

Week 11

3-12-13

James: I want to welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison. Betty and I are thrilled, I mean we're excited about – well, of course, fifty years of marriage and ministry and this year it's an anniversary celebration. By the way, you want to make plans right now to come to the anniversary conference, *Awaken Now*, the 18th through the 20th of July. It'll be held at Gateway; you don't want to miss it.

Now today you're going to see the academy award-winning actor Robert Duvall. I found out he was kind of following me, watching me, watching everything we did on television. He came to our home the year he won the academy award for *Tender Mercies* and said, "I think you're the best preacher I've ever heard. And I think one of the illustrations, I like all of them, but one of them you used, I think it's the greatest illustration on the love of God I ever heard, I want to use it! I want to use it in a movie!"

Well, you're going to hear him telling that, then you're going to see how he did do it. You'll hear the illustration from me and then you're going to hear the award-winning producer in Nashville, just won an award, Michael Curtis, who in our old set, Betty, when we first started, it's going to be pretty funny. Of course, I had black hair. But remember this is the fiftieth anniversary. You're going to hear him sing a song to me and the highest response in the history of our ministry, people calling to give their lives to Christ, jammed all day and AT&T services. You're going to hear that! First of all, Robert Duvall!

Begin video clip:

James: I want to take you back now and show you what you said got your attention when you came to me and you asked if you could use this illustration in your movie. Let's go back and look at this. All right?

>> My son was very small. He used to crawl up in my lap and put his hands up on my face and he would say, "Da –"

He couldn't talk very plain,

“Da, I love you!” I remember when that little fellow finally began to walk, he was very heavy, he was a big boy when he was a baby, and I remember the first time I entered my home and those chubby little legs carried him rapidly down that hall with those fat little fists up in the air, saying, “Da-ee, Da-ee, Da-ee, Da-ee!” And I grabbed him and he put those little hands on my face and I grabbed him and I looked at the little dimples in each knuckle, and I kissed him and I turned him over and I kissed him.

As I held my little boy’s hand and I thought how masterfully God created us, I suddenly saw in that beautiful little hand a horrible nail. I began to think, God, I wouldn’t let someone come in my house and take my little boy and take him out in my yard and get some old boards and put my little boy on boards and take big ol’ nails and put them on his little hands! And while he looked up at me and cried, “Da-ee, Da-ee,” [screaming] I wouldn’t let them drive those nails through his little hands! I don’t love anyone that much. But God does.

>> Look at these beautiful, beautiful hands. Look at them. Now imagine a nail piercing the palms of this child’s hands.

Congregation: No!

>> And then picture the nails going into an old board. If you was to take two boards and nail them together, I know I don’t have that much love in me to do this to my son. Do you? I know I don’t! I don’t have that much love in me!

But God does!

Congregation: Amen! Yes!

[Cheers & Applause]

James: Do you have any personal desires for the film to have any kind of an effect in our country?

Robert: Absolutely! I think we all have our individual journeys or journey from the cradle to the grave and in that journey for me, what I think I’ve done here is something that is therapeutic to the nation in a small way. If that’s something I’ve had to offer in my lifetime, that’s good because I want people to see that there is one God and to take it a step further that his son Jesus Christ is to be glorified and this can help people. The essence of that can help people and without becoming sanctimonious – I’ve had a woman come to me and say, “You know, this movie affected me. I’m a Jewish agnostic lady from Long

Island but somehow this movie got to me." So, if it gets to people then without great explanations then maybe that's good.

James: Well, you know I guess one of the finest things that happened to us as a family and we've had a long standing friendship with Robert Duvall, prayed together a lot with him. He's been on a number of times; he's come with us [unintelligible]

-- he's just a great friend. But he told us, he said, "James, one of the reasons I wanted to come in your home and meet with you and all three of your children --" which he did, sat around the table, we had dinner together, he said, "-- because I see Jesus in you and I believe you're the real deal and I wanted to come look at your family, and you are."

Robert, he didn't like just religion without a real relationship. He said, "I see that relationship." We want it for everybody. Well, Michael Curtis as one of the most famous, most awarded country music writers and singers and he came because we have a very similar testimony and he came to give that years ago, when we first started the talk format. It's in an old set but you need to listen to what happened when he just kind of shocked me and the highest response ever. I mean, thousands and thousands of people called in and trust Christ. Let's join that, in that very special moment.

Michael: Yes, in fact, brother, I wrote a song just for you that I want to play for you. Do you mind?

James: Do you mean during the course of this program?

Michael: Like right now!

James: You mean you want to do it right now?

Michael: Like right now!

James: You wrote a song for who?

Michael: You know those Set Free tapes you turned me on to?

James: These, right here?

Michael: Yeah, when I was in my motel room, me and Dot kind of got into them.

James: Did I know you were going to do this?

Michael: No sir, you didn't.

James: I didn't know he was going to do this! Did I?

Michael: No sir, you didn't.

James: Are you sure you're supposed to do this?

Michael: Oh, yes!

James: All right!

[song]

You know the prince of the world
Well, that old demon he's heartless
He had me walking in chains
He had me blinded by darkness
Then I met the son
There was a dawning of truth
And I've got something better
Than the fountain of youth!

Hey, I've been set free!
By the blood of the lamb
My debts been paid
By the great I Am

Now that you've been changed
They've got no hold on me
My sins are washed away
Thank God I've been set free!

(Here's the punch line)

Well now old Satan he's hot

Yeah, he's mad as the devil
'Cause I'm out of my prison
And getting back on the level
Thanks to the one
Who went down to hell
Took away those keys
From that old rascal
And let me out of my cell!

