

Week 49

11/30/11

Betty: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! Well, for me I know -- and probably you too -- it is that special time of the week, "Wednesdays with Beth"! I'm Betty Robison and this is James.

James: Well, we are thrilled to have Beth. And she is teaching a series that is in this book that you can get and I hope you will at the close of the program, *The Life that Overcomes*. Beth -- we were talking, as a matter of fact, we were just talking this week, both of us had such a challenging childhood and it is like we're the poster kids for what God needs to do. But you know what? We're a poster person for what God can do. And we can have a life that overcomes. You don't overcome to the point that you don't have any more challenges or any more wrecks. And Beth is actually teaching what is in the book in a series that you can be wrecked or have a wreck and not be ruined.

Here's Beth. Welcome her.

Begin video clip:

Beth: I want you to look back at Acts chapter 27. I'm so anxious to go with you in this next portion. Pick up with me in verse 33: Acts 27 verse 33. It says then, now notice that they've just tried to escape in the lifeboats but they've stopped them from doing so in verse 33.

33 Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. "For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food--you haven't eaten anything.

34 Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head." **35** After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. **36** They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. **37** Altogether there were 276 of us on board.

In case you want to know, I've told you that number several times and you want to know where it lives in scripture? That's the verse! It says then, in verse 38:

38 When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.

I want you to pause right there for just a moment and look over those verses with me. I want you to notice something. We're going to work up to our fifth point in just a few

minutes but I want to settle on some things before we do. I want to take you back to verse 33, where it says:

33 -- "For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in –

There are two words there in the NIV that I want you to lock in on. What does it say?

Audience: Constant suspense.

Beth: Everybody say it again.

Audience:

[louder]

Constant suspense.

"You have been in constant suspense..."

Beth: And somehow when I was studying this portion of scripture I settled on those two words because I thought you know what, I don't know of many things that will wear and tear on your soul more than that... just living in constant suspense. And I started thinking, how many of you, just like I have been in my own life, are going through a season where day after day after day after day you are longing to know an answer that is yet to come or maybe you know when that test is going to come due and you're going to get the results of that test but it's days from now and you live in this – what did it call it?

Audience: Constant suspense.

Beth: Constant suspense. I want you to let those words settle on you a moment and I'm asking God to even cause them to somehow bring about some of the emotions, some of the feelings that it has and it carries with it, the weight that it carries with it. Because I just want to present to you, I don't know of many things more demoralizing than that. Just day after day after day after day – just let that stir up the emotions, that living in constant suspense.

Let me give you a few examples: Am I going to get laid off or not? I mean, you'll hear about it at your work place that there are going to be layoffs. Maybe last time I know that

my son-in-laws place of business just here recently laid off 16 people out of nowhere. He doesn't know, will he be next? They know they've got financial challenges so will this be the time or will next time be it? Will I get laid off or not? Some of you know exactly what I'm talking about.

How about this one? Is he going to stay with me or not?

Or maybe for somebody else, maybe it's a gentleman out there and I say to you, "Is she going to stay with me or not?"

I mean, constant suspense; is there anything that will wear on you like wondering, "Is this going to work out or not?" Looking for some little indication of some kind of permanence, some kind of vision of where this thing is going and staying in this thing we're calling what? -- Constant suspense.

Are we getting married or not? Anybody? I mean like, where is this moving? Is this going anywhere or not? -- Constant suspense.

Is the chemo going to work or not? Of all the people that we're talking to today that these two words might resonate with, I listed statement after statement and question after question trying to think who would this most resonate with? I can't think of anybody more than somebody going through chemotherapy and wondering is this time going to be the time it's going to take? Will this treatment work? -- And the wear and tear on your soul of that constant suspense.

Is the money going to come through or not? Will we ever sell the house? Ever make financial ends meet?

How about this one: am I pregnant or not? It may be that you want to be. It may be that you don't want to be. But I'm going to tell you that that constant suspense can turn you inside out.

Will this adoption go through or not? Anybody else?

I started thinking, I thought and I'm going to call it out to you because I'm about to do something with the audience that you can't necessarily hear them say but I thought this would be interesting to you so I'll relay it on to you but I just thought some of you – open my mind here. What did I not mention? What something that you're going through that is just constant suspense? You tell me.

Are you going to get to retire or not? How about that one? Will there ever be any real retirement here or not here?

Will my children be faithful to God? -- Constant suspense. That's a good one.

Others? Yes? Exactly what we were talking about with the chemotherapy but in a broader range: Waiting for the doctor to tell you what is it? What do I have and what are we going to do about it? What is the answer here? What are those two words? -- Constant suspense.

