

Week 34
8/18/11

Betty: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Betty Robison and this is James. We've got one of our dear friends and she is so funny!

James: I am already getting ready for my face to crack laughing. Chonda Pierce is here and we're going to have a wonderful time. Laughter is good medicine. We've had people say, "How can you be talking about needs of the world and the suffering and all that and have everybody laughing?" But it is some of the most incredible expressions and outpourings of love we've seen have come when people have just found joy, I mean real joy unspeakable.

One aspect of the fruit of the spirit, the weight of God's presence on us is joy and peace. I want you to have that -- and joy. And we can laugh, it really is good medicine. Would you welcome back to *LIFE Today*, Chonda Pierce? Here is Chonda.

Chonda: I just hate -- there is a sticker! I hate crossing in front of them because I know when I pass over him he goes, "Lord, help us! Lord, help us! Lord, help us!" It is so funny that he talks about the most joyful people. I don't know if we're the most joyful or we just found the right meds!

[Laughter]

Either way the Lord works in mysterious ways. I haven't seen you for a while. He hasn't had me on for a while. Evidently, something I said last time didn't set too well.

[Laughter]

But I've been very, very busy at my house becoming empty nested. Isn't that awesome! It's the greatest days of my marriage. I'm so sick of those kids! Listen, they left. My youngest is 21 now, he is living in Los Angeles and we're from Tennessee so we like it like this. He's 21, he goes to a technical school to learn how to make video games and that's about all I have to say about him.

So... but I have a daughter and lo and behold, just when we were empty nested, we're enjoying it, they moved back in. The daughter and her husband and her dogs and her little pregnant self because they decided they needed to save money for their own house so they're going to eat us out of our house.

[Laughter]

I knew we should have said "no" or at least changed the locks while we had the chance. Here they came and it kind of cramped our style.

Now, I'm 50 -- I don't mind telling you this -- I'm 50. But I'm also not dead either. I love my husband. He is a stud muffin if you know what I mean.

[Laughter]

And at 50, there is little more muffin than there is stud.

[Laughter]

I just -- Write that down, Betty, I just made that up. I'm going to need that next week.

Here's the thing. So my kids were living there. So my son decided well, I'll come back if Sheri's coming back and we'll all just be under the house one happy family.

No! That's over! When you're 18, there is no more happy family. You're supposed to get out!

So here they are and they're -- she starts nesting in my nest so that's a lot of trouble. So one night we decided we would go on a date night like you used to have to do when you would sneak out from your kids. You called it date -- "Mommy and Daddy is having date night." It's really, "We're sick of you."

[Laughter]

"We're going to go have a cheese burger without you." So we went on this date night.

What's so funny we knew our kids would make fun of us if we came home like at 9:00 since we just left the house at 8:00. So you ride around the neighborhood for a little while, that doesn't work. So we decided to go parking. We thought that would be -- we just thought that would be funny. So we went back to the same park that got us in this mess to begin with.

[Laughter]

And do you know they had shut that place down! We didn't know but it was good, you could hide the car better in the weeds.

[Laughter]

But I'm telling you, parking over 50 is -- you've got to have a chiropractor for three weeks after that.

[Laughter]

And the funniest thing, here comes a policeman knocking on the window and we're just in there going, "Oh, please don't go to our church! Please don't go to our church!"

[Laughter]

And he asked to see our license. So I gave him my license. My husband gives him his license. He's going, "Are you guys married?"

[Laughter]

Like this is the grossest thing he has ever seen! I think he gave us a ticket for that right there. Being married and going parking was supposed to be so gross.

I'm like, "Yes, we are but the kids moved back in and it kind of cramped our style. We wanted to be out a little late so we thought we would go wild and go parking."

He's like, "Oh, say no more! I'll give you 30 more minutes."

[Laughter]

I looked at my husband, "Well, he thinks you're a stud!"

[Laughter]

See, this is what is so funny. Somebody right now is sitting on their couch is just appalled that I talked about sleeping with my husband. I could testify how the Lord has saved me from prostitution and drugs and alcohol. People would be waving their hanky. They would write into James that this was the best show they ever saw. But talk about sleeping with your husband, everybody goes --.

My husband is stud! And I try to stay young looking for him. I try to stay healthy look... well, not healthy. But you put on enough Spanx you look a little better. You know what I'm talking about? The Spanx, it's like your grandmother calls them girdles. The hip thing now is Spanx. I have on four pair right now myself.

[Laughter]

I put on one pair and I had a hole and I thought I had a tumor all of the sudden.

Have you ever tried to get the fat back in the Pillsbury -- when the dough pops out of the Pillsbury can there is a problem! You can't get the dough back in the can. You can't get the fat back in the Spanx.

