

Week 5

1/23/12

James: Thank all of you! Hey, you're great. Appreciate it.

John Eldredge is here with us and we're thrilled to have him.

I'm James Robison. Betty and I welcome all of you to *LIFE Today* and all of you here. Thank you so much for being with us.

This is an incredibly thought-provoking title, *Beautiful Outlaw*. I wonder, who in the world are you talking about? Experiencing the playful, disruptive, extravagant personality of Jesus. I wonder if he is the beautiful outlaw and who might consider him to be such? And disruptive? ...Jesus? Playful... Jesus? Sounds like he might be talking about someone I've come to know and not only like but love. Let's find out about it.

Would you welcome John Eldredge to *LIFE Today*?

Hi, John! Good to see you!

John: Great to see you.

James: How is Miss Stacy?

John: Real well. Real well.

James: How is Colorado? Is it still pretty?

John: It's gorgeous! The Aspens are gold right now and it's absolutely beautiful.

James: Let's just cut to the chase. Let's find out about this Beautiful Outlaw. I really don't care how you start, where you go, I don't care how you take off on it but I know you're always the guy that kind of shakes things up. It's obvious to me you're fond of this Beautiful Outlaw and you've kind of picked up some of his characteristics. You know, you can be a troublemaker with some people while you're getting them into this --

John: Not intentionally! Yes. Oh, it's true. You hang around Jesus and he rubs off on you. It's one of the best things that happens by being his friend.

James: Tell us about it. I want to know about how you got cranking in this and what you want us to hear because we want everybody to read it and I have an idea many will, perhaps all of you.

John: So encountering Jesus is the best thing that can ever happen to a person. Your whole life is built on that, your whole ministry -- falling in love with Jesus is the single greatest event that will ever take place in anyone's life. Here's the problem: You can't love a stained glass cartoon. You can't. You can try. You can work at it.

You can't love someone who is two-dimensional, has no personality to them, have become so religious that they're practically not a person anymore. They're like a caricature or like a mannequin. Jesus has been dressed up in a costume, pushed off into the clouds. No wonder people have a hard time knowing him, loving him, following him. So what Beautiful Outlaw is about is getting his personality back and freeing Jesus from those goofy religious images and let's find the man, let's go back in the gospels, let's read these stories, let's encounter the most captivating person you have ever met.

James: And I have met him and I find him to be exactly that. So I don't have any problem understanding some of the things that you say about him that would seem to be disturbing to people who are still trapped in that stained glass image and they have actually become like a stained glass image themselves and they're stuck -- literally rigidly stuck. They're not really fun to be around. They look miserable, you get around them, you'll be miserable. There is nothing really exciting about being around these people. And sometimes they try to dress and look alike and think they're looking religious but they're not looking like God or anything he created. They're getting into some kind of image that just doesn't seem to reflect anything that the creator has expressed in all that he has made.

Now here you go. The playfulness of God and the poison of religion; that's chapter one, you get off to a real good start.

[Laughter]

John: Yes, we do. You have a dog. It happens to be a dachshund. Right?

James: Right, Princess. Beautiful Princess!

John: What was God up to when he made dachshunds? Think of it! Right? Has princess ever done anything that's made you laugh?

James: Everything she does. God made me laugh and he made her a long weenie, little bitty short legs, real long nose, real long ears, and she is beautiful!

John: Exactly! Personality, playfulness... the playfulness of God is all through creation. Have you ever seen ducks trying to land on the ice?

James: Oh, it's so funny!

John: It's hysterical!

James: They don't even know how to ski. It's obvious they can't ski.

John: Exactly. And when our golden retriever Obin has a particular taste for underwear, he'll grab mine and take off down the hall. And I'm --. Right? The playfulness of God is all through creation. Why don't we see it in the gospels? Why don't we think of Jesus as playful? This is his creation. Princess is Jesus' creation. She expresses something about his playfulness --

James: And his love for us because all his kids like to play too and like to play with fun stuff. Like little dogs and big dogs.

John: So if we find the playfulness of God in creation and we see it all over, polar bear cubs sliding down hills. Right? You see it all over creation, the playfulness of God. Knowing that about Jesus now, you, "Go wait a second." Maybe it is in the gospels. Maybe we just draped Jesus with this kind of religious drapery. Let's go back and take that off and see.

So here's the story. It's about a week after the resurrection. This is the risen Lord now. Jesus Christ, risen from the dead. He's only appeared to his disciples twice: once right there on Sunday morning and then once about a week later when Thomas was doubting and Jesus appears in the upper room and says, "Touch, see, it's real. I am alive."