Is my child going to be all right? Is this baby going to be all right?

Listen, God esteems a season of constant suspense. You need the ministry of the Holy Spirit. You are in a place where you need to be tended to. I want you to understand today because when we talk about it as a group maybe we acknowledge it, but on our own we're not realizing you're in a tough situation. When you go through a duration of constant suspense it can eat all the way through your intestines. Anybody? Not to mention your character – a marriage – a family – all sorts of relationships.

I started thinking, because I was in this situation. God's so faithful. Let me tell you something about being a teacher. God is really faithful with people that he puts up at podiums because he wants to make sure there is authenticity so he makes sure we go through it before we talk about it. I can't even begin to tell you.

I've got a neighbor – I was walking yesterday around my neighborhood and I saw a neighbor's yard that I get a really big kick out of that just swears she cannot grow anything. That everything time she puts in a shrub or she puts in flowers they die within about 48 hours. I do think it probably is so based on her struggles. But I noticed just yesterday that she stuck some artificial flowers, just stuck them in --. She just went to Hobby Lobby, she just packed them up and I mean right now they look really good, really good. But they're going to look rough after a few days. But anyway, it just kills me; it just made me laugh.

But we're so tempted, let's just go artificial here -- let's just go artificial! And the Lord doesn't like for that to happen to his servants so he just like keeps us true. So he keeps us going through all sorts of things so we will be able to relate with it.

I had a recent bout with constant suspense; something that went on... it was only supposed to be -- and I'm not going to give away exactly what it was because I want you to relate on this level, wherever you're coming from -- but it started out that I was going to have to wait two months. And then you know how this works. Then it was going to be

five months. Then it turned out, by the time all was said and done, this was a ten month ordeal. It was so frustrating, and it was big! It was something that was big to me personally, something big to my family where it was concerned and the kind of thing that we would have had to deal with.

I got to tell you, in the process of that I came upon this lesson and this portion. My eyes just settled on those two words. I thought, "Lord, that's what I'm in! I'm in me some constant suspense and it's wearing on me. It by itself can become a storm. I need the ministry of your spirit!"

And I thought what am I to do here? Because I knew that the Lord was going, just like we saw in the earlier part of our lesson, "Take courage." I get that -- I get that. But so often I need like give me something specific. I need me a word.

So here's what God began to challenge me to do. I brought them with me and these are months old. I didn't do this just to bring it to you. God would never let me get away with that. I'd already done it. But what God began to show me is that he had me go to his word and compile a list of ten because I had one big area of constant suspense. So the Lord led me to his word and he said, "I want you," and this is not out loud but in my spirit, I was just led of the spirit, "go to the word and compile ten constant certainties. And the only way you're going to overcome your constant suspense is ten times..." And this is what I felt like doing.

I'm not saying that that part is doctrine, but I am telling you that the overarching message of it is indeed doctrine, that it is faith -- it is faith that is going to carry us through something when we are under the turmoil of constant suspense. So God had me go to his word and I wrote out ten constant certainties. That I may have this one constant suspense but I've got ten certainties. I'm just going to read you three of them.

Number one: I have constant certainty that you are for me and not against me. Romans 8:31.

Number two: I have constant certainty that you yourself made yourself of no reputation and took on the form of a servant, according to Philippians 2. I have complete certainty that you would be most glorified by me, too, making myself of no reputation bowing down in humble service and entrusting myself to you.

Number three was this: Psalm 118:5 – 7. I have constant certainty that in my anguish I can cry to you, Lord, and you will answer by setting me free. I have constant certainty that you, Lord, are with me. I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? I will not be afraid,

Psalms says. What can man do to me? You, Lord, are with me. You are my helper and I will look in triumph on my enemies.

I came up with ten of those and I'm going to tell you for the entire remainder of the time that I was in that what?

Audience: Constant suspense.

Beth: I read out, I mean nice and loud. I did it with some volume. I did it with some meaning. I got out my scriptures and I read those things out day after day after day after day. When it all came out, we came to the other side of it. You know what? It didn't come out in the best case scenario of what I would have wanted but you know what? I had already had the victory! I thought, "You didn't get me! You didn't get me, enemy! You didn't! You didn't!"

I may not have come out of this with exactly what I wanted but I can tell you this: what you wanted out of me was that I would falter to fear over and over again and by golly I'm not doing it! I'm saying to you today, if you are in constant suspense, you've got a whole Bible full of constant certainties. Go to his word and claim that your God is for you and not against you. That's the remedy for constant suspense.

Now, there's another sideline here. Look back at verse 34. Some who are tuning in are going, "I don't even know what book y'all are in."

