

Week 13

1/17/13

James: Thank all of you! Thank you! I'm James Robison. Betty and I are just thrilled to have *LIFE Today* to share with you and be able to share this time.

I talk about how much we like our guests and excited about... I've never had a guest and said, "We just don't like this guest. They're crummy; haven't got it." But I've got to be honest with you, this guy -- I've had so much fun, *Two Foot Fred -- Two Foot Fred*, and it says, "Fred lives life large." That's what Dave Ramsey said. Would you welcome Two Foot Fred to *LIFE Today*?

Fred, I'm glad to see you!

This is Fred Gill!

Fred: Howdy howdy!

James: Fred, I'm absolutely -- as a matter of fact, when you and I were visiting before we came out here. I said, "Man, you've had a lot of weaknesses to overcome." And you threw that right back in my face. You just told me --

Fred: No, I said, "Other people might see them as weaknesses but I see it as a gift -- as a gift from God." What a lot of people might consider is their own weakness or their own insecurities, they ought to kind of flip that around and look at it as a strength because it can be used for good.

James: So you've been able to take advantage of your disadvantage.

Fred: I've made millions and millions of the greatest lemonade that you ever could imagine, and then God was the sugar in the lemonade -- he was the sugar part of it.

James: That's great! I want you to tell our viewers because a lot of people watch and they look at whatever challenge comes in their life, whatever obstacle they see wherever they feel like they got a bad deal, and it looks like they just get trapped by it. It's almost like a steel trap or a pit and they're pretty well stuck in it and they're always

finding all the reasons to either blame God or whoever or whatever they're doing and they never really go anywhere.

Now you did -- I want you to talk about your life. I want you to kind of let our viewers know where you ultimately ended up even though you might have been making some pretty good decisions on some of the challenges, but then I want you to tell our viewers how really God used somebody they might have seen, Dave Ramsey but just take us on the journey. Would you?

Fred: Well, I sure will. And first of all, thanks for having me.

James: We're thrilled to have you.

Fred: Yes, sir, and really happy to be here.

I was born 38 years ago... 38 years and a few months. Back then they didn't have ultrasounds and they didn't have the technology so they didn't know I was going to be a dwarf until I came out. I was born at a small town hospital in Seymour, Indiana. They kind of evaluated me and realized that I wasn't like the rest, and realized I had some pretty big challenges that needed more attention than what they could provide at a small town hospital. So they –

One of the issues I had was they knew that my arms and legs were disproportionate to my body and that was obvious but I have a cleft palate which was all inside, it was a hole in the roof of my mouth and the immediate attention I needed there was they sewed my tongue to my bottom lip so that I wouldn't swallow my tongue on the way to Riley's Children's Hospital in Indianapolis; that was about an hour ambulance ride, 45 minute ambulance ride. My mom used to say -- my mom has passed, it will be four years in November that she passed but she used to say, "Fred, you talk so much I wish they would have just left your lips sewn to your tongue!"

[Laughter]

James: I can imagine a mother saying that.

Fred: I think she was kidding.

James: I can imagine your mother saying that.

Fred: Can you imagine me causing her to say that? No! Not me!

And I had some -- they obviously unsewed it and --

James: Somebody did!

[Laughter]

Fred: Exactly! And so she fed me with a feeding tube for the first year and a half of my life until I was apparently mature enough to have the hole fixed so that it would grow with the rest of my body.

My body did grow... Yes, from a baby.

You're supposed to laugh, James!

[Laughter]

That's funny!

James: I appreciate the help!

Fred: I can't help it!

James: Why don't you get a little joy, Fred! How about a little joy?

Fred: I had some other -- I had club feet, which is where your feet are really -- you walk kind of on your tiptoes and on the sides of your feet. I had scoliosis -- the reason I say had is because all these have been repaired. The first 12 years of my life, I lived surgery to surgery.

So the cleft palate was the first thing. I took speech classes all the way from kindergarten through sixth grade in elementary school.

The feet repair was next. You can read in the book more detail.

And then finally at 12, with scoliosis it actually -- I'm actually being serious here, it stops your growth when they put the rods in your back, at least for 26 years ago, when I had it done. And so they had to wait for kind of the cross hairs to match where your - - they want you to grow as much as you can but they can't wait too long or it will get

so bad that they can't fix it. And the scoliosis, the curvature of the spine can cause pressure on the lungs and other organs and really cause problems as an adult.

