

Week 48

11/21/11

Betty: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. Thank you so much for joining us. I'm Betty and this is James. We're talking about a really important topic today and that is relationships and how they can be healed.

James: And it is a devastating event when someone has been unfaithful in their marriage and when they're a church person and a church staff member and they have been unfaithful and then actually one of the relationships brings forth a pregnancy and a child. And you say, "Well, my God! How would they relationship survive?" How could there be a meaningful future? -- Because there is a God that is greater than all of our failures.

When we return to him, don't play religious games, don't try the great cover up, get covered by the grace of God and the sufficiency and adequacy of the cross and the covering of all of our sins when we come to him, our father, our God, our savior in repentance and brokenness.

Then there is the restoration, the redemptive process; the restoration not only of a relationship with God but with even those who have been hurt. Here's the story. It is in a book. It's just gone to the bookstores. *Healing Your Marriage When Trust Is Broken: Finding Forgiveness And Restoration*. Cindy wrote it.

This is the wife, the one betrayed, the one trampled, walked on, hurt indescribably. How in the world could she write the book and see the restoration? Well, let's ask them. Her husband is here.

Craig Groeschel who has been one of our guests, LifeChurch.TV, one of the largest, perhaps the largest church in America now. It's amazing. They have 220,000 people who tune in on the Internet every week; check in, actually relate, interact with them, as well as the thousands that attend in the various locations. Craig has written a Forward. He is the pastor that said this can be restored by the power of God.

I want you to welcome, if you will, Chris and Cindy Beall. Would you welcome them?

It's really tough to know who to go to first. I'm going to be very honest with you because we had time, we had a meal together and I see Jesus in both of you, in your countenance. Isaiah said that your countenance testifies against you. I see a lot of people in churches, I

don't know whether they've been having affairs, I don't know whether they have broken relationships but their relationship with God seems to be so meaningless to them that they look like they've been hit by a truck and they sit out here like they need a resurrection more than a revival. I'm thinking, dear God what is happening? Their countenance doesn't testify of anything significant in their life.

Your countenance, Chris, testifies that something has happened, that there has been a load lifted. Just tell us about your journey, how you could hurt your wife and your family and get in the mess you got in. Take us on that journey.

Chris: It started when I was eight, honestly. I saw the first image in a magazine as a kid and for 20 years, it was just this constant struggle.

I came to faith at 19 years old, got married a year later; married way, way, way out of my league. Stepped into full-time ministry, and all throughout the way, I thought, well, now I know the Lord, now I'm in ministry, surely the struggle will subside, it will go away. And all along the way, I did everything but be completely honest about what I was struggling with.

James clearly says, "Confess your sins one to another and pray for each other that you may be healed." I think we have Christians that are dying with sin in the dark and they going to God, religiously going to God but they're unwilling to do the one thing the scripture calls us to do for healing, which is confess it one to another and lift each other up in prayer.

James: Do you think when they don't do it they're afraid they're going to be shamed about something they're already ashamed of and they feel like religious people will put more shame on them? Is that how the enemy plays off that?

Chris: Absolutely!

I think the deepest, for me, and I'll just say this, the root -- the root of my sin had nothing to do with physical intimacy, although I sinned physically -- I was physically unfaithful to my wife many years ago. The root of my sin was I believed a life that I am not enough in Christ.

All of the sudden when you don't -- when you forget who you are in Christ, you look for anything or anyone to validate you but it is a counterfeit, it is not the real thing. The real thing comes from God himself. I believe that when we bring this struggle into the light

that the light of the Holy Spirit and the light of God's people, if you're surrounded by the right people, God can do incredible things and that's what happened for us 10 years ago.

We went to be a part of LifeChurch.TV. Love Craig Groeschel to death. To be honest, I don't think we would be sitting here today if he wasn't our pastor and if he didn't have the courage to do what he did. I came on staff and all I can say is the Holy Spirit put me in a corner.

I was there for six weeks, we were still in boxes at our house and I felt caught. I remember he was talking in a staff meeting one day about being the real deal, that our private lives are what give us opportunity to minister publicly. At that point that was it. I went home. It was a Monday? Tuesday afternoon -- and she remembers -- trust me. I sat down on that couch and I said, "Honey, we have to talk." It was a rough day.

Cindy: Yeah, so he walks in the door. I thought, somebody died. I knew something was wrong.

He said, "We need to talk."

