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Week 34

James: Hey, thank all of you very much. I appreciate it. Welcome to *LIFE Today*.

I'm James Robison, Betty and I are thrilled to have Rick Bezet who is pastor of New Life Church in the greater Little Rock area, and it is a great church in a great state. As a matter of fact, even when we were there, I preached there recently, we came to what I think was a very wise, sound, spiritual conclusion that the population is such, the diversity is such that it is just possible that the state of Arkansas could be an example to the nation of what can happen of when you let God's presence, his power, and an expression of his personhood, which would include his great love and the sound principles that Jesus said are solid rock foundational, that you can build a house that stands the storms, you really do have a chance to really point our nation to hope. We had a president from Hope and you had another candidate from Hope, might it be that you're supposed to offer hope as a nation?

Well, Rick Bezet is here. Would you welcome Rick Bezet? -- A good friend. Rick, good to see you buddy!

Rick: Good to be here for sure.

James: Loved hearing you preach at Gateway. I appreciate ARC, the Association of Related Churches. My friend, Willie George, who pastors several of our grandchildren and our youngest daughter in Tulsa, walked up to me and said after your conference that was here in our area, "I believe they're the most unselfish pastors I've ever seen."

I said, "Well, I agree with you. They just really want to help everybody, younger pastors, older pastors, it doesn't matter."

What's the deal with it? What's going on with this association that you've got?

Rick: Well, I am glad to know Willie George said that because we like Willie. But also, we do love pastors and we love churches, and I think a lot of ministries right now are hungry for relationships. Pastors are lonely.

The average pastor after being in the ministry for five years doesn't have one friend. In fact, after ten years of being in ministry they don't have the confidence that they did

when they were in Bible school. So their dreams fade away and they're lonely and they want to be helped but if they have trouble in their marriage; for example, our first year of marriage, when I was in Bible school, they taught us, "You can't be close to people. You have to stay alone. You'll lose your anointing if you get too close to people."

I remember being in Bible school thinking, I'm not going to have any friends? I'm going to be alone! Then I got married and my wife and I struggled, our first year we were fighting all the time. I remember reading that verse, "Don't go to bed with anger in your heart," I was staying up for 30-40 days at a time.

[Laughter]

We were fighting but I didn't have anybody to tell because I was in ministry, I was alone. You had to always act like your marriage was great. You always had to act like you had plenty of money. You had to act like you were healthy and nothing was wrong, and our marriage was falling apart.

So one particular day, I remember that I was going to be speaking to a large church and my wife and I were fighting, and I'm trying to answer the reason why Willie saw what he saw is because Willie lives this way. And the ARC seems to be surrounded by Pastors who do not want to live another day lonely.

So my wife and I were arguing and I yelled at her, I said, "Michelle, shut up!" Except I said it a lot louder than that. Then I went into my office, had to speak that weekend, I was preparing a sermon and it was difficult. I didn't know who to call. And so I got on my knees and I said, "God forgive me."

Then I heard my wife crying in the other room. I went in and that beautiful lady, she was -- she lost it and I went over to her and I said, "Michelle, I didn't know I would ever talk to you like this. I'm sorry."

So she said, "I forgive you. Please don't do it anymore."

And so we made out -- I mean made up -- both -- okay both!

[Laughter]

Then I went into my office and --

James: Amen! Amen!

Rick: But it all changed for me that day because when I was in my office the Lord spoke to me and said, "I forgive you, you know that. Your wife forgives you, you know that too. But when you speak this weekend, I want you to tell everybody what you said to your wife."

I remember saying, "God, I can't do that! I'm in the ministry. You can't do that. God, you need to go to Bible school! They'll tell you that you can't do that." So I decided not to.

And then when I was speaking it was going so bad because I had resisted God. Then I closed my Bible and I told everybody, I said, "Look, the reason why this isn't going well is because I have a problem. I got into an argument today with my wife." She was on the front row. And I said, "Michelle, I want to ask you to forgive me for what I said to you." She was shocked. But when I thought it was all over for me by being real, I actually found out this was like the first day of refreshing ministry for me.

James, that's the way you live. That's the reason why the hand of God has been on you for years. You talk openly about your struggles and the weak moments. But I bet there were some years where you couldn't do that. Think about those days comparatively speaking to the way you live now and look at the anointing that's on your life and people want you around, they want to talk to you, they want to read your books. It's because you're real and I think people are craving that. I believe that's what Willie saw and I believe that's the reason why the hand of God is on the ARC.