It's maybe a few days after that and Peter and the guys don't know where Jesus has gone off to so they go fishing. The story picks up with the guys have been fishing all night, they caught nothing and Jesus appears in John 21 on the beach but they don't recognize him. Well, that's fascinating. This is the risen Christ. He could have announced himself in radiant glory, "It is I the Lord, come thou unto me!" Right?

[Laughter]

You know what he says? "Hey! Caught anything?"

[Laughter]

Oh, the story is rich, rich, rich. They don't even know it's him so they just yell back like he is some tourist, "No!" That's it! That's how they answer the risen Jesus. "No!" Kind of, "Get out of here, what do you think?" He says, "Well, try the other side." Right? So okay pause, how did Jesus catch these guys three years ago? This same beach, this same story, a night of fishing, nothing to show for it, and Jesus says, "Try the other side" and the nets are full and that's when it says they left everything and followed him. So it's three years later, Jesus on the same beach, same guys, they're in the boat, all night nothing, and Jesus - - right -- instead of saying, "Come and have a Bible study with thouest!"

[Laughter]

Okay, he says, "Try the other side, you'll catch some." So they try the other side. Miraculous catch. It's the most beautiful moment because it's then that John yells out, "It's the Lord!"

And Peter says -- he actually puts his clothes back on, jumped in the water and starts swimming for shore. Do you see the playfulness of Jesus in stories like that? The way he is with his disciples? It's rich! It's so beautiful if we can get his personality back.

James: This is the Jesus I live with. I don't live with the Jesus people have stuck off in church somewhere; even though I go to church and occasionally find him there when people really want him there. They will come in his name rather than their name or their issue or their point of dissension. You also talk about a scandalous freedom.

John: Okay -- okay, beautiful, beautiful, because when you know Jesus you're going to fall in love with him. Outlaw, because Jesus -- they didn't kill Jesus because he was nice. Right? They didn't hang him like a criminal because he was just going around telling people to love one another. Jesus lives with a scandalous freedom.

Here's one example: A Jewish man would never speak to his wife in public. You just don't do that. A Jewish rabbi would never speak to any woman in public. Now Jews don't speak to Samaritans. So John chapter four, Jesus is walking through Samaria. What is he doing there? Right? What's he doing there?

It says he sits down at a well and this woman who is single, Samaritan; she has a sexual representation -- right? This is tabloid stuff! She comes up to Jesus at the well and Jesus, he just strikes up a conversation with her. It is so scandalous that she literally says to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, speak to me, a Samaritan woman?" She throws in "woman," like "What do you think you're doing?" Is it an insult? Is he coming on to her? How is a girl supposed to interpret this?

When the disciples get back into the story later it says they are shocked that Jesus is talking to a woman. See, Jesus doesn't care what the nice people think. He's going after this woman's heart. And not only does he capture her, he captures the whole village, by capturing her -- and the stories, it's so scandalous! It ends up with, it says, "The village invited him to stay and Jesus stayed two more days with them." Okay, a Jewish rabbi, hanging out with -- this is a white man asking a black woman for a ride in her car in 1920, segregated Birmingham. You don't do this! Right? That's our Jesus -- that's our Jesus.

James: I like it.

John: Oh, you fall in love with him when you see what he is really like. The famous Sermon on the Mount, everybody knows this. It's become the most famous sermon in the world. It wasn't called "The Sermon on the Mount" at the time but everyone knows that there is this really important message Jesus gave.

At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, in the gospel of Matthew it says large crowds followed him as he went down the hill. And a leper ran up to him and he knelt, he doesn't get too close, he kneels and he says, "If you're willing, you could make me whole." Now you've got to understand what's happening here. First off, you don't get near these people. The book of Leviticus says that lepers have to never wash their hair. They have to wear torn clothing. They can't sleep in town; they have to sleep outside in the woods. They wear a veil over their face and when they walk through town they yell out, "Unclean! Unclean!" So that no one will touch them accidentally and become unclean yourself.

So Jesus' credibility at this moment is really important because he just preached the sermon on the mount and he just said, "This is a life that pleases God," and he is overturning a lot of their ideas. So the leper comes close, not too close, and what does Jesus do? He touches him. He disqualifies himself in front of all the religious authorities, Jesus reaches out. It is the most beautiful act. He doesn't need to touch this guy to heal him. He's already healed people in the gospels by speaking a word... people a county away -- right? Why is Jesus touching?

James: He shattered their false system of belief. They were locked up.

John: He does! He was so scandalous! He is so scandalous in a beautiful way! You see he is not just throwing his freedom around and flaunting. No, no, no! The thing is, Jesus is compelled by more important things -- in this case, love. No one has ever touched this guy. This guy needs a human touch more than he needs healing. Right? Maybe he's never been touched in his life and Jesus reaches out and shows him the love of God. You can fall in love with someone like this.