So I put our son in front of a video and came back and sat on the sofa with him and he just unloaded everything. It consisted of him being unfaithful multiple times, many different times with many different women. And the last part was that one of the women was pregnant and he was pretty sure that he was the father.

One minute I'm unloading boxes, getting ready and settled into my new home and the next minute I'm literally asking God to just take me home.

Betty: Did you have any idea that he was struggling with any of this?

Cindy: I knew he had a struggle with pornography but it was a percentage -- an addict will usually give you glimpses of what they're struggling with so I didn't know it was this full blown and I certainly didn't think that my worship pastor/husband was cheating on me.

James: How in the world? You wanted to die. Did you ever want to murder?

[Laughter]

Cindy: I don't know. He was pretty broken. From the moment he started confessing or when the confession happened he was truly acting in a godly sorrow. There was not a sorrow -- I'm sorry I got caught. When are you going to get over this? There was nothing like that.

I actually, as crazy as this sounds, in the midst of my pain, I felt pain for him because he shamed the name of Christ and he knew it and that was devastating for him.

James: All right, the process of healing because you've already heard a miracle that he would be broken. Were you convicted or did you know you basically had been caught or were you just confronted by God and by what your pastor had said and with the reality of who you were and what was going on?

Chris: I think -- when the Bible talks about the yoke of Christ, that was not the yoke that I had been living under. The yoke that I had been living under was very, very heavy -- the burden. A lot of people listening to this story know exactly what I'm talking about. The darkness and the weight and the despair of the -- you wake up one day and say, "How did I get here?" One little step after one little step after another step and all of the sudden you're living with this constant lie. I think I finally got to the point where I hated it. I hated the sin. I hated the sin enough to do whatever it took to be free. I didn't know if a marriage was going to be saved but I knew that a marriage couldn't be saved unless I was free.

James: You were tired of living as a prisoner. You were tired of being the trampling ground of the enemy. I know what that's like.

I actually was so trampled on in my own life, even as a minister that I prayed to die. I was never accused, nobody ever assumed. I was arrested by the Holy Spirit and convicted, brought to my knees before God, and God, in his mercy, lifted that burden.

Betty was awesome in ministering. We've been so open. Sometimes people think, too open to tell God will lift it. It is amazing what God does.

So you came with brokenness and you saw this and you had to be a big part of his healing. I don't think you wouldn't really have made -- you talk about Craig, but I don't know if you would have made it to where you all have actually been like parents to this child of this affair to where there is a relationship there that is meaningful. That's a miracle! This is huge! Tell us what's going on.

Cindy: Well, I wanted -- there was a part of me that wanted to leave but then that part of me that surrendered to Jesus years ago was like have you talked to God about this yet? And I finally said, "Okay, I need a word God. I need to know from your word, I need to stand on it. I need an obscure biblical confirmation that no one else will understand."

I went to visit with my mom and she made an appointment to see her pastor. I said, "Oh! I don't need to talk to another pastor."

I told him my story. At the very end he looked at me and he said, "If you left, no one would blame you. What you've gone through is so hard." And then he said, "But you are not a fool to stay and be a part of the redemptive work in a man's life."

And the moment those words came off his lips I knew that he was the voice of God disguised in a middle-aged Baptist minister.

[Laughter]

I mean there was no doubt in my mind.

And then God confirmed to me through Habakkuk 2:3, with two different individuals on the same day who did not know each other with that passage. The vision... (paraphrasing) For the vision is yet for the appointed time though it linger wait for it, it will not be delayed. I just felt God saying, "Do you trust me?"

I'm like, "Oh!" I'm just not sure I want to answer yes because I knew that answering yes meant going back to a dead marriage trying to make this work and how in the world does anybody -- how do you repair that?

But the moment I said, "Okay, God. Okay, I trust you." Peace -- the peace of God that I hadn't had in a few weeks just flooded me, just drenched me.

And the next morning was the day I was supposed to drive back home and start rebuilding with him and we started on this journey. Few steps forward, a lot of steps back; we kept going and we surrendered. Both of us, it took me to surrender too and not just for me to say, "You need to get your stuff together, buddy. I'm the great wife."

[Laughter]

But I had to look and see what it was about the things in my life, what did I do to contribute to this mess.

Betty: Forgiveness had to be one of the first big steps for you.

