

Week 49

11/26/12

James: It's fun to be with you. You're a joy, thank you! You join us. We normally tape on Tuesday nights in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. You can go to LifeToday.org and find out how you can get tickets. They don't cost you anything. It will be a wonderful evening together. I'm James Robison. Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*.

We've got a pastor that's written a book. As a matter of fact, I asked him if this was him jumping and he said it absolutely was not. They had to hire someone to do that. But here's the neat thing, Andy Stanley, Charles Stanley's son, wrote the forward. Our pastor, Robert Morris thinks that this pastor is something, who wrote this book. His name is Perry Noble and he has written a book titled *Unleashed: Breaking Free from Normalcy*. I'm real curious to know what he is talking about. Since I've heard a little bit about it, I'm really anxious for you to meet him.

Now he pastors in Anderson, South Carolina. I held a crusade there years ago, it was one the most God blessed crusades I've ever been in. I'd love to hear from some of you, if you can remember it. You might want to tell Perry if you remember it. I hope some of you who found the Lord there are leaders in his church. It's New Spring Church; isn't that right? And it is only 12 years old.

Perry: Yes, sir, we're about 12 years old.

James: And doing well.

Perry: Yes, sir. We've got about seven campuses now across the state. Had a service a few weeks ago where, or a weekend where about 1500 people gave their lives to Christ. It was an unbelievable weekend.

James: Well, you've got a church that's about the same age as Gateway, where I go. You and Robert met and he really liked you and you said you liked our pastor.

Perry: I love Robert Morris! I preach his sermons every week.

[Laughter]

James: Well, they're worth preaching.

Perry: Absolutely, they really are great.

James: I want you to tell our viewers about your own journey and then how you got into, let's say the ministry after you found Christ, and then I want us to really talk about some of the issues that you touch on in this book because it is really good.

Perry: Well, the joke is, when I was a kid I had a drug problem. My mother drug me to church every time the doors were open. It didn't matter if there was a rumor. Today we call it A.D.H.D. They didn't diagnose that back then. It was just that I was a boy. So she figured church would do me some good. So she was always taking me to church. So ever since I can remember I was going -- my mom took me to church.

My dad was -- he would follow the Lord, backslide, follow the Lord, backslide, but my mom had me in church. That was great until I was about 12 years old and when I was 12 years old she was diagnosed with cancer, three months later she passed away; she went on to be with the Lord.

At that point I got bitter. I didn't want anything to do with God. I didn't want anything to do with church because we had prayed for God to heal my mom and God didn't do what I asked him to do so obviously, he wasn't worth following, in my 12-year-old mind.

I went on a path of rebellion over the next several years and got about as far away from God as you could. I knew all the right answers. If you would have said, "Are you going to heaven when you die" or whatever, I would have said, "Yeah! Because I prayed a prayer when I was five." I had no idea what the prayer was but I prayed it. Because the preacher, who was huge told me to pray the prayer and I started crying.

And they said, "The spirit's on him."

I was like, "No, I'm scared. You're huge."

I prayed the prayer. My senior year in high school... and things in my life had completely fallen apart by then. There was a guy that sat in front of me in English class and he kept inviting me to church. I was like, "I don't want to go to your church."

He was like, "You need to come to church."

I was like, "I don't want to go."

He was like, "There are hot girls at church."

I was like, "What time are we going?" Hey, whatever gets them in the door; right?

So I went and there were some hot girls there but it's the first time I'd ever really heard a preacher preach the gospel. I'd never -- I was like -- do y'all do this every week? Because, like, can I come back here next week? I didn't know if I needed a ticket or what because I'd never been to anything like that. Like every church I'd ever been in was boring and this was awesome.

So I went back and over a period of time realized I was a sinner separated from God. I needed Jesus in my life. I surrendered my life to Christ. It was in a Baptist church so I asked them, "What do I need to do now?"

And the next week was Vacation Bible School week and they said, "Well, you need to volunteer for Vacation Bible School."

[Laughter]

So I was like, "Amen! I'm in." So they put me in a sixth grade class. And the last day of the class the teacher told me, "Tomorrow, Perry's going to give his testimony." I didn't even know what a testimony was. I shared my testimony and there were seven kids in the class and three of them gave their lives to Christ. I said, "I might have a future in this. I don't know."

So I went to college and studied to be -- went to college, majored in communications, went to Anderson College, now Anderson University in the upstate of Anderson, South Carolina. Worked in a couple of churches. In the fall of 1999 we planted New Spring Church with about 15 people in a living room, and here we are today, 12 years later, and nobody is more amazed at this whole thing than me.