So for my time, it was 12, and they repaired that... major surgery. Body cast from here to my hips for three months. Took the cast off -- I'm giving you the in-a-nutshell version -- took my cast off, staph infection all the way down my spine that they didn't know for several weeks later.

My mom had -- the doctor didn't know it was staph infection and she would dress my incision every day. One day she took a piece of gauze off and could see the rod -- the shining of the rod in my back. Yeah! That's when they knew something was really wrong. And it turned out that I had --

James: I had staph and it nearly took my life. So it's brutal.

Fred: It is brutal and you don't realize how beaten down. I think this has a biblical connotation to it because you don't realize how much of a weight and how beaten down staph is on your body until your body is ridden of it. I think that's also with darkness.

James: Well said! I didn't realize how much damage it had done to my body. It is brutal.

Fred: And when they removed the staph, my mom -- like you, I was like a different person. And I think that could be the metaphor or the analogy would be that when you remove the darkness, you take the veil off, and you see the light of God, you're like a brand-new person; that really is pretty cool on a lot of different scenarios.

I went to college, went to Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana and got a degree in entrepreneurship; can you believe that? I'm a serial entrepreneur.

James: Knowing you, I can. Yeah!

Fred: I'm like squirrel, squirrel, squirrel!

[Laughter]

That's what Dave Ramsey says about me.

[Laughter]

He's like, "Fred's like squirrel, squirrel, squirrel!"

[Laughter]

"Start a business! Start a business! Start a business!" I think that's why --

James: And you have!

Fred: Yeah! And I think that's why the entertainment business works so well for me is because each song -- and I'm not a singer but each facet of the business is its own little project so I am able to start a bunch of little projects and let them grow.

James: And you help people. I told you when we were meeting privately, Jesus said, "Greatest in the kingdom is servant." And you may see yourself as an agent, you may see yourself on Star Search but you're actually helping them. You're actually assisting them on their journey with -- and they may not know it -- their god-given talents and abilities.

Fred: Absolutely! And I'm a dot connector. I connect a lot of dots. That's something... a term that didn't come to mind earlier when we were talking. And that's really my gift.

James: You got very successful assisting people and working with this act. By the way, the whole story is incredible. I would just say that if you've ever felt that you had something too big to handle, or you were too small to handle it, God is big enough. But I want you to hear in his whole story here, there is no way, it is like I told Fred, this is not Oprah. We didn't have her time or her money. So we don't have enough time to tell the whole story but he put it in the book. It is fabulous! It is *Two Foot Fred*. But you actually became successful and hung around a lot of rich people and it actually, that success actually contributed to some real issues in your life.

Fred: It really did. I met John Rich of the band Big and Rich when I was in Nashville for Fanfare, what used to be -- it's now C.M.A. Music Fest. And again, long story short, pun or no pun intended, that was funny!

[Laughter]

It's okay to laugh. Four years later he invited me to be in one of their music videos;

their first video they ever did. Eight years, almost nine years later from that, I'm here talking with both of you. In-between that time –

Well, first of all, I'll back up real quick. Before that, I had been in business as an entrepreneur for eight or nine years running restaurants and got my real estate salesperson's license, broker's license. I started in the entertainment business. I was blessed to have a younger brother who is also a dwarf that has no -- the only thing he likes about me being in the entertainment business is I get him tickets to friends of mine shows. So basically, entertainment, the last eight years, I had a lot of fun.

My mother died, passed away, that fun which was alcohol based turned into a medication. The whole time I didn't realize that the devil and the evil and the enemy was just waiting for that to happen, waiting for their time to come in because I was always -- and I am now but I was always such a precocious, strong, thick-skinned, nothing is going to get in my way. And the one thing that came -- the weakness I do have that can get in my way is alcohol. I'm big enough now to say that. I knew that one day that time would come but I was not an ever nayer, that's the thing that somebody people think that they have a problem -- well, I don't have a problem with alcohol. I don't have to get up in the morning and have a drink. But yet, I was one drink for me meant 12 hours and a fifth of crown royal later, excuse me, a fifth of whisky later, whatever "it" was.