So by then I'd had a hot flash and I couldn't get them off. Have you had a hot flash in a pair of Spanx? You have to have them surgically removed. So I just put on another pair to stuff the stuffing back in. And then that didn't work because I had the little shorts part. Have you ever wore the little short Spanx and it looks like you have two tumors on your thighs? Because you know where the girdle ends. It is awful. So then I got the little tank top Spanx that's supposed to meet with the shorts. Well, then you sweat and the shorts rolls under your beer gut then the top rolls -- it lifts and separates if you know what I mean?

[Laughter]

It is just disgusting. So then I got the whole body suit Spanx that goes down to your knees. Well, then my feet swelled so bad I couldn't get my shoes on.

[Laughter]

It just cuts off the circulation. So finally, I'm started to wear the whole thing that goes from your ankles all the way -- so this is not cleavage, this is my ankles sitting right here.

[Laughter]

Now put that in your pipe and smoke it!

[Applause]

Let me tell you, I forgot to talk about the cheerleaders. I went with your Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders to Afghanistan not long ago. I was there. We went with six of them.

By the time we got to Kuwait we only had two. They were scrawny girls. They can't keep up. But yeah, I got hungry, I had to have a few for lunch. They were just -- I mean little tiny things. How do they cheer a whole game just -- feed me something! Feed me! It was so funny. Me and the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders and some country singers and the most photographed swimsuit model for Sports Illustrated. And she took her -- eight by ten. You know what I mean? And my eight by ten. Well, mine is like a 14 by 16.

[Laughter]

It was something else.

Then they didn't want you to talk about Jesus. They gave me the list, don't say anything about Jesus because we're in a place that may not be so happy about that. So I just had him tattooed on my chest.

[Laughter]

That's where all the soldiers were looking I figured.

[Laughter]

No, I wouldn't do that. That would be awful. I know you don't like tattoos. I heard that.

But I have to confess to you, I got a tattoo. And I'm worried because I only see him once in a while. I come here to get my life changed, stop backsliding. Then I go back out and do my job, I come back and confess again.

[Laughter]

Brother James is like my priest, let me just stop over for a few minutes if you don't mind. I've got some things to tell you.

But I did -- Betty, I'm recommending this. My 25th wedding anniversary, I wanted to do something that would shock my husband so I got a tattoo. I did! And don't send me verses. If you're going to send me a scripture send it before I do something wrong; would you?

Well, it is too late now because tattoos are kind of permanent. I had a little heart with his initials and flowers in a place that only my husband would see, by the way. My daughter was disgusted. She said it is a tramp stamp.

[Laughter]

I have been married to this man for almost 30 years so I thought this would be so funny and surprise him and so I got this little tattoo. It's not as romantic when he goes, "Let me get my glasses so I can see."

[Laughter]

It takes the romance out of it.

Of course, it is gone now. Things kind of shift, you know? My husband's initials are somewhere on my rear end right now.

[Laughter]

In a few years he can see it again; it will be behind my knees.

[Laughter]

Okay, so next year when I come back -- if I come back -- Betty has to get a tattoo. Don't y'all think?

[Laughter]

I just tried to think upstairs, what would be the most exciting thing I could talk to James about?

James: You left me breathless. Speechless, breathless!

Let me just say this is her CD and it's Listen and Laugh. Here is a DVD, Did I Say That Out Loud? There's Chonda's web site and these are just awesome.

By the way, Chonda, we're drilling water wells so if you do well, well, help us do a well. We're going to give the CD away. Chonda, you have –

By the way, we just love you.

Don't you appreciate her? Doesn't she make you laugh?

You take the very real issues and you just turn them into something wonderful.

Chonda: I don't know if it is wonderful.

James: I think it is because I love to laugh.

Chonda: My momma thinks I'm going to hell in a hand basket. She does!

She said all my life. I asked her, "How big is the hand basket?" Because me and four cousins are going in the same basket; you know? I say if we find the guy who is carrying the basket, take him out first.

[Laughter]

James: How in the world are we going to say something that's kind of a more serious nature when you've got us absolutely in stitches?

Chonda: Very carefully.

James: Now you are maybe going to do some movies in Hollywood and some parts and so forth. By the way, I just want to go ahead and address that since you'll get letters on it.

Chonda: I know. My mother writes me every day.

James: I want you to take the brightest light into the darkest places on planet earth and that's one of them. The darker the situation, if you want to show off a diamond, go to the jeweler, he is going to put a dark cloth out on the table and put the diamond on it and put light on it. So you get the greatest jewels in the brightest light in the darkest situation and it looks the best. I want you to go and pierce the darkness.