James: I think that I -- when you get in leadership and you have a real special touch of God on what you're doing and you've experienced success, especially coming from nothing, which I came from total nothing and experienced blessing and then you begin to experience that loneliness you're talking about and that defeat, you don't know who you can talk to, who you can trust to talk to.

I had had such a close relationship with the Lord, I think this is the only thing that really -- God and Betty, is all that saved my life and my ministry because when I realized I was defeated, here's the thing that got me, I missed the intimacy with the Lord, I missed that close love relationship, it was a sweet relationship. I missed Jesus.

When I lifted my voice out of a horrible pit he heard me. He picked me up. But when he picked me up and he forgave me and when Betty could forgive me for my defeat and just being so really full of anger and hostility, God just told me to share it. He told me to tell it.

Rick: Was that intimidating at first; when you first thought, "I've got to talk about this?"

James: This happened in the later years in my ministry and I had to tell people what happened to me in my defeat. And what happened is I found more people identified with me -- they identified more with the honesty and the vulnerability than they did with the gift to communicate because they said, "Somebody is telling us the truth. I believe this guy is not just talking at us, he lives with us and he understands."

I see this with the ARC fellowship. I see this with the way you reach out to people. I know another occasion you talked about trying to help someone and you counseled them and it didn't work right or something and it really set you back. What was that?

Rick: Oh, yes. Yes, there was this girl. It was right after that episode I just told you about. There was this girl that my wife and I were counseling and she was depressed. We tried everything that we could do to help her, but I wasn't capable of doing it. And then it hit me one day that I didn't even know if this girl wanted to be helped. I remember during a weak moment I looked at her and I said, "Do you know? I'm not sure that you want to be helped. I don't even know how depressed you are. I wonder if you just want to hang out with my wife and I and that's why you're here all the time."

I hate that I told her that because she said, "Oh, really?"

And I said, "Yeah, I'm just wondering. I don't know for sure."

She goes, "You don't think I'm really depressed?"

I said, "I didn't say that. I'm just wondering."

That girl went home and blew her brains out. When I got that phone call, I know for sure I killed that girl. You know?

But -- the point that I think you can also make is that no one knew that I was completely discouraged and dead on the inside because I knew how to go to church. I knew when to say, "Praise the Lord!" I knew when to tell a joke and read a verse. So it hit me, I have the ability to fake my relationship with God where no one knows, even my own wife didn't know that that killed me.

And this man came to our church, his name was Pastor Lawrence Cohen and he was talking about how he lived that way. He said that one day it hit him that his kids would fake their relationship with God just like he did. And he crawled into the bedroom of his kids and he apologized to them. And then he looked at all of us and he said, "You can't live that way. It will kill you. Start being real."

I made a decision that day, and a lot of pastors have, that we're not going to live faking our relationship with God. The early church, they were excited, they had the power of God but the Bible says, "They ate together with glad and sincere hearts." They had the joy and they were real with one another. That's what God says, you confess your sins to me and I'll forgive you. But then you've got to confess your sins one to another so you'll be healed. I want both.

Betty: Why do you think it is that we come to that place as Christians? That we put those expectations on ourselves and on others because we say, "Okay, you're a Christian; you're supposed to have it altogether." Wasn't the reason that we accepted Jesus and confessed our sins was because we were in a mess? And it is, if we can understand, it's about a journey, it's about a walk, a daily walk with him that we grow and we become the mature Christian that God wants us to be.

Rick: And maybe that's why we're so on fire for the Lord when we first get right with God but then at some point we get pretentious and then we start slipping --

James: Well, we start getting religious. We start getting more like we're lodge members and club members rather than a family. Really, you don't even hardly know what a healthy family looks like anymore because there are not very many healthy families and there are not very many healthy church families.

I feel like God is really, boy, he just burned this in my heart years ago when he led me out of the coliseums and stadiums to come sit down, call the family into the family room and try to help them get to know the father. Our children are really special; not because they had a perfect father but they had a father that had a heart in pursuit of the father's heart and admitted when I failed because they knew it, I might as well admit it. They could see it, why don't I just go ahead and face up to it? And when I did face up to it, which I did, that raised the level of respect, but it also showed them the reality of God and how important he can be and he became huge to our children, and he's going to be huge to our grandchildren because it's Father God and it's family we need.

And what I'm seeing in ARC, by the way, there's the web site for ARC. Do you see it on the screen? For the ARC churches, you wonder what it is, it is a fellowship. They're trying to help where there are needs; they want to be an encouragement. They plant churches in places where there is a need for somebody to help perhaps that area in a particular way.