And women of the night -- I was probably passing up the woman of my life for the woman or the women in the night. I woke up one day; I got saved on -- a mutual friend of ours -- Dave Ramsey's back porch. It took God six months from the time that I got saved until the time that I finally woke up one morning after having made a complete you-know-what of myself, and had the shame. What was happening was my binges were getting closer together to where I was then drinking to cover up the shame of the last binge. I didn't want to be –

I read a quote that said, "Would your ten- or eleven- or twelve-year-old self be proud of yourself today?" And I can say that right now, two and a half, three years ago, I could not say that. He would have kicked my own butt. Are you kidding me? He would have been so disappointed in me and wouldn't have even recognized me. So I made the decision and it was a day or two before but one one of one one, so January 1st of 2011, I took every drop of alcohol in my house and I destroyed it. I took a big plastic tub and here's -- I'm a person of metaphors and symbols. I didn't realize it, when I opened my fridge from my level, I had a case of beer in the top shelf in sideways. So when I opened that door, the light that came out was brown. I got on a stool -- I'm getting goose bumps right now. I got on the stool and I started throwing

that beer in this tub and I was making it break -- it was breaking. And I didn't realize as I was pouring those bottles out, the light was getting whiter and whiter and whiter and whiter to the point when I was done, I got down and the light was white. That was just -- I knew at that point that that was what I had to do was remove alcohol from my life.

And so to go from there, then I -- so I got in a good Bible-based church in Nashville. I had been going to church when I was able to on a Sunday morning if I had a wild Saturday night, what I called "Nighttime Fred." Now I'm just "Fun Fred." I like to say, "I'm not small, I'm fun sized!"

[Laughter]

But I started going to church. I started realizing... what I realized is when I was growing up, we went to church every Sunday but you had to go to church. And then I realized the way my thought process was, I thought to myself, I get to go to church. Like I was excited -- like I get to go to church this morning! That was the real turning point for me, I think with Jesus. And really, I think the light bulb moment or the moment when I knew I had been saved. Because I got saved on Dave's back porch when we spoke the words and the sinner's prayer but I think it takes that moment, don't you agree, that it takes that realization that like, yes, this really is true.

James: And we don't try to -- everybody doesn't have a Damascus Road experience, the disciples obviously didn't. What happened to Simon Peter after he crashed and burned more than you did when you fell back and got on that binge after you'd had the prayer, he had a bigger crash but he preached the keynote message at Pentecost a short time later, Peter did.

Here's the thing that I want to say this to you and I feel very, very strongly that I need to say and I wish I could say it to you, Fred, I find myself falling in love with you. I just see Jesus. I see a remarkable person. I say that you've been remarkable, period. I believe your greatest cheerleader, God, was looking down at a guy that took all the lemons that was thrown his way and did make lemonade, and now you acknowledge he's the sugar that really makes even lemonade really sweet. You went ahead and made lemonade out of the challenges but now then there's a beauty in you that is the Lord. I want you to know you've got a friend here in me and in Betty, a friend here in all the studio.

Do you appreciate Fred and what you see in him and his spirit? I really believe that your greatest days of helping other people are right now. Our audience is going to pray for you.

If people wanted to know, how can they find out what you're doing, where you're going to go? Maybe people you're interested in or people you're helping, or maybe the fact that they might want some help. Do you have a web site that they can go to?

Fred: I do. TwoFootFred.com all spelled out just like the book, as well as if they want to communicate with me, Twitter: @TwoFootFred just like -- and all that information is on my web site.

James: Do you see people that find reasons to kind of write themselves off drawing inspiration from you? Do you see that?

Fred: I do. I do. And I feel like if one person, and I'm guessing maybe you feel this way as well, that if from your entire broadcast on a show, if just one person in the entire universe draws something good from that, then that was worthwhile. I look at that because at one point, I was that one person.

James: Let me just say to our television audience, let me say what you've heard and I believe what you've seen in a remarkable story is God's invitation to you that no matter where you've been, no matter where you find yourself now, God is able and anxious to lift you up above those circumstances and he really will.

Father, I pray that every person watching has drawn inspiration from what Fred has shared. I pray that they would look up to you as their strength in Jesus' name.

Fred, you said a while ago, "If just one person..." And we really do feel that way. You know we will pray almost every day with between 1,000 and 2,000 people who will call us to say, "Something is happening in my life. Pray with me." -- Every single day! And that is absolutely awesome.

So again, join Betty and me in saying thanks to God and thanks to Fred. What a blessing! The book is in the bookstores. There is his web site again if you want to know what's going on and how you can interact with him.

Fred, we're doing something that is just absolutely one of the most powerful things I've ever seen and that is to give people direction in their life by showing them life

through love. And there's not one thing we do that expresses the love of God any more clearly than to give people fresh water.

Jesus said, "If you give a cup of water in my name, you will not lose your reward." That reward goes beyond anything you can imagine.