So you've got our encouragement and our prayers and I believe you'll be a blessing. You're funnier than anybody in Hollywood.

Don't you think she is funnier than anybody Hollywood's got?

You go out there and just be a bright light for Jesus.

How do we pray for you? What can we do for you because we love you?

Chonda: Probably just that. For the first -- I've been a standup comedian for almost 20 years. I'm blessed to have climbed to the pinnacle of this market or whatever I've done. And I will continue to do this until Jesus comes.

I still work 98.9% of the time in the church world and the Christian conference world and love it. Those are my people. That's the world I know. The Lord is opening doors in places I'd never dreamed or imagined and I go in carefully and fearfully. And at the same time I'm getting such an education in what happened.

When Hollywood came along, the sitcom came to life because of war. When the Vietnam war hit and World War II that's when they came up with the sitcom ideas; it is just a historical fact. So the laughter and Hollywood and the fun of the storytelling in the movies, it was all a wonderful release and relief for difficult times that we're in.

Now it almost feels like the table has flipped and that's causing some of the difficult times that we're in. The influence that's going on in Hollywood is now perpetrating some of the difficulties that our teenagers are facing, and unwed pregnancies, and all that's going on. So that's very sad to me.

And at the same time, when I was in college and heading off to college to tell my mother that I wanted to major in theater arts, well, you might as well have told her I was just going to sell marijuana for the rest of my life.

[Laughter]

It was that forward and that fearful to that generation, and it shouldn't be.

James: The Kingdom of God should make the weight of God's presence felt as a footprint of God's presence on every part of life -- all the culture, everything.

Chonda: I said this in concert the other night. It was just on my heart. When you look at how horrible Hollywood is and some of the movies that they're putting out and the soap operas and all that mess that we --

James: It is -- that's what it is!

Chonda: It is just a mess; we have really no one to blame for that, so to speak, other than Satan, but ourselves because we pulled ourselves out.

So now to go back in or as a Christian to walk into some areas, and I've been in a couple of movies this year that weren't necessarily billed as faith-based movies but because I am a Christian, I read a script and said, "Okay, yeah, I can do this one. I can be in this one."

And they're good folks, I've met wonderful people. I've met really great Christians in Hollywood.

What's really sad is when you're on a movie set and you're having a little bite to eat or in-between scenes and somebody whispers, "By the way, I'm a Christian too." It is for the first time we're getting a very small taste --

James: I believe that's going to change. That's going to change.

You know Soul Surfer is a faith-based film but the beautiful girl that lost her arm to the shark that's the star of that and it is a very inspirational movie, she actually, after she lost the arm, gave water wells and showed on the show here and her dad was here with us telling how God had put that on her heart.

And we're doing water wells now and you know how much you enjoy what we're doing. I want to just say again that I really believe now, whether it is education and we really, the church gave education and academics over to some other force other than the literal

impression and principles of almighty God that are as rock solid as the foundation upon which we build the house safely and securely.

And it is not, by the way, preaching the word or hearing the word it is doing the word -- doing what he said. Not just discussing it and talking about it, but being a living demonstration of it which means that you not only affect academics and education, you affect the arts, you affect every part of society. You address the social ills and you address the economics. We're supposed to literally have dominion -- not take dominion, not be a theocracy -- but the weight of God affecting everything on planet earth.

I'm going to be praying for Chonda as she goes and does what God impressed her to do in the dark places of the world. Would you assure Chonda that she's got your prayers and that you appreciate her?

Chonda: Thank you so much! That means so much!

James: There is her web site again. Go there; you can get the DVD. We'll just simply tell you this, I would love to send you the CD. This really contains a lot of the best of Chonda Pierce. We just want to send it to you to say thank you because what we're going to ask you to do and I know how much you believe in what God's called us to do, you've been a part of what we do for a long time; not just by being a guest but praying for us and helping us. We've had really the joy of picking you up off the floor when your heart was broken and it is just the love of God. But what we're doing, Chonda is our viewers and they're the most special people, I honestly believe our viewers will pray for you. I don't think they will send you a bad e-mail, I think they're going to pray for you. If they do, well, then you tell me and I'll have a little talk with them. We'll have a little talk.

Chonda: I'm going to tell my daddy on y'all!

James: You pray for her. All right? But here's what we want to ask you to do today. We want to ask you to help us drill fresh water wells. This is the last week. Twice a year we will take various regions of the world and target to drill water wells. Our goal right now is to complete 415 wells. We're asking you to help us. They're \$4800 but I want you to get this, \$48 will give 10 people water the rest of their life.