Cindy: Well, forgiveness, I have a hard time when I hear people who have -- when they have a hard time forgiving others. I get it but I have been forgiven so much by the savior of the world, how can I withhold that forgiveness especially when someone is on their knees begging for it? I just felt like that was God's -- it was my opportunity to show grace and to receive it and to understand it. It took my relationship with Christ to a whole new level of what he'd done for me.

James: What do you want to say to her and to the whole church family that loved the two of you?

Chris: The church, the house is the hospital. They loved us. And they prayed for us. And little old ladies came up to me years later, grabbed me by the collar, "Are you still free?" I would say, "Yes, ma'am, I'm still free."

[Laughter]

She means so much to me and Craig knows this. I could walk away from the ministry tomorrow and not even blink. My dream is to die not messing up the best story I know, which is the redemption of a marriage and then the opportunity to be painfully honest with masses of hurting people.

We wish there was not a market for this story but we know that's not true. We know they're everywhere. So we feel uniquely called to be honest, to live out loud and to share - - because we're still on the journey, we're still on the road of healing.

I think if I could say just one thing to the church is man, let's give ourselves permission to be a mess from time to time and let, in our weakness, Christ's strength truly be evident in it. I sometimes think we try so hard to have it altogether and we just don't! We've blown it, we've messed up.

Ministry was never even something I considered going back to ever. It was something that my pastor spoke into my life after a number of years. He said, it's -- I don't think God's done with you guys. He took -- who takes a risk like that? He puts somebody back in a position of shepherding other people after that? I don't know many people who would do that.

James: His name is Jesus. And Jesus manifests through the shepherds and through the family. What do you see in him, in Chris, now what do you see?

Cindy: He is completely willing, open, transparent. He is the best example of humility I've ever seen. Who can sit there and watch your greatest sin be told to the whole world by your wife and he just -- he does and he says, "Whatever I've gone through, God, for your glory -- whatever it is." Our thing is, "God, the answer is yes. What is the question?"

James: Do you see Jesus in them? Do you want to say thank you, God?

[Applause]

This redemptive work is truly the work of the redeemer. Religion doesn't repair things like this and restore relationships. You go through make believe pretense -- the great pretenders, pretending to be what you're not. We really get right and what matters is Jesus. And when Jesus matters then others matter.

You matter to Jesus... your relationship. You may need someone to pray with you today. Our prayer partners, many of them have gone through the same challenges you have. If you want someone to pray with you, don't hesitate to call. Your relationship is not too far gone. You're not hopeless. He is the hope.

Father, I pray for everyone who has been hurt, who has inflicted the pain, who's been trapped and trampled, defeated, that God, you'd lift them up and set them free that they would fall before you in repentance that you may lift them up and re-establish their lives on a solid footing, a solid foundation. Do it, Lord.

If you need someone to pray with you, that number is there. It's paid for by love. Don't hesitate to call.

The book is in the bookstores. I just bless you and say thank you for blessing us.

I do want all of you as our viewers, I want you to know that what we do, what we've just shared, this is the greatest ministry we have. Betty and I can deliver our heart, we can deliver messages that God's given us but this is his story written in the lives of others. We love to share that. We're called to do that but we're also called to assist the suffering. That's what we've done today -- but it is what we also want to do when you save a life.

You're going to hear a missionary; you're going to hear the heart of God. Now listen to me, please -- reach out and become an answer to this missionary's heart cry for the children on his continent. Listen!

On the mission field:

[Child crying]

Isak: Working here in Africa we're constantly confronted by statistics; we track these statistics. I've got to be perfectly honest, after doing this for 14 years I'm actually a little sick of statistics. I'm tired of hearing about the statistic that tells us that a child dies every six seconds. I'm sick of people telling me that there's a literal tsunami of children whose lives get stolen away by malnutrition. They have faces. They have names: The Matthews, the Jagombys, the Alberts.

When I see the desperation in a mother's eyes as she sits on a concrete floor looking at her child literally dying in front of her -- that's what's being lost every six seconds is a life. It is not a statistic! It's a life!

End of clip

In the studio:

James: God, I just thank you that when I look at those children I don't just see a statistic -- God, I see someone so precious to you! I don't ever want to get to a place that I'm not moved almost beyond the ability to even adequately express what I feel like.

I found myself wanting to just sort of freeze frame on some of those little faces -- the little eyes. And knowing what absolute poverty is when you see it and how simple it is to just give them what their heart desires. I look at all of those precious mothers and those families and they don't -- they're not even thinking about, "I wish I had a house or some mode of transportation." They don't, they walk.