But they want to help pastors. You bring pastors together in conferences, you love them. You're working like Dino Rizzo and our good friends and he's one of your leaders and he works with other ministers, he and Joyce Meyer do things together. I think it is wonderful. He is helping -- he calls it the healing place. What a great place for church. It's the Potter's House, where T.D. Jakes is -- the potter, we're the clay in the potter's hands. Let's get in there and get shaped like a family.

This is fabulous and it's what you're encouraging. So I pray people will check it out. But you know, in our relationship, one of the things that I've seen from your leadership and a lot of the people in the association of churches are young people, they have looked to me a little bit like a father and they've listened. And I've started talking to you about our need to pray for the country. I wrote the book, *Indivisible* and you read it and you saw it. I've got to ask you, because here is what church people are thinking, "What is James really offering us? Is it really important? Can it really make a difference if we'll read and see and focus?" What is your impression as a pastor?

Rick: Well, first of all I did read it and when I found out you wrote that book, I wanted to read it. I believe you get ministry but you get the church, and so I read it as a Christian but I also read it as a pastor because I see the deterioration in our nation but I don't know what to do about it. So I read it from a desperate angle. The first thing I noticed is that it was very informative. Then it persuaded me. After I was persuaded, then I got convicted, and then I found remedy in there.

Look, when you came and spoke to our church and I handed out this book to different people, I believe we now have even tactic, not just passion. For years we just wanted to be the anti-radical on the political side. We just didn't want to be a freak. But through all that, we tried to express wisdom but I think we got foolish.

James: Wasn't that a beautiful night when I gave the invitation and you know, I'm going to say 90% of the people came forward and you were the first one. The only one to beat you on the floor was me because I was already on the floor.

Rick: You preached the last half of the sermon laying down -- crying.

James: And the first thing I did that night when your church came to say, "We want to be the family of God, we want to be the light that pierces the darkness," the first thing I did is pray for our president. I believe it was one of the most incredible, God-given prayers for our president, for our leaders. This is what we ought to do. God can change any of us but the thing the church has to understand is we don't compromise what he says is the rock. He said, "Don't just hear it, do it." "Don't just be hearers of the word," James said, "be doers." The prophet said, "Don't be just like the people that say 'you're a pleasant voice' and they come and listen to you like somebody that sings well and they hear your words but they won't do them." We've got to stop that. Really, that's what *Indivisible* is about.

By the way, let me tell you this, it is now out in paperback. Would you say to every pastor, I'm asking as a pastor, large church, a lot of people, would you say to every pastor and congregation, they would have their prayers focused appropriately and they would understand why these issues matter and should matter to everyone, would you agree if they read it?

Rick: Yes, every pastor, I believe, if they have convictions, they get up every day and they aim the Word of God towards something they believe in. I believe that we all believe in our country. We love that God has blessed our nation. But we're aware of the fact that our country is in trouble. So what do we do? We have to have tools. That book right there is a tool. I read it to stir up passion but I found tools in it too.

James: Praise God! And we're actually, if you go to *LifeToday.org*, you can get the book and the Christian vote pins, we'll gladly send you, which I designed, it is the V-O-T-E, the T is a cross that we as Christians need to be praying for our country. Would you join me in saying thank you to a great pastor and a great fellowship and the Association of Related Churches? Again, there's their web site.

Rick, I count you as a friend. I think we're co-laborers in the fields of the Lord. I believe they're white to harvest. I believe this can be the day of a great awakening. I think you and your fellowship of churches, I believe you all are going to be, as your own church in Little Rock and that state of Arkansas, I believe you're going to be a great source of inspiration and I thank you.

Rick, what we're doing right now is what our viewers tell us is one of the greatest things they get to do and that is to meet a specific need where you don't have to wonder if it works. It is an absolute. There isn't anything you tell us that we get more excited about. Some people build a whole lot of what they're going to do during the

year around just this because it is so exciting, it is so meaningful and so important. You're going to know that when you listen. You, every single one of you, you can be a part of this miracle. You don't want to miss this.

On the mission field:

Pich: My son, Chaktra, is sick because he drank dirty water. I am so very afraid he will die like his sister Meum. When Meum turned three, she drank dirty water and got sick. She suffered a lot of stomach pain and diarrhea until she died.

I am asking every mother to help save my baby. Please help give us clean water.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: I love that little baby and I love that mother. I don't know -- I don't know of many things that ever moved me any more.

The first time I saw that, you remember what I said to you?

Betty: Yeah, you said, "we're going to drill a well for that mother."

James: I actually looked out at Pich, her name is Pich and there are no televisions. I just wanted her to know; I said, "Pich, we're going to drill you a well."