I want you to watch this. One of our staff member's sons did this that grew up with our daughter, our youngest daughter and he's got five children. Listen to his voice and what he was saying on the mission field. Watch this.

On the mission field:

>> Pathways... they often represent choices. And while some in life are trivial, this one... this one... and this one carry the weight of great consequence. But in reality, these pathways in this village can hardly be considered choices because they all end here. Which when it comes down to it, leads here.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Boy, that breaks my heart. That's... hmmm! Not just a little name there -- it's a name but it's a precious little life. Dear God! Betty and I have knelt too often by those graves. A lot of times they bury children right around their little hut or house. You walk outside their house and they've got little mounds -- it's family. They don't have to go to a cemetery with my baby. Then we go to -- we wouldn't call them cemeteries, they just go to burial areas where they just bury the children. It doesn't have to happen.

I think in the heart of every person there's a desire to relieve pain, suffering, pressure and there should be. If you have a perfect cure for anything... we've had West Nile outbreaks, no cure. We've had all kinds of problems taking lives.

I've told you many times, Betty and I are strong faithful supporters of St. Jude's. We don't stop and say, "Well, it was started by someone that was Jewish." How do you let stuff like that stop you, for crying out loud? If you love God and you love people, I say, "Praise God!" They're trying to save these little children's lives. We can find so many reasons, it seems, to not do the compassionate thing. What could be more compassionate than giving to people? See, we help St. Jude's to try to find a cure. We've got the cure for what's killing these children. We've got the answer to a mother's prayer, a child's need, to a family -- stop the death cycle.

Our missionaries have found 500 key locations where the need is desperate in 12 countries. And we've set up behind mark this year, economic uncertainties, a lot of people are thinking about many times, but I'm believing God is going to correct that. I think he'll correct our nation's course if we'll seek his wisdom and guidance and the heart harmony that only he can bring. We're trusting God to let us drill 500 water wells in these 12 countries. Would you drill one of them?

I'm asking all of you who watch -- I'm praying that all of our donors, Betty, will make it a personal goal to drill a water well in a year. We made it our goal 14 years ago. We were drilling once a year, then we started drilling twice a year. The wells were \$3600 and now they're \$4800 but we asked God to let us do it. We did it the first time, the next time. You know what? God has honored our prayer to where we've been able to do it every time. Sometimes we've drilled several. We ask God to help us start with one. We're meeting children who are drilling a well -- little kids! So if they can do it, we just say, "God help us do it."

But here's the thing that's really critically important. Not everyone can. You don't start there necessarily but we start somewhere. This is really important. \$48, ten people water for the rest of their life; you make a \$48 gift toward a \$4800 well. If you could give \$144, 30 people water the rest of their life. There's a level at which you can start. Some of you could give \$1200 toward the \$4800 and say, "I'll pray three people join me. God, let three people join me!" Or \$2400 and pray one joins you. There are some of you who will say, "You know what? I can drill a well. I can do more than that."

Betty: James, as I was watching that, I thought, they're walking along a path. And most of the time, that path leads to a grave. I want them to walk a path that leads to the well, the well of life not only for their thirsty souls but for their bodies. I want you to help us and join us in doing that.

James: Well, really and truly, I've made it kind of a prayer theme that in mission outreach, I want to provide water for every thirsty person on planet earth, clean water, so they will have water for life and they'll be anxious to hear about the water of life that gave them that love expression.

Would you start today with that \$48 or \$144 or something toward the well or perhaps a well? We want to send you some special gifts to bless you because we love you. Thank you for helping us share Water for Life.

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 500 new water wells for remote villages in over 12 different nations. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five people. A gift of \$48 will help provide for ten 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 Beth Moore's *"Blessed Mornings & Restful Nights,"* a beautiful new daily devotional to begin and end your day in God's presence.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request *Morning and Evening: I will Praise You*, a two CD collection of 20 instrumental hymns and the companion book that shares the stories behind each hymn.

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 limited edition 50th anniversary bronze sculpture, *Living Water* by artist Robert Summers.

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

In the studio:

James: I do want to remind you again to say thank you. I know you would give because you're giving life.

We want to send you something to bless your life, the hymns, the incredible CD's that will bless you, and the story of how the hymns came to be. And then I want to remind you that *Two Foot Fred: How my life has come full circle* -- his incredible, incredible story! And I want you, if you would, to just say a big thank you to Fred.

Fred, you're a great encourager. You're my friend! God bless you! Thank you! Thank all of you for watching. Thank you for helping us give water. Thank you for your encouragement! God bless all of you!