There is not one person watching that will say, you know what? I could give 10 people clean water the rest of their life. This is something they've never had. And it is a real -- it's becoming the answer to the heart cry and prayer of many mothers for precious children. I want you to listen closely because you really are the answer. You really are! Listen and watch.

On the mission field:

Announcer: Water is essential for life. Every system in our body depends on fresh clean water. Water flushes toxins out of vital organs. It carries nutrients to your cells and keeps the body hydrated so it can function normally. These are important facts but they mean very little to mothers like Landy and her daughter Valorie who find themselves among the nearly one billion people in our world who have no choice but to drink diseased water and suffer the tragic consequences.

Announcer: The plight of Landy is simply a snapshot of what thousands of other mothers suffer on a daily basis because of waterborne illness has taken the lives of their children.

Announcer: There is a simple solution for her tragic situation. It is fresh clean water which can prevent these needless deaths, bring children back to health and give Landy and thousands of other mothers hope for the future.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: That little baby died. That picture -- she still has one baby that can crumple up the picture. And mother doesn't want that baby to die and we can stop it.

I'm telling you, we can put at the missionaries' request and their great love, God's love through them, we can put a water well there.

Betty and I get pictures like this all of the time. This is from St. Jude's. And we get the pictures of little children like this because Betty and I started helping St. Jude's and we try to help them a lot. But we get pictures like this from a child that is fighting a disease that they don't have a cure for, and oftentimes they say, "Will you help us find a cure, please?"

And then sometimes we get a picture of a beautiful little child that died and the mother says, "My little girl -- my little boy died. We think we're close to finding the cure for somebody else's." And boy, Betty and I help.

When I look at that little child and think of that little baby that died, I know the cure. Betty, we don't have to do research, we don't have to find some miracle drug, all we have to do is give them a fresh water well and we know the water is there. People like you provided the drilling rigs. Now we're asking you to help pay the cost. And the average cost, we're drilling 400 in 15 countries. And those 400 wells, the average cost -

- and there are some places that are more expensive and there are some places where the water is very shallow, maybe 150 feet but the average is \$4800. That could change in the coming months but currently it is there.

Would you drill a well? Would you go to the phone wherever it is right now. A billion people give online and they can go to their computer, go to LifeToday.org and just click, I want to donate, I want to give and make your gift. Put it on a bankcard. Use it like a check. That's how you should always use that card. If you want to write a check and some of you do, you say, "James, can I make a check?"

Yes, certainly! Make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us you're mailing it because this is the last week. We need to hear from you now -- I mean today.

You say, "Will you ever drill wells again?" Many months from now, sure, we're going to do our best. But you determine whether or not we can fulfill this.

And by the way, the missionaries have said, "We're going to drill a well here." We -- it is not me and Betty. You can know we're going to drill a well. Every time the missionaries say, "Can you do it here?" -- we're going to help them in that project. Would you -- listen -- \$48, 10 people water the rest of their life and we put that together. \$144, 30 people water the rest of their life.

Could you give the \$4800 or \$1200 or \$2400 and pray three people join you? Or another person joins you and we've got a well? It's each one of us fulfilling our part in God's heart. That's how it happens. What can you do?

By the way, in God's sight your best is as good as it gets. It is as big as it gets. Father, help everyone to be excited about giving. And Lord, let us drill those wells. Bless the people who can drill a well or several wells or give water to 10 people or as many as possible in Jesus' name. Would you make that call? Please do it or go online. Please do it now.

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 in life.

With your support we will drill 415 new water wells in remote villages in 15 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!

In appreciation for your gift to help drill these new wells be sure to request the Kingdom Life Journal. This beautiful leather bound prayer devotional includes both Psalms and Proverbs, as well as a place to write your own reflections as God speaks to you through his word.

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 you may request the journal as well as our beautiful commemorative bronze sculpture, "Heart of the Father."

This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your secure gift online today!

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Well, you have the answer. It is not one we have to look for but it is one we provide. Who wouldn't want to give the cure to any disease a child had if you knew what it was. I mean you would want that; not only for your children but anyone's child. We do want to send you the gifts that we've mentioned that you've seen.

And also, if you would like to today and you make the gift, remember, it is the last week, we're going to send you Chonda Pierce's CD and you'll laugh. It will put a big ol' smile on your face and you'll want to share it with others. Join Betty and me in saying thanks to our good friend, Chonda Pierce. Chonda, thank you! We love you. You go be a light in the darkest places on planet earth. Let's all be a light. Let's be the city set on a hill that cannot and will not be a hill. Pierce the darkness.

>> It's a hole the enemy hopes to bury us alive in.

Announcer: Next week, Beth joins James and Betty to help us get out of that pit.