We're in Acts, chapter 27. We are talking about the ship, the storm in the shipwreck of the apostle Paul and the 275 others. I want you to hear this one. In verse 34 they're on the ship and have been there for days and he says to them, notice he says,

"For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food--you haven't eaten anything. **34** Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive.

I want to camp here for just a second. Still not making point 5 yet but I just want to say that when you and I are going through a collision of storms, when we're going through a very difficult time and all sorts of winds are colliding right over our life, it's very easy for us to neglect our physical needs.

I want to remind you guys for the time that we are this side of heaven we're all linked together in this physical body, this soul and this spirit. Being made of those three components, we are part spirit, part soul, and part body. And as long as we're in this

form, in this flesh and blood, every one of those components affects the other. When I let go of taking care of some of my physical needs when I'm in the middle of a storm and if we're super, super spiritual about the way we want to do the thing, we could really do that.

In other words we're going to take care of all the spiritual needs but we're not doing anything to watch after our physical health. I want to remind you of the time when Elijah just got so incredibly despairing that he just sat under a tree and went, "I just want to die."

And God said to him through the angel, "Rise up and eat! Rise up and eat!"

And it represents two things to me. Rise up means get the blood flowing again. I just want to say this to you. I know you're going, "This is a far reach on that word." I'm just saying God dwells in, (by way of his Holy Spirit,) in our physical bodies. Just like get out and get some sunshine. When you're in the middle of a storm, sometimes our worlds can become like our entire matter is the entire universe.

Does that make sense to you? Where we just get to be a globe head, everything is about us. We're just like a globe with legs on it. And everything -- everything -- like the news ought to be about us every single night, the way we think.

[Laughter]

And get outdoors... take a long walk, just walk a dog in the park, do whatever you got to do but rise up. And here's the best part, eat.

[Laughter]

My daughter's birthday was just here recently and I made the famous Texas sheet cake. I wish I could make it for every single one of you. I wish you could rise up and eat that! I mean, it is a piece of heaven: three sticks of butter, and buttermilk, and all sorts of ingredients that make it the ultimate Texas cake.

But I'm going to tell you something, that's what you want to rise up and eat but that may not be what you're supposed to rise up and eat. But we've got to take care of our physical needs. Said you need to eat something. You've got to have your strength here, and attend to the fact that our Holy Spirit empowering is coming through these jars of clay. We've got to note it, and see what God is telling us.

Now here's the thing I brought you here to see:

34 Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head." **35** After he said this –

Oh! I love this kind of stuff!

35 After he said this he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat.

Would you please turn with me to Luke chapter 22? Some of you are already on it. You know where this is going. Look at verse 19. This is that final – that last supper, that full Passover meal. So please picture it just that way. They were not only taking of the bread and the wine, they were taking the entire Passover meal. It comes to a place where it says in verse 19:

19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

Listen very carefully! This is when commentaries come in very handy. And when you are so glad there are scholars out there that do know their Greek backward and forward and they can tell us things like this because the wording in Greek, listen carefully, is exactly the same! In Acts chapter 27, when it says:

That wording is exactly the same Greek as it is in Luke chapter 22. You want to know the other wonderful thing about it? The same man was inspired to write both books; that ought to tell you something right there. That's when our eyebrows ought to be like way up on our foreheads here.

[Laughter]

So scholars are really divided as to whether or not there is a Eucharist going on here in Acts chapter 27. Some will say, "I don't think that's what it is."

Others will say, "I think that's got to be what it is. Why is it exactly the same wording, exactly the same author that God has inspired to write it?"

But the New International commentary of the New Testament puts it this way, listen carefully. I'm quoting: "While it was an ordinary meal to the non-believers it was a valid eucharist for Paul, Luke, and the other believers who may have been with them."

I want you to hear that again. It may have been a common meal to everybody else but to Paul and to Luke it was the Lord's Supper. Anybody getting this with me?

Let me tell you something, because this will happen to us all the time. The rest of them may have been just having a regular meal but the few that came with faith were communing with Christ and had come to dine with him. And you'll have situation after situation -- I've got chills -- can you see the chills all over my arm?

[Laughter]

We'll have situation after situation happen to us where we'll know that was God and somebody else will tell us that it is coincidence. But let me tell you, you just let them have their common meal if they want it, you have communion -- You have communion!

Because let me tell you something, while everybody else is saying that can't be it, you get to have Jesus! You get to have Jesus!