James: See he didn't break the law, he revealed the law. He revealed the truth that God wanted everyone to know that was hidden in religion and misunderstanding rather than understanding. God really did, in Jesus, bring to life all the truth in the Word of God. And he brought it home to us.

Betty: So many times I think we miss really treasured opportunities that God gives us to reach out in love because we're afraid of what somebody might think of all the traditions we have learned -- all the strongholds we've been put into by people, by society. We go, "Oh, what will they think?" Instead of "What does God think I should do?"

John: And it shows you that we're living by the fear of man, and the fear of man is a snare.

James: We're going to talk to John in another program about *Beautiful Outlaw*. Listen to some of the chapter titles. I think it will arouse your curiosity: The Missing Essential -- Jesus' personality. Is Jesus Really Playful? Fierce Intention. The Most Human Face of All. Extravagant Generosity... extravagant generosity?

By the way, I think that's what a lot of our viewers experience: An extravagant generosity. They get it about giving. They understand that giving is living, that it is more than money, it is not limited to money, it's giving many times, yes, money, because that's really the simplest to give, it is giving time, it's giving an ear, it's giving a hand, it's giving attention, it's expressing concern, releasing compassion -- all those things. That's extravagant generosity. Disruptive Honesty... that does sound -- when I think of someone disruptively honest I think immediately Jesus -- that's Jesus! And we need that. Scandalous Freedom. Cunning. We're going to talk about some of more these with John.

By the way, tell your friends today, if you'd like to have it, you make a gift to help us share water. We'll send you John Eldredge's book, *Beautiful Outlaw*. You can already know from all the books that he's written, he is a best-selling author, he and his wife both.

He's been here with us many times. He is a tremendous blessing. Would you like to just say thanks to John Eldredge for being here?

[Applause]

Being someone that's bold enough and loving enough to tell us about *Wild at Heart* and tell us what men really are like and how we don't have to just be all wrapped up in little religious garments and sitting around without any adventurous heart. And to find out that Jesus is -- you know you really do have kind of a unique way of seeing things. It must be up on the mountain. Jesus spent a lot of time on the mountain. You must see stuff -- you must really see stuff up on the mountain.

I have an idea -- maybe he is a little bit up in that we get up sometimes, we seem to hear better and Jesus kept going up. The main the thing is I think to get away from the all the sounds and noise that distract us from being able to hear him. And I know you feel like you were called -- literally called up into the presence of the Lord. We really appreciate you. John, when you touched on that, when I referenced a moment ago about the Extravagant Generosity, there is probably not anything we do -- and when I say "we," I'm including all the viewers all over the world.

By the way, I want to say a very personal word to those of you down under, those of you who really in my opinion in so many ways are up over in Australia. You have no idea how encouraging you are. By the way, those of you who support us in Australia, you know this, you don't get a tax deduction for what you do to help us. I really regret that you don't because I wish you did but it hasn't hindered you at all. But I just want to say, Australia, thank you! Thank you for your prayers for us as a nation. Thank you for your love for what we do at *LIFE Outreach*; and all of you in the U.K. and in Canada, what a blessing you are, and to the U.S.

What I'm saying to you is all over the world there is this incredible extravagant generosity.

John, the thing I've seen with our viewers, there doesn't seem to be anything that they're not excited about trying to help with but there is not anything they're more exciting about helping with than drilling water wells. I mean it's something you really want to do. Well, we're going to give you that opportunity.

I'll tell you what I want you to do. Have you ever seen something that just really gripped your heart? By the way, John, I think some of these, even the Humane Society's pictures of the puppies that are lonely and hurt and sad, they really touch me. You know

something? There is something wrong with you if they shouldn't. Let me tell you what's sad. Sometimes that touches people more than seeing a broken child or a person. I just want you to look. See if you might not be the answer to what you see.

[Music playing]

James: Whoa! I didn't see a single image of a child that I didn't want to help. Then they take that water and it's dirty but it is precious. I don't know if you've ever really been thirsty.

I think a few times, Betty, we got pretty far out. I guess I think I've been thirsty but I haven't been thirsty like a lot of people. And then when you go and you try to get something and it's dirty, and the mother knows that that little baby, that little child is going to be sick and they go a long way to get water, and do whatever they can. And we have the answer. We don't have wishful thinking, we don't have false hope, we can drill water wells and we've got the teams and you've paid for the drilling equipment.

