dares believers to follow Him.

Jesus Mean and Wild: The Unexpected Love of an Untamable God Details

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Steve Bedford says

I wanted to like this book. I agree with its premise, and was hoping that the thesis would be better borne out, but the execution was lacking. The majority of the support for his arguments were based in stories from outside the gospels themselves, so most of his claims remained unsubstantiated from the text or the historical context. He'd make a claim, then jump to a tangentially related story from the 12th century, or his son's boy scouts, to support it. The worst part was at points he would overreach into some pretty grey territory. At one point he used the "Oh God, Oh God, why have you forsaken me" account to talk about how God sometimes forsakes us in our lives, that God isn't fully reliable, that sometimes he doesn't come to our rescue as a matter of nature, seemingly simply because he is mean sometimes. This is a terribly flimsy argument about the problem of evil, one that doesn't account of our sins or other spiritual agents. Disappointing, in general.

Mara Jule says

Galli challenges readers to remember that a holy God is not a tame, malleable puppet. The book is the start of a conversation about who Jesus really is. And while I wouldn't suggest Galli's has everything right, he can throw you out of your comfort-zone concerning who our Lord is. As a spur to deepening a relationship with Christ, Galli definitely set you out on new trajectories. But I would challenge each of his premises through a deeper study of the scripture.

I am always hesitant to trust any theology that is not frequently referring back to Scripture. A handful of passages, disjointed for their original context, might only be proof-texting (that is, taking a passage out of context to prove your point). Not that I perceived Galli as being altogether off the mark. But, like I said before, the book works well as a starting point for the reader to do his or her own study.

As a provocative discussion started, it would be quite fascinating to do this book as a study in a church group.

Kharissa says

From what I've read thus far, this is quite the read! It shines a light on some aspects of Christianity most individuals would rather keep in the back of their minds. God does love us and desires us to see HIM completely... so much so that he allows us to experience difficult times. However, such times build on the genuine faith and shine light on issues beyond our comprehension... these are the things that can direct a deepening realization, understanding and devotion to our precious father and Savior. The book illuminates God's passion and how it sometimes is more than grace and mercy or the fuzzy, warm feelings in your stomach. His mission to save us and direct our lives can bring us to our knees... and so much more.

Diane says

I didn't expect to like this book, because I thought it would be another of the Christian "self-help" books that really aren't very helpful. However, I found it to be an engaging read on many of the hard teachings of the Gospel. The author's thesis is that Christians and the church are focused on being relevant and comfortable to the point where they often miss Jesus' message entirely. I really learned a lot from the author, and felt that he dealt with a difficult subject with grace and dignity.

Alexis Neal says

An interesting premise, but it lacked oomph. I feel like Galli started with the gospel and traced it back to attributes of Christ that he feels are often overlooked by the church today: Here is the gospel, and what does that tell us about Christ? Which is a fine thing to do, but the book purports to start with Jesus himself and his seemingly unpalatable actions and words, so I think it would have been more effective to say: Here is the Jesus of the Bible, and what does that tell us about the gospel? It may be an overly subtle distinction, but I think the second approach better addresses the very real issues some people have with seeing Christ as He is, rather than as they imagine or want him to be. Also, I felt that aspects of Jesus that he chose are not really the best examples of the meanness and wildness of the incarnate God as revealed in Scripture.

Virginia says

The premise of this book sounded so interesting. I looked forward to reading about a God who would live up to the title of this book. Untame-able, indeed! However, Galli, (whose writing I do enjoy on *Christianity Today* does not quite reach my expectations with this offering. I found the ideas somewhat watered down, bland, and boring. Nothing mean nor wild about it. Truly disappointing.

David Pierce says

Extremely insightful work that creates much thought. Galli has written something great and useful here.

Heidi says

Galli is an evangelical Anglican, and I'm a mainline Episcopalian, so I'm sure there are things we'd disagree about. But his approach to Jesus and scripture is vigorous and inspiring for me. It does help to see Jesus both as meek and mild AND mean and wild. Admittedly some of his points about shame, physical force and intimidation, and fear make me squirm, but I found myself wanting to understand the point he was trying to make, rather than dismiss it all out of hand. It was helpful to read his critique not only of mega churches, legalistic evangelicalism, prosperity gospel, and "church planting for cool people" but also his critique of a tolerant God, laid back theology, and that mainline churches can be boring, bland, and showcase a loving Jesus without any anger or bite to him. An easy read, but with quotes from hefty (if typical) Christian thinkers like Augustine, Aquinas, Annie Dillard, Kierkegaard, and Martin Luther King.