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Well, I think the whole world is waiting to see people who when facing those challenges, what could be called a catastrophic experience, that we've had meat to eat the world doesn't know anything about, which Jesus told his disciples that you could find a satisfaction, a fullness in the face of all challenges and depravity and difficulties. It is amazing. People are looking for that. People will be drawn to it. The world is looking for the answers and they will come from God. And they best see them where they can believe when they see it demonstrated in our lives.

Betty, one of the great expressions that you and I have and have enjoyed is expressing life not in word but in deed all over the world and in areas where people thought no one would ever notice. You ever felt like no one noticed your issue and you found out that somebody did -- because God did and how it felt?

I want you to look at situations and lives that so often feel so totally overlooked. I don't think you can experience a greater joy than doing the unexpected in an impossible situation. Watch closely and listen.

On the mission field:

Isak: This young child's name is Esperanza. Her name means hope, and yet for this child there is very little hope. And for the thousands of children that this child represents, children who don't die as a result of a war or some form of conflict or something that they did wrong but children whose lives are literally stolen away, silently in the middle of the night by a killer called malnutrition. It is a simple thing. It is the lack of adequate nutrition and food for children of this age.

Esperanza, while her name means hope, may not represent hope, it may actually represent the exact opposite unless you open your heart to stand up and say, "I'll do what I can do." Because each and every one of us can do something, that's one life saved -- that's one less child that dies as a result of malnutrition.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: I've spent... my life sharing life because I experience life. I experience it more fully because I express it freely. I just like to share. I find something wonderful, I like to share it. I see these little children and I don't run from them. I've spent, with Betty and others, boy, nearly 25 years running after them -- running to them. And I've not gone to them empty-handed. We've not left missionaries empty-handed.

I remember one of the first places that we went and saved a lot of children who were dying and we went back and saw one of the missionary pastors there and we came to give a good report. As we were leaving he looked at us. He looked real sad. I said, "What's wrong?"

He said, "Well, I just wondered if now that they're a little better maybe you're not coming back."

I reached out and put my arms around him and said, "We're coming back."

He said, "They're all doing good but there is a lot more. We'll go get them."

I said, "Okay. We'll feed them."

That's a big we -- because that we includes you.

Some of you I've never seen. God's seen you and he's seen them and he wants to connect you. So that's what I'm asking you to do. This is kind of the divine connection station where the heart of God finds hands and hearts to extend the hands. So that's what we're asking you to do. I'm asking every one of you wherever you are, yeah you -- I'm talking to you -- I'm asking you to just go and get your bankcard and use it like a check. Perhaps it's the greatest reason you've may ever have used it -- to save lives.

And dial the number, it's always there as a prayer line, and take that card and say, "Here I want to save -- I want to save a hundred kids lives" -- the next months we're going to feed them. \$1,000 we can feed 100 kids for the next months. \$100 we can feed ten. \$50 we can feed five. \$30 we can feed three. So where could you put \$30 or \$50 or \$100 or \$1,000 and do more good?

This is not something that might work -- this is what does work -- it is what will work. It is guaranteed to work. Love never fails. When you express it and you just give a little girl named Hope real hope -- more than a name -- hope. Give her help. Give her life. Would you do it? Please?

You can go online LifeToday.org and make the gift. You want to write a check, make it to *LIFE*, address it to *LIFE*, put it in the mail. But call us and tell us what you're mailing because we have to let the missionaries know they can count on you. Please? Don't just pray someone else will do it. You be the one -- the answer to a heart cry, to a prayer, to a missionary's need. Thank you for doing it.

If you get a busy, call until you get through. Make the largest gift you can. It will just keep giving. We're going to send some wonderful gifts to bless you -- not because you ask for them but because we like to bless you as you bless others. Thank you for your help.

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 want to emphasize something again, "The Heart of the Father" bronze. It's a beautiful, beautiful art piece showing a father reaching down to a child, which is what we're doing to children and their families in the most difficult circumstances. We're sending this beautiful bronze -- thank God for artists who say, "We want to bless people who bless people." But we're sending it to those of you who will help us care for at least 100 children and we really need that.

We're moving toward the last days of this emphasis that will last now -- the gift you give will keep giving for the next months. Help us care for 100 children if you can.

Of course, we're sending Beth's book and the 90-Day Bible to those of you that will help us care for at least 10 children, and of course, Beth's book for any gift to help us care for children. We just want to say thank you.

But if there is any way that you could help us care for 100 children or more, we really need to hear from you. And if God's blessed you where you can bless in that way, please do it. Thank you so much. Thank all of you for being with us.

Announcer: Tomorrow -- FOX News analyst, Father Jonathan Morris.

>> Isn't that how God works? In the midst of our pain he is helping us and pushing us along.