

Week 48

11/23/11

James: Hey, hey! Wow! I'm going to join your group! Your church! Welcome to all of you! Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm James Robison, my wife Betty, "Wednesdays with Beth."

This is a book that you can get at the end of the program. It is called *The Life That Overcomes*. Now these are some of the lessons and teaching series that she has done right here on *LIFE Today*. And we would love for you to get it.

By the way, we have another interesting offer. I think this is just fantastic. Read *The Bible in 90 days*. Three months -- the whole Bible. It's laid out to where it is very interestingly put together where it will take you on a wonderful spiritual journey that will have transforming effect.

Now Beth is teaching a series on *Wrecked but not Ruined*, talking about the shipwreck, talking about what Paul went through and we've had a lot of attacks, we've had a lot of assaults, we've had a lot of challenges. *Wrecked but not Ruined*; Sometimes you have a wreck, you have a challenge, you have a mountain, you have a valley, you feel like well, it's just over, it is kind of like curtains but it is not, at an opportunity oftentimes to be lifted beyond and above and to learn through that challenging experience some of the greatest lessons in life.

Here's Beth Moore. Welcome Beth. Would you?

Begin video clip

Beth: Turn back with me to Acts, chapter 27 and we're going to go into a little bit of 28 during this present series. We're in a two-part series coming out of the storm and the shipwreck with Paul and Luke and 274 others. So turn there if you would, please.

We're going to catch up with them while they are in the wait, day after day after day after day on this ship and it says that they couldn't even tell day from night because the storm was raging so heavily around them.

We were just talking about before you joined us, we had just been doing a little bit of praise and worship and I wish so much that you could all be part of that with us; that

would be a joyful, joyful time together. We were singing the song that says the words out of Isaiah 40 verse 31 where it says:

Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength...

I want to say that again to you.

Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall just soar on eagles' wings and walk and run and not get weary, the word of God says.

But there is something that we miss over and over again because we think it says those who wait will renew their strength. So we keep wondering why in all of our waiting we are getting weaker instead of stronger. Anybody know what I'm talking about? Because we go through this all the time.

The scripture says that in that waiting we are supposed to gain strength but if you are like me the longer a wait goes on the less and less strength I have the tendency to get. Is anybody going there with me? Anybody, perhaps, as immature as I am in my waiting somehow? But we miss the little phrase there that is the most important part, "Those who wait upon the Lord! Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."

If you're like me I'm waiting upon the thing that I'm waiting upon. Anybody getting that with me? He doesn't say if you'll just wait upon the thing you will renew your strength. He says, "Wait upon me in the thing! Wait upon me!"

That's exactly what we're going to see happen on the pages of Acts chapter 27. They are in a waiting game and their lives are at stake. Now, at this point they've been told through the apostle Paul that they're not going to lose their lives but that they are going to lose the ship. So somehow they know they're going to run aground and it's going to be them swimming their way to the safety that God has for them.

So with that in mind I want you to pick up with me. Acts chapter 27 verses 27 through 32 to begin with. It says this:

27 On the fourteenth night –

Everybody say fourteenth night.

Audience: Fourteenth night.

Beth: That is a severe storm, tossing back and forth in a ship. I want you to feel that rumble in your stomach. I want you to grab that air bag. Anybody know what I'm talking about? Because I'm telling you these were men who were sick and tired of waiting.

27 On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. **28** They took soundings and found that the water was a hundred and twenty feet deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feet deep.

So all of this is tell us with our little bit of math that we're getting closer and closer and closer to shore.

29 Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. **30** In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow.

Now, mind you, what they're doing, they're trying to escape. So they lower the lifeboats as quietly as they know how because they are going to try to see if they can get away and leave the rest to die. Verse 31 it says.

31 Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved." **32** So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it fall away.

I want you to camp right there. If you're just joining us in this series you don't know, perhaps, that earlier in the story when they first set out on this voyage Paul said, "This is not a good time to sail. We shouldn't do it. There's going to be a whole lot of loss of life and cargo." But they did it anyway.

I want to present to you that now they're listening to him, whether he's a captain of a ship or not. This is the beauty of it. God is an expert at everything. So when he's giving the word suddenly a man that is not a captain of a ship can tell what the ship ought to do

better than the one who is in charge because this man is listening to a God who is God over all things -- over all things.