Ebony says

I was expecting a book about Jesus. *Jesus Mean and Wild* is a book about humans who misunderstand Jesus. Essentially the message is that God as Jesus loves us so much that he has to be mean to us and make us suffer. That's not a new message, but Galli claims it has been lost in the making of Jesus into our own image—the meek and mild Jesus who wants us to have our hearts' desires. Galli suggests it is more important to be loving and be perceived as mean than it is to be nice and nonconfrontational. This, he argues is the true spirit of Jesus. As someone generally opposed to the perpetuation of redemptive suffering, parts of the book I simply disagreed with, but I liked the idea of accepting God on God's terms and not forcing Him into our own manageable paradigms because we are afraid to accept the truth. Despite the random personal narratives and the distracting jaunts through history, there is truth and conviction in this text.

Barbara says

Jesus will not be tamed.

Angélique (Angel) says

2 1/2 Stars. While I agree with Galli that many Christians today have accepted a water-downed version of Jesus, I felt that the Jesus portrayed by Galli was "spiked." He twisted Scriptures to turn Jesus into a volatile gimmick in order to draw people in and to present an excuse for anger sired explosions and behaviors. Another flaw I found in this book was the noticeable lack of referencing Jesus throughout the chapters. The chapters were filled more with Galli's anecdotes from his life or the life of others than with the life of Jesus.

Jeni says

Loved this book. I hope to read it once a year for a while - there was just so much in it that needs to become part of me. It's not a big book, and it was an easy read. I was so convicted about my cavalier attitude toward this awesome, mysterious, all-powerful, sometimes-distant God who is so loving, but not in a mushy, indulgent way. He loves me enough to speak truth, withhold harmful things, block my path and withdraw his presence for a time. Jesus is not a teddy bear, and he doesn't cater to my me-me-me demands no matter how much I whine. And I am so glad.

Garrett says

I really enjoyed this book. After the first few chapters, like other reviewers have mentioned, I felt like the author touched on the subject of the chapter, gave a brief biblical example, and then proceeded to use real life experience or others stories to make his point. It seemed to really be lacking of anything substantial in the way of portraying Jesus as "mean and wild". I was beginning to think perhaps this is not the book for me. However, as the chapters progress, it became more clear and concise, the author used more scripture and biblical references with fewer personal stories and anecdotes...or at least it seemed that way to me. By the end of the book I had trouble putting it down, only to make notes or stop to think about what I had just read.

Overall, after reading this, I have a deeper desire to find similar books, not because this book lacked anything, but because it left me wanting more of the same. I would encourage anyone who truly desires a deeper understanding of Jesus to give this book a read.

Favorite quote-

"If once from the cross Christ screams 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' how many times has God lamented 'O man, O woman, why have you forsaken me?'"

Jeremy Devaughn says

The Deep Jesus

This is exactly the sort of book for someone bored of the Jesus presented in church. Much of the time that Jesus seems pitched at the understanding level of a first grader--which is great if you're a first grader, not if you're an adult. This is a Jesus for mature and maturing people.

Mike Crews says

I bought this book because the title intrigues me. I have not been disappointed. Galli uses the Gospel of Mark to remind us that the Lion of Judah is not tame. I find his observations challenging and (in spite of the title) delightful.

I especially enjoyed chapter 11: "Mercifully Irrelevant" in which Galli writes:

"What the church should be in God's sight is not glorious, powerful, or successful by our standards, but faithful. This means the church, and every member in it, must die to dreams of relevance and success. We have to let all that be crucified. It also means letting the church be the church, the flawed institution that God has used time and again to further His kingdom in this world...Relevance, and power and success are finally a mystery, not so much something that can be manipulated by church growth science as something to pray for in humility and faith."

Those words, like many others in the book, are worth pondering and praying over.

If I could give this book 10 stars I would. It is not often a book makes me think and feel so deeply. I recommend it very highly with the warning---don't read it unless you are ready to be challenged!