What they want, they want that little baby. Their baby is their joy. Their baby, those precious mothers -- I spend a lot of time praying for the dads, that they will learn to be real good dads, just like I pray for them here at home to be good dads. A little baby, that's a joy, that's their world and all we have to do is feed them. And Betty and I are going to feed as many as we can. We've just done it for years. We've gone all over the world; we've held those kids. Many of them have died when we were with them; we've watched them bury them.

So I'm asking you now please, I'm just saying this as direct as I can, please dial that number and take your bankcard and use it the best way you'll ever use it, use it like a glorious check. And make the biggest gift you can. If you could help us feed 100 kids for the next months, give \$1,000, do it.

Just think about the simplicity of what I'm asking. A \$100 gift, we can feed 10 kids for the next months. When we began the program, we could feed them for six months on that amount, now it is three. So what Betty and I do, is we spend a lot more time when you don't even see us just raising money to cover the whole year but we come to you twice a year and we say, "Would you join us? Please! -- Hundreds of thousands of kids." But they're not statistics, they're little kids like Isak, the missionary said.

Would you dial the number? Take your bankcard. If you want to write a check, make it to *LIFE*. Some of you like to do that still. Go get it. Write it. Make it to *LIFE*; you're giving life. But address the envelope to *LIFE*, put it in the mail. Or you can go to LifeToday.org. You can do that, it's simple. We'll get the gift immediately. And we can tell the missionaries you can count on us.

A lot of the missionaries, we need to do something in Somalia, it's really dangerous. There are hundreds of thousands going to die in the next months. We can't -- the missionary said it is so difficult. I said, "God, we've got people who can make it happen. We've got viewers who will see it the way you see it. And they'll do something."

By the way, \$30 -- three kids. Don't say, "I don't have enough." Hey, how big is that to those mothers of those children? How big is it for their future?

Please! I pray when you call, I pray many people are calling to get help. I pray when you call to help if you get a busy, you'll be so persistent because a life depends on it. I'm going to get the life preserver to them. They're drowning! I'm going to save their lives. I can, it works. It is not a futile, feeble hope. It works! Please call! Or go online, and would you if you could help us care for 10 or 100 -- whatever!

We're going to send you Beth Moore's book. We're going to send you the 90-day Bible to say thank you, the beautiful bronze just to bless you. We want to bless you. I know you don't give to get. We give to you because we want to bless you. Thank you for helping us save those lives.

Please make the call. If you get a busy, press on until you get through. Would you do it? Thank you!

Begin video clip

Announcer: At this very moment a child is drawing her last breath struggling to stay alive due to a lack of food. Sadly, this impoverished child is not alone and without our help, many like her throughout Africa face death as well.

Today you can make a difference. You can save a life! *LIFE's* mission feeding teams are in place right now ready to answer the hunger cries of hundreds of thousands of suffering children in remote areas of Africa.

With previous food reserves gone and parts of Africa facing its worst famine and food shortage in more than two decades, we desperately need to replenish our supplies for the feeding programs immediately! Your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 will help feed and care for three, five, or ten children for three full months.

With your gift we'll send you Beth Moore's book, *The Life that Overcomes*. This Life Outreach exclusive featuring a collection of messages from Beth's heart will inspire you to live an overcoming life each day!

With your gift of \$100 or more to help feed ten children you may also request our new 90-day Bible designed to help you read through the scriptures in just 90 days.

Finally, as a special challenge please prayerfully consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and save the lives of 100 children. And you may also request the beautiful "Heart of the Father" bronze sculpture.

Please call, write, or make your secure gift online today at LifeToday.org.

End of clip**In the studio:**

James: I really feel like you heard God's heart -- the missionary's heart. We want to bless you with *The Life that Overcomes*. Beth Moore is such a blessing. Boy, her life was so impacted. She said it changed when she went to the mission fields with us. What a blessing she is. And *The 90 Day Bible*, we just want to say thank you.

I want to remind you again, healing for your marriage -- no matter what!

By the way, some of you say, "We've got a real battle." Call, we'll send you the book. We'll send it to you if you think it will help.

Let's say thank you again to Chris and to Cindy. You're a real blessing. Thank you! Thank all of you, viewers all over the world, down under, Europe, Canada, U.S. -- thank you for your help!

Announcer: Tomorrow, Anne Graham Lotz, daughter of Billy and Ruth Graham.

>> And we're sleeping through the alarms and I believe God wants to wake us up in our relationship with him.