I've got to tell you something: we're going to see it further in this particular chapter together. But the centurion likes Paul. He likes him. I just want to throw out to you today that there is a lot to be said for people simply liking us. We don't have to live in such a way as to believe that somehow to be spiritual is to be unlikable. Now, you and I, I just want to make a little plea for the gospel to be given by people who other people can stand for a change.

[Laughter]

Anybody? I mean, can y'all just go with me there? What would be wrong if people actually even liked us as we gave them the message? -- Now, not in compromise. You and I have got to be willing to be un-liked if that's what it takes but, oh for heaven's sake do we have to set out to be disliked? Is that what it means to be spiritual?

[Laughter]

I've got to tell you, it's not just about spirituality, it's not just in religious circles that this happens, we really are losing in our electronic relationships, we are losing a lot of our social graces.

I want to say something to you young parents. It's something that I'm so full of joy to tell you that I'm seeing in my daughter and my son-in-law with our two grandchildren. They're teaching them manners. If you really do teach your kids these days, in this culture, real live manners and how to actually talk to adults, I mean you still need all sorts of recommendations to go to schools, to go to colleges, to get jobs. It doesn't hurt to be a person people could occasionally like! That's all I'm saying -- that's all I'm saying!

To grow in favor with God and man is a really, really pretty thing. Now again, we don't want to set out -- our other problem is that we just live for other peoples' approval, that's not what I'm talking about. But I am talking about having the social skills enough in the power of the spirit -- exactly what Proverbs talks about -- that we are able to relate to people in such a way that they find the gospel palatable, that we are that salt and that light, that we are the seasoning on that plate of food of the word of God to them, that something of the favor of God on us with people that do not know him and they're drawn to him.

That's exactly what happened here; Paul has got the man's favor. He flat likes him and it's going to happen, if not for God being the one in sovereign control anyway, so not a hair on Paul's head could be harmed if not for that sovereign fact it would be the centurion later on in our story saving Paul's neck because he plain flat-out likes the man.

I just want to make that point before we go any further that social skills can go a mighty long way in the middle of a storm. Now, you and I, if you've been in our first half of the series together, we've already compiled three points and I'm going to repeat to you what they are so far so you can jump in with us. I'm going to get our audience here to help me with this.

But we've already come up with three statements out of the shipwreck that we find in 27, in this 27th chapter of Acts and it's this:

Number One: Sometimes...

(would you finish this with me)

Beth and audience: ...we're standing in the exact spot where several storms collide.

Beth: We found that to be true. That it just seems like it's so often true that wherever we're standing, it's not just one thing we're going through, but it can be that several storms are coming and colliding right over our heads at the same time, a time of clarity, a time of direction if we've ever needed it, a time of collision. That was number one.

Number two: The question of fault feeds the fury of every storm. What we talked about earlier in the series is that our tendency in a storm is that we'll often find we're not in it by ourselves. There are other people in it with us. So what we'll find is that it's a perfect opportunity to place some kind of blame and some kind of fault because the truth of it is sometimes we do know that someone helped us get into that particular storm. Sometimes situations make it easy for us to blame... until suddenly it's us and everybody's finger is pointed toward us and then suddenly it is a whole different story. The question of fault feeds the fury of every storm.

Number three: The titanic temptation in any storm is to just give way to it. In other words, we're just going to do what comes naturally to us and we're just going to have a panic attack here. Or we're just going to go to bed and pull the covers over our head. Or we're going to work ourselves into oblivion so that we don't know what's going on around us while all these collisions are taking place.

This is where we pick up in our portion today. Here's what I want you to see is number four out of Acts 27: 27 through 32. Number four is this: To make it through the storm sometimes we have to cut some ropes. To make it through the storm sometimes we've got to cut some ropes. Would you take a moment to write that down? That's going to be based on Acts 27 verse 32. It says:

32 So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it fall away.

There can be beautiful clarity that comes out of being in a collision of storms. Sometimes we'll find that one reason God brings us to that place is because it's time to let some things be cut away from our lives that we've been hanging onto.

Listen, I want you to know something. They don't even have to be bad. It can just be that maybe you don't need them anymore. Maybe the purpose they were serving in your life five years ago, ten years ago, is simply finished now and it's time to move on past it. And it won't be until we're in a storm and that ship is being tossed to and fro that we begin to realize we're going to have to cut some things off and get some focus and get some clarity here.