I'm evidence that the Bible is true because the Bible says God will use the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. I tell everybody -- they say, "Why is your church growing?"

I'm like, "I made a 790 on my S.A.T. I have no idea!"

[Laughter]

And somebody always asks, "Was that verbal or math?"

I'm like, "No, that's the whole thing -- 790!" So if God can use me, God can use anybody!

James: And he is!

Now here you are a writer. You didn't know you could write; did you?

Perry: I had no idea!

[Laughter]

James: I want you to tell us because when you get into this, I looked at one of the very first chapters, chapter two, The Performance Trap; what are you talking about? What is the performance trap?

Perry: Well, I think the basic premise behind the book is most of us as followers of Christ, we trust Jesus with our salvation, we don't trust him with our life. There's a big difference because we're not saying, "Dear God, I want to go to heaven." We're saying, "I want to trust my life." I think we really become free when we trust him with our life.

The whole chapter, the performance trap, we were talking about earlier, I learned more about the love of God when I had my little girl, Charisse and she is five years old now. She is brilliant like her mother. She is beautiful like her mother. Thank God she is like her mother!

[Laughter]

I realize that... right before she was born I went through this entire thing as a dad. It was my first child and I was really worried about how I was going to love her, because we knew we were having a girl, and I was real nervous because I didn't know. So she was born by C-section. I remember the doctor holding her up and I went that's it. That's how I love her. I just saw her. She is mine. I don't love her because of anything she's done. I love her... I don't love her because of her performance, I love her because of her position as my little girl.

I think many times as Christians we get into, I've got to perform for God. I've got to try and impress God. What in the world could we do to impress the God that spoke the world into existence? We're like, "Look at me God! I wear a certain type of clothes."

And he's like, "I made the Grand Canyon with my pinky."

[Laughter]

So like you want to compare notes? Because I think you're going to lose this one." So that whole thing of we don't have to perform to get God to love us, he loves us because we're his children. That brought about so much freedom in my life personally because I think sometimes as Christians we get caught up in I've got to do certain things to get God to love me. If we do that, we never feel good enough, we never feel adequate, we never feel accepted, we never feel completely loved. So that's what that chapter is all about. There's a lot of Charisse stories in there because I've learned about the love of God through me loving my little girl.

Betty: Isn't that the key to that freedom you were talking about and that relationship with God? Is accepting God's love for us? It's unconditional -- he doesn't run out?

Perry: It was one of those things I never understood until -- that God's love isn't achieved, it's received and that was a game changer for me.

James: You have another chapter that you call moving past your past. What are you talking about?

Perry: So I start out that chapter with a pretty embarrassing story. I was in the sixth grade and I was a large sixth grader -- very. So we all left to go to lunch and I played football in the sixth grade. We had burritos for lunch. And right after we had lunch, we ate our burritos, we had P.E.

[Laughter]

So we went to P.E. class and there was a girl, one of the prettiest girls in school, her name was Tara Ann, I never will forget it. She stood right beside me and we were going to do our fitness test that day and you had to go number off one-two, one-two, one-two. Well, I was number one and she was number two, and so the first thing in the fitness test was sit ups. So she was going to hold my feet --

[Laughter]

And I was going to impress her with my ability to do sit ups. And so the P.E. teacher blew the whistle and here I go. I'm one, two, and on the third sit up I parted her hair.

[Laughter]

It was the most un... I cried! I was -- I quit. I would have dropped out of school that day. I went home and told my dad. I said, "I cannot go back to school. I have ruined Tara Ann's life."

And here's what's funny -- here's what's funny. I never forgot that. So the next year we go to middle school. Every time I saw her, I wouldn't make eye contact with her. In high school, I would see her in the halls in high school, I couldn't look at... James, I promise you, at our 10-year high school reunion I'm standing talking to a bunch of people. Somebody comes up and taps me on the shoulder. I turn around. She looked at me and she said, "I bet you don't know who I am."

[Laughter]

I said, "I have never forgotten you!" And I use it to kind of illustrate the point that sometimes we make some really bad mistakes in our past and we never get past them. It's those things we allow to defeat us to define us. And we kind of stay trapped in the prison of our past and I did, man because before I came to Christ, I did some things I'm not proud of. And the enemy loves to bring up your past. He gets historical on you and he loves to say, "Hey, you did this." Or "You did..."

I'll tell you my father passed away and I was driving around in my hometown where I grew up and I drove by the house -- I never will forget this. I drove by the house where as a very young guy I lost my virginity. Right when I drove by that house I saw it and the enemy started whispering to me saying, "What if your church knew about that? What if your friends knew about that? What if your wife knew about that? What if your little girl..." I'm telling you, for a moment I was just gripped by fear and insecurity and worry.