You did -- people like you -- all the drilling rigs are very expensive. And we're able to drill a well for an average cost of \$4800. To be honest with you, sometimes it's over \$10,000; we've got a few places where it's \$3,000 because it's so shallow, and it's easy to get to. Think about it, easy to get to. We just have to get to it. Then we give people a water well that just keeps giving for years, for a lifetime basically. \$4800 -- you know what I believe, Betty? I was really impressed before the program to say this and I really believe this, we drill hundreds of wells, twice a year we come and we ask you to help us drill hundreds of wells in 15 or 20 countries where the missionaries have showed us the need, and where the love of God is there in place. Now they demonstrate it.

But I believe there are 100 people watching today, there may be some of you in Australia, you may all be in Australia, or in the United States -- I believe there are 100 people today who can drill a well and I believe you would step up as one person. You know what? You've got it, I can. It's \$4800.

I made a statement one night, Betty, I remember where it was, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. I'd never made that statement publicly before and I said, "You can drill a well. Maybe there is somebody here who can drill ten wells." And a man in the back turned to his wife and said, "Honey, we can drill ten wells." And they did -- they gave \$48,000. We were shocked. I'd never said that before. My staff said, "We ought to say that everywhere we go."

[Laughter]

I said, "Well, it would be nice but I'm not going to do that." But he did do it, he and his wife. And you may be able to do that. Maybe you can give ten wells. But I believe there are 100 people who can give a well today, \$4800. Would you do it? Would you be one of them?

I believe there are some of you who would say, "I can't do that but I can give part of a well. I could give \$1200 and I'll pray three join me and we'll have a well. Or \$2400 and pray one joins and I've got a well." But most of you, and Betty, this is where most of our support comes and I don't want you to ever think, because people say, "You always ask us to give big." Because I love people to think big! We've got a big God with a big heart. I want you to think big.

Jesus said the greatest gift was one that people thought was the smallest, the widow's mite; said that's the biggest. \$48, ten people water the rest of their life. \$144 -- 30 people. I don't know what level you can help at but I believe you can help. Would you go to the phone right now? Take your bankcard. Please look, you take that bankcard and use it like a plastic check. That's how you use it; it's a check. But take it and use it. Or you write a check, make it to *LIFE*, you're giving life. You want to go online, *LifeToday.org* and make gift, whatever, but would you do whatever God is leading you to do today? Please do it.

Father, I pray you'll direct. And people will joyfully give.

Will you joyfully share life? We want to share some gifts with you. I want to share a book, *Believe This Not That*, truth. You'll like this!

We want to share with you a very helpful testimony, coffee mug, Water for Life. You're going to pray every time you drink that coffee.

And the beautiful "Lion and the Lamb" bronze to say thank you. Thank you for going to the phone. Please dial. If you get a busy, be persistent, be determined, "I'm going to give water to those precious children and their families!" Thank you for doing it!

Begin video clip:

Announcer: Every day millions of children are forced to make a dreadful choice, drink filthy, polluted water filled with deadly disease or die from thirst. No child should ever be faced with this decision.

The good news is that there is a solution -- Mission: Water for Life is one of the most exciting and viable demonstrations of God's love in the world today. The suffering can end because clean water changes everything!

With your gift today we will begin drilling 350 new water wells for remote villages in 12 different nations. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five people! A gift of \$48 will help provide for 10 people! \$72 will reach 15 people. And \$144 will help provide fresh clean disease-free water for 30 people for a lifetime!

With your gift be sure to request, *Believe This Not That* a brand-new topical Bible promise book that will encourage you in every area of life.

With your gift of \$100 or more you may request our newly released *Water for Life* mug set, a daily reminder of the clean water you make possible to those who thirst.

Also please prayerfully consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well. And be sure to request the 2012 commemorative bronze sculpture, "The Lamb and the Lion."

Please call, write, or make your secure gift online today!

End of clip

In the studio:

James: I'm really anxious to send you the "Lion and the Lamb" bronze; a beautiful lion sculpture, the beautiful little lamb. Only God can do that! Only God can touch people's hearts enough to say, "I'm going to give a well. I'm going to give toward it." I pray you will.

We want to bless you with the book *Believe This Not That* and the beautiful coffee mugs. And then today, if you'd like to have it, you make a gift to help us share water, we'll send you John Eldredge's book, *Beautiful Outlaw*. You're going to love it.

John will be back with us for another program this week. Join Betty and me in saying thanks to John.

John, appreciate you and Stacy! God bless you!

God bless you!

There's John Eldredge's e-mail address if you want to know where he is going to be speaking or go to one of his men's conferences. It will be great!

Announcer: Faith, family, and freedom are under attack. James Robison and Jay Richards encourage a divided America to stand together before it's too late. *Indivisible* – coming soon to online and retail bookstores.

>> By stripping Jesus of his personality what happened is we stripped the church and his followers of personality as well.

Announcer: John Eldredge tomorrow!