I want you to know, what I'm not talking about is cutting the ropes of your marriage. I want to say that really quickly. Beyond that, almost anything goes. Not exactly anything but a whole lot of things are up for grabs when we come to a place where we see that God has a direction for us and we can't necessarily take everyone we've been in relationship with for the last 25 years. Anybody get what I'm talking about?

Maybe we cut loose of a job that we know God has brought us to the end of in a season of growth that we had and it's time to move on. Maybe it's time to move to a new city. Maybe it's time to make some new friends. Maybe it's time... and I don't want you to assume this if God is not saying it to you. Don't let me put this on you but sometimes it's just time to find a new church. Where God just says, "Cut some stuff loose and let me send you forth to the place I have for you. Cut it loose!"

Now here's what I'm thinking today and these are some notes I jotted down to myself to make sure I would tell you. When it comes to a point like this I really do believe that God is going to use us as a confirmation. In other words, if you're just coming up with something out of the blue right now, until you get it confirmed don't go get the scissors.

[laughter]

Do you understand what I'm saying? Because we can just take one thing right there and then we go home and we break up with every friend we've got. We quit work tomorrow. And then you've got no place to go day after tomorrow! But that's not what we're talking about here.

But it is game if you're saying God has been telling me over and over again, in fact maybe he's almost used that exact terminology, "Cut it loose! Cut it loose!" Take this as a confirmation. Okay, say it's the first time you're here. Well, now if you hear it four more times before next Wednesday, cut it loose! That's when you do get your scissors.

But here's what I found: anytime when God begins to work on me to make a change and to let go of some things and to go on forward with him in an area, any time in my desire for security and saneness – I don't know how many of you are like me but I want to have like exactly the same relationships all of my life and I don't want to make any new ones. I want to have all the old ones; I want my staff to be exactly like it is right now in 15 years, and I would have missed so many wonderful people if I'd just had Tic Toc the Game Is Locked, this is the only way we're going to do it. But that's our tendency, we want everything to stay the same.

Or we just keep accumulating, accumulating and we've got more life going than we know how to handle. And he's going, "Cut some of it loose!" Maybe it's a wonderful hobby we have and he's just going, "You know what, it's time now. I've got somewhere else for you to go. Cut it loose." But here's what happens to me. If I don't cut it loose when he tells me to and I never do exactly when he tells me to --.

[Laughter]

Isn't that true about cut-it-loose terminology? That one takes a while. But if I just keep hanging onto something after he has said cut it loose what happens is that rope becomes a noose around my neck and it happens every time -- every time when there could have been a smooth departure. But no! No! Instead I hung on to that rope until that thing was all around my neck and was hanging me. That's what happens. A good thing can turn sour on us. It could be you're serving in an area of your church where you've been for many, many years and it's like time... God has something else for you to do and you're going, "Well, there is no one yet there to do it." That's because you're in it.

[Laughter]

Anybody? He'll supply all the needs according to his riches in Christ. But if we've not left

the hole yet it can't get filled because we're still in it and we need to cut it loose because it's time again. Only hear this as confirmation but if he's been telling you over and over again it's time, that maybe one reason why we can't get onto that next place is we're just like hung on all – everything we're hanging onto we've got to have the same thing, same people, same exact church, same exact mentors, same exact people, same exact work, same exact world and he's going, "I've got a whole new place to take you and you're so hung up in all your ties you won't even go with me to freedom!" Is it confirmation? Then get the scissors!

I've got to show you something so exciting! I love this kind of thing so much. I hope you do too. If you hate it hang on for a second. But if you like it stick with me.

Look at the very end of Acts. To somebody that is new with us today, when the word of God was inspired the Old Testament was given in primarily Hebrew, some Aramaic, and the New Testament was inspired in Greek. So that's why we'll talk about various Greek words. Well, in Greek in the very last verse of Acts, look all the way at the end, so I'm looking at Acts 28, all the way to the end at verse 31 it says this in the English,

31 Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, in Greek the very last word of the verse, it ends... the entire book of Acts ends with the word that in the NIV says without hindrance -- without hindrance. It's the very last word instead of being at the first of the verse where we put it in our English translation. It's the very last word. The entire book of Acts ends with the word in Greek that means unhindered. The entire book is about the unhindered work of the Holy Spirit through regular old flesh and blood, frail and weak people just like all of us!