And all of the sudden I felt the Lord speak to me and say, "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." God knew about that event and he loves me and he forgives me and he accepts me and he's chosen to use me for his glory.

So it's just one of those things where I'm like, you know what? It's one of those battles we're always going to face, the battle with the past, the battle with the mistakes but the thing I've learned is if you don't let your past die, it won't let you live. And you don't have to live where you used to live. We cannot embrace our future until we embrace everything in our past, paid for, forgiven, redeemed and we need to move on because God has.

James: I think you can see why Perry would have a church that is 12 years old and have 15,000 or 20,000 people coming.

By the way, to you in Anderson, South Carolina, like I said, over 30 years ago you made an impression on me when I was in the stadium there and I loved you. I saw a future, a hope for so many of you. And I hope you'll even communicate perhaps some with Perry.

But what I really heard coming from this wonderful young pastor is the great truth that if you are trapped and held captive by the past, and really, we were able to laugh along with him which makes you understand why people can enjoy listening to him, but then he took us to the reality of the pain of the past.

And really, Perry, a lot of people are caught by the pain of their failures right now even as Christians. You can look back and say, that happened as a Christian, I failed. One of the things you've heard our Pastor Robert say that I know impacted you as it has the people at Gateway and the people you've heard Betty and me talk about, as Christians we miss the mark, we fail. I mean the Bible is filled with people who knew God and they failed.

So the issue is not when it happened or exactly what condition you were in or what your relationship with God was, it was something that was wrong but he died for the wrong, Jesus. He paid for it. He took your shame, he took the blame and he took it so he could lift that load off of you. He took the load of it, however intentional or unintentional the issue was, you don't need to be stuck there. You don't have to be held captive by it.

That's really the message that Perry's communicating to the people he preaches to but also in the book, how you can unleash and live -- be *Unleashed* -- be free. That's what God wants for us.

So wherever you are, I mean right now, please understand that I know you smiled, you laughed along with him. But I know when he talked about something, I know

your mind tracked too and you may feel like, "I'm stuck in something very recent or something way back" but let Him lift you. Love lifted me. From sinking sand, he lifted me. From a horrible past, he lifts us. Would you let him? Right where you are, would you ask him?

Jesus, you were lifted up. You died for me. You were raised to live in me. I receive you as savior, as Lord, as redeemer, as my friend. I hope even as I was saying that you are somehow in harmony, in heart harmony saying it and receiving the Lord. You may want to call that number and say, "I just prayed that prayer."

So glad to send you a book I wrote to help you know God as father. It's titled, *Knowing God as Father*. It gives you some simple Bible studies. We want to be a blessing to you. This book that Perry wrote, it's in the bookstores. Do you have a web site if people want to see what's going on at the church? What is it?

Perry: The book web site is *UnleashedBook.com* and our church web site is *NewSpring.cc*.

James: You may want to visit them sometime. You may not have a church home or you may want to check the web site. Would you like to just say thanks to Perry for sharing so openly?

[Applause]

We're actually going to have him back and tell us some more stories. I'm kind of interested in some of the things that happened to Mr. Perry; aren't you? And we'll be listening. But I want to show you something, and I know, Perry, you've told Betty and me that you watch our program and you like it and I appreciate that fact. I know one of the reasons you have to like it is because you love what love does and that's what we're going to see. I want you to listen very closely to prayers of people you may recognize like Beth Moore or some of the Pretorius family or some of our own grandchildren praying and people you may not know but I want you to notice what they're praying about because you -- you are the answer to the prayer. Watch and listen.

Begin video clip

>> Lord, she needs food.

>> I ask you to perform a miracle in this child, God. Please stop its suffering, Jesus.

>> The disease and the death. Lord, I just ask you to let the food we give him be nourishment to his body.

>> Father, I just pray that you take this child in your arms, in your loving arms. And Father, we need a miracle for this child.

>> We need your help, Father. He needs a supernatural touch from you, Lord Jesus.

[Child Crying]

>> God, we ask you to work a miracle to bring a child back to life. Father, I ask you to work a miracle in the hearts of people who are watching us right now to keep babies alive.

>> You are the God who heals and you are the God who provides.

>> God, help us to stop this holocaust in our day that could be dealt with by fighting disease and starvation and hunger by merely giving. God, touch the hearts of people, in Jesus' name.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Yes, you can, God! And so many times if not most of the time, you're the miracle. You're the miracle answer to prayer.