I could just tell you, my heart just overflows with a burden that God put there to give everybody a fresh drink of water; seemed like a pretty simple request. Jesus said, "You just give a cup in my name, you won't lose your reward." Just giving the cup is enough reward for me to see that mother's prayers answered.

But if you say, "Boy, that's nice, James, that you've got that burden because I can tell it's real. I can tell it's real." If you think it's real here, you think how real it is to the father who says you -- you, us, you're my hands, you're my body, you're the ones that give the water, you're the ones that bestow the blessings, you're the ones that take the brokenhearted world in your arms. So it's my arms -- he really has no arms but ours. Yeah, he can fling everything around. But he said, "This is how I've chosen it because I've given you the choice of letting me be father and trust me or rebel against me but if you want to be my family and express what I'm like, give a cup of water, meet a need, touch a broken heart.

All right, I believe you want to do it. I don't even know if you profess to be a Christian. I think if you're just breathing and grateful you can breathe, you say, "I want to help somebody." Okay, do it.

This is our last week. Twice a year, we ask you to help us drill water wells. We're asking you to help us drill 350 now that the missionaries showed us. This is a place, right here, we've got somebody here to minister to them and show you a need. Would you do it? Would you drill a well?

Betty and I, we gave a well to Pich's village. They're drilling it. I'm relatively sure they're drilling it while I'm talking to you; they're going to have water. But what about all she represents? What about all those hundreds of other villages?

Could you drill a well? Could you drill part of a well? \$4800 is a well. Could you do that? Go online, *LifeToday.org* and say, "Here's my gift." Use your bankcard like a check. Write a check and make it to *LIFE* but here it is. Could you give \$1200 or \$2400 and say, "I pray three people join me" or "another person joins me and we've got a well?" Whatever you can do, it's huge to God, it's huge to mothers like that. \$48, ten people water -- not just a cup, water basically for the rest of their life. \$48 -- could you do that? Surely there is a level you can come in. \$144, 30 people water.

Father, help everybody do what they can. In Jesus' name, for their sake, answer to those prayers.

Would you go to the phone, please? If you get a busy, be determined. This is the last week so if you happen to get a busy, say, "I'm not quitting until I get through. I am going to be an answer to that prayer and that heart cry. I'm going to help somebody's child. I'm determined to do it, nothing will stop me. I will express the love of God today." Would you make the call? You write a check, call us and tell us you're mailing it.

We've got some gifts to send you to bless you because we love you. We like to invest in you. As you're giving life to others, we want to strengthen your life. Thank you for making the call. Thank you for your gift.

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 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. Suffering can end because clean water changes everything! With your gift today, we can establish and drill 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 impact 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 *Arise*, a beautiful new daily devotional featuring words of encouragement from inspiring women who have shared their faith on *LIFE Today*. With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request the *Arise* audio visual devotional featuring 40 days of inspiration from *LIFE Today's* favorite women guests.

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 Lion and the Lamb."

This is the last week. Call, write, or make your gift online today!

End of clip

On the mission field:

Janice: I wish I could just sit down in your living room with you or a coffee shop and just share my heart of what it really is like in a place like this and with the people who like -- obviously, the need is great. People and children, especially are dying because of contaminated water. You can be a part of the answer. You can save lives. You can join with James and Betty and *LIFE Outreach* and drill a well that will give Water for Life to a village like the one I'm in right now. I hope you'll reach deep into your heart and join with me and let's save lives together.

In the studio:

James: I want you to get the incredible inspirational testimonies of so many of the women that have been on our program here and the audio/video series. If you'd like to have *Indivisible*, remember to go to *LifeToday.org* and say, "I want it. I like those Christian vote pins." You just make a gift. It's in paperback now, you can get it. We are sending the beautiful "Lion and the Lamb" bronze to those of you who help us drill a well with a gift of \$1200 or more. If you can drill a well, I know you will. I want to thank you.

Betty and I consider it an honor to have a great pastor with us. We think the church is the hope for the future. We actually believe the government rests on his shoulders. That's what the scripture says in Isaiah and the church is his shoulders, we're his body. Why do we turn it over so often to people who are deceived, defeated, and walking in darkness and then wonder why they dig a ditch of depression and debt? How about we take back the responsibility? Not church state, state church -- no, no! The impact of the family of God on planet earth, that's kingdom imprint.

Do you like that, pastor?

Rick: I like it!

James: I think it will hunt -- that dog will hunt.

Will you give Rick Bezet, New Life Church in Little Rock, give them a big thank you? ARC church, go to their web site, go online, and see what they're doing. You may want to be a part of it. Love to all of you! Thanks for putting God's arms around a hurting world.

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* - now available in paperback at online and retail bookstores.