And it shows what would happen; I mean they lived an adventure because they were just willing to move with the spirit! And we just placed our feet in concrete and we demanded of God that we stay. And he's going you know what? My cloudy pillar of anointing has moved! And you're just demanding that you stay right where you are. That's where we get bored and we get weary and we think, when was the last time we got a fresh word from God? Well, he was talking over there! And we're still over here going, "What? What?"

[Laughter]

A fresh work of God! We've got to go with him. The acts of Holy Spirit on us will be

where he is unhindered; where we've just got a noose around the whole thing. We want him to come and cut those ropes loose.

You know what? If we'll do that, even the things that he didn't mean for us to cut loose, they won't go anywhere. We just still like cut some ropes where we're not so tangled up in everything. We're just so busy being the savior; everybody in our little group knows that we're just totally tangled up in it.

Listen, when we start cutting those ropes of codependency, what was meant for us will still stay. We just don't have to be all entangled in them. Anybody get a word from that? We can cut them loose. Then God decides do they go in that current or do they stay right here next to us? But we want the Holy Spirit of God to be unhindered in us! Everybody say unhindered.

Audience: Unhindered

Beth: Say, "Come, Lord, be unhindered in me!"

Audience:

[repeats]

Beth: I want you to see this for a moment. I want you to reflect on that lifeboat because here they got the ship here, but they are going to get down in that little lifeboat so that they can be saved in the tiny little boat. And I kept thinking to myself this is what we do. We have our little lifeboats, the things that we're looking at for security, things that are going to save us in our storms that are not of God."

What occurred to me, God brought Isaiah 40, verse 12 to my mind that says that he holds the sea in the hollow of his hand! I want you to understand as your sea is tossing and as the wind is blowing, God not only has your ship in his hand he has got the whole sea in the hollow of his hand and your boat is right there in the middle of it! We can trust him, we can trust him!

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Boy, that is a tremendous truth. Everything that Beth shares is, I think is profound truth because it is biblical truth but she communicates it so effectively and what she just said about the situation not only in life but the total situation, the whole picture, he has

got the whole world in his hand. It is critically important for you to understand that -- and I've said this before, I think it is worth repeating, if we are clay in the hand of the potter and our Father God the creator, the one who knows how to shape the very best in all of our lives, there is pressure, it either comes from the hand of God for shaping purpose or it is filtered through the fingers of God, whoever fired the arrow that flies in the darkest moment and at the brightest day the Psalmist said. That arrow still gets through only in order to accomplish some purpose and we don't have to receive the painful suggestions of the enemy. So these are literally fire that tests us oftentimes, trials that test but make us stronger.

Betty, we're going to hear the voice of God through one of our friends, a missionary, an athlete, that would have been a professional athlete in South Africa in the sport of rugby, just like our N.F.L. or our major league baseball or the national basketball association but he said no, I'm going to do what my dad has done and he has done it for years now. What a blessing.

I want you to listen. I want you to listen to him talk about the children on his continent; I believe you'll hear God. I believe you can do what God wants you to do and I think it is really important. 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: Betty and I say from the bottom of our heart thank you on behalf of children whose lives you will save. *The 90 Day Bible*, many of you have never read the whole Bible, this is a wonderful journey. We're sending the Bible along with Beth's book, the life that overcomes. This is the life God wants for you.

Those of you who make a gift to help us care for ten children for the next months, \$100. Where can you make a \$100 gift that just keeps giving for months? And gives the greatest gift, it gives life.

Beth's book for any gift, both of these books are for a gift of \$100. Please keep this in mind.

If you can help us care for 100 children, make a \$1,000 gift or more, please do that. We'll send you "The Heart of the Father" bronze, it is beautiful. These collectibles become not only a treasure. You say, well, that's wonderful! These artists have done this to say thank you. But they become a conversation piece, often you can inspire others to begin to save lives and to make a divine deposit in areas of incredible indescribable pain.

Thank you for your help! Tell your friends to watch *LIFE Today*. Tell them about Beth.

>> Some people are thanks whiners. God's wanting me to do this, but I'm going to whine for Jesus.

[Laughter]

Announcer: Happy to do it -- tomorrow!