Betty, I watched those graves that I know it was my voice and you know they're being dug for little bodies. The children of people who don't have the things that we take for granted and the things we have that we think are entertaining or fun and make life pleasant -- there's nothing wrong with any of it. God gave us the creative energy and expertise to develop so many things. But for the truly poor, that's the only joy most of them have is a little child, a little family, and then their gone. And we've got a miracle prayer we want answered. Betty, I want those children to have food and we can feed them.

Betty: We sure can. James and I have been there. We've seen the small little graves like you just saw. We've seen where the mothers are weeping over those graves because their baby didn't get help in time. We want to make sure that babies that are struggling now to survive just for the next breath, we want to get there in time and you can be a

part of that miracle that we're asking you to share with the lives of these children. Please join with us and let's reach out and offer a miracle to them of food.

James: You know we come to you twice a year and we ask you to help us feed children for an extended period of time: \$30, \$50, \$100 will feed three, five, or ten children for the next months. It's what you give today, if you'll take your bankcard and call the number or go to LifeToday.org and go ahead and make the gift online. You can do it and we get it immediately; it would be great if you could do that. You write a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us what you're sending. But I want you to keep this in mind now because you see, we're talking about praying for a miracle.

Well, we've got another miracle answer and you need to hear this. This just happened. We just got an offer of \$3.8 million in food, in a grant. See, we've got hundreds of thousands of children that we're trying to raise the funds for to feed that are in the centers. What we've just heard is if we can come up with another \$640,000, we're going to keep raising money for all these children that the missionaries have got in place. We're not near there yet. That's why the \$30, \$50, or \$100 to feed three, five, or ten is so important.

But what you need to understand now is we're going to keep focusing on that but we've got a chance, if we can just get a \$640,000 add-on, it's going to be multiplied six times in its effect: \$3.8 million. That means \$1,000 now can have a \$6,000 impact -- \$100, a \$600 impact.

So would you please today, Father. I pray everybody today, God, this is an answer to prayer. I'm going to be an answer to prayer. Lord, I pray everybody will say that.

I'm asking God to move on you. Then you be the answer to that prayer; you be the miracle, please? Go to the phone. If you were to get a busy say, "I'm getting through. I'm going to be an answer to prayer. I'm going to help!" And make the largest gift you can. If there's any way you can give \$1,000 or more, let it be multiplied to \$6,000 or \$100 and go to \$600, do it!

We have some gifts we're sending you to bless you. We always want to bless you. I'm asking you, please, let's see the miracles together. Thank you so much for making the very best gift you can and know it will be multiplied and it will make an impact.

Pre-taped video:

Announcer: At this very moment children are drawing what could be their last breath, struggling to stay alive due to a lack of food. Today you can stop the cycle of death. You can help save a life.

Life's mission feeding teams are in place right now ready to answer the hunger cries of 400,000 suffering children in remote areas of Africa. And now we have a miracle opportunity, a 3.8 million dollar food grant has been offered to us for our mission and relief efforts. All we have to do is guarantee we can deliver the food at a cost of \$640,000. This means your gift today can now have six times the impact. \$30 to help feed three children can have a \$180 impact. \$50 for five children can have a \$300 impact. And \$100 to help feed ten children can have a \$600 impact for feeding.

With your gift you can receive James Robison's newest book, *God of All Creation*. Through his personal observations of animals and wildlife, James shares heartwarming stories and spiritual lessons of God's love and grace.

With your gift of \$125 to help feed ten children, you may request the new *Jesus Calling Devotional Bible* featuring 260 scripture insights from the author of the *Jesus Calling* devotional, Sarah Young.

Finally, please prayerfully consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help save the lives of 100 children, which today can have a \$6,000 impact, and you may also request "The Lion and the Lamb" bronze sculpture.

Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I'm really excited about sending you this little book. By the way, a great Christmas gift. You could go online and order several copies if you know somebody in the family and I know a lot of you, you not only love kids and people, you love pets and you observe what God's made. These are lessons God's let me learn from our little dachshund, our little Princess. We may have to bring her up here and let everybody meet her. She is going to love you absolutely to death. She's a German dog but a French kisser and she will kiss you.

[Laughter]

I want you to know this -- we're going to send it to say thank you for any gift. You get copies of it and you get it to everybody you know for Christmas that loves pets or animals.

And Perry Noble's book, *Unleashed*, it's in the bookstores. I hope you'll look him up and go by to visit their church there in South Carolina.

Join Betty and me in saying thanks to Perry. He'll be back for another program.

Perry, thank you a lot, buddy. God bless you!

Thank you -- thank you for being a miracle, an answer to prayer!