Yeah, I've been set free
By the blood of the lamb
Well, my debts been paid
By the great I Am!
Now that I've been changed
It's got no hold on me
My sins are washed away
Thank God I've been set free!
My sins are washed away
Thank God I've been set free!

[Cheers & Applause]

James: But you found that you were an illegitimate child, that you're mother had been raped?

Michael: Mmm hmm.

James: Had a lot of pain, but you really found some deliverance. But did you ever go and deal with that aspect, with your mother, and find out some things and have a kind of a healing experience in your relationship with your mother?

Michael: That didn't happen, really, until this year. I mean, we had communications: Christmas, and things like that. But there was always that wall. And in 1991, you know, I've always been a song writer but never a book writer and God gave me the idea for the book, *Illegitimate? But I Have a Father*.

And I said, "Lord, I'm not a book writer!"

But he said, "Oh yeah!" And say it was to April of this year, 5 o'clock in the morning God woke me up and said, "It's time to start that book."

So I go to the computer like a big book "know-it-all" and I start tap-tap-tap-tap and I get frustrated and I said, "I don't know what to say!"

And my wife says, "Well, you know, Mike, you haven't even called your mama and really talked to her about it."

And I was just going on things that I had heard. So, I called my mom and – this was all in one day now – I called my mom and told her I was starting that book, told her I wouldn't use our real names, if that would make her feel better. But I said, "Mom, you never really told me what happened to you."

And let me tell you something, James, that day God broke the dam wall and the flood gate. And I want to tell you something, she opened up and she shared and she started getting free. I could hear it in her voice and she said, "You know, I was going to call you today!"

I said, "You were?"

She said, "Yeah, I was." She said, "Your dad's moved back to town."

I'm thinking, oh, this is the man that raped my mama. So I said, "How do you feel about that?"

"Well, it's all right. It don't really bother me anymore. He's got lymphocytic leukemia, and said his dad had it and he wanted to make sure the kids were checked."

The first thing that hit me was, "I wonder if he knows Jesus?" And then a light went off in my head and I thought what a privilege. I said, "Lord, you've got to let me do that." And there was a thing that says, "What bigger privilege for me to be than to lead the man that raped my mom to Jesus Christ." And I've still got that go, brother, I'm supposed to meet with my dad.

James: You know my father raped my mother and she conceived at age 41 and gave birth to me and later in my life my mother wanted me to have my real father to be my father so she married him, and actually divorced him and married him, I was told, five or six times.

It was not a good thing, when he came into our home he was an alcoholic. He would go into a drunken rage and nearly killed my mother. In self-defense I nearly killed him.

And all of these things that happened were awful. But one time, this was after I started sharing Jesus with people in public ministry, Michael, my father came where I could try to help him. The truth is that one day I was driving down the street and I saw a man laying in the gutter by the curb. I was in Junior College at the time and preaching. I pulled my car over and I walked across the street and dropped down by the curb and I rolled this man over to see if he was all right. And when I rolled him over I looked in the face of my own father. My dad had fallen in a drunken stupor and there he was.

You know, Betty, remember, I brought him home.

We lived in a trailer, in a mobile home. It was 50 by 10. Do you remember Robin -- Rhonda's little bed filled the whole room where her bed was. That was it. It was just a little cubby hole. That was her little bedroom. And our bedroom wasn't much bigger. And we just lived in that little trailer. But I took my father, my real father, alcoholic father, to my house but I could not let him go in the house. I had to put a big chair out in front of the trailer and let my daddy sleep in that chair while I tried to help him.

You say, "Why didn't you take him in the house? He's your daddy!"

Because I could not trust my daddy with my little girl that was about two years old at the time. That's a terrible thing to say, but I couldn't.

But, Michael, I tried to help my daddy, and one day I went over where I had gotten him a room to stay and my daddy had thrown up all over his shirt from being drunk, and I knelt down on the bed, and I mean, the man was stinking. He was just filthy. He had paid somebody to go buy him a drink and they brought it to the room and he got so drunk he couldn't walk. He just threw up all over the sheets. Now, you've got to understand, and you can, but this was tough for me. I knelt down and I reached over and I pulled that man's body, that filthy man who had thrown up on his own clothes, and I held him and I looked in his face and I said, "Daddy, I don't know you. I don't know you, but I love you. I love you." And I lowered my head, and I began to cry until my tears fell on the floor and I said, "Daddy, I want you to know Jesus with all my heart." And he did walk down an aisle with me the next Sunday morning and make a decision. I know the tendency here would be to applaud, because that's what I wanted everybody -- they did applaud in the church when my old drunk daddy went down the aisle. Well, Michael, my daddy never changed. He wouldn't even follow the Lord in baptism, he wouldn't do it. There was never a change in my daddy. And I witnessed to him. The last time, one week before I

came right here to the football stadium, here where we are, there's a huge football stadium near here, and I was speaking in that stadium when I got a call the next week that my daddy had died in his sleep.

I don't know where my daddy is. I have told people many times that when I get to heaven and I see Jesus and I see all the believers that I have this hope, it's faint but it's real, that as I see Jesus that out of that crowd of people around Jesus there would just be a figure that would begin to wave a hand and say, "Hey, son! Look here!" And it would be my daddy. And that my daddy would say to me, "The night I went to sleep, before I went to sleep, I looked up toward God and said, 'God, I never did anything right, but I want you to forgive me.'"

Let me tell you how great our God is. My daddy never got to do one good thing for anybody that we know of, he never did anything for his son that I'm aware of, except break my heart, but without ever getting to do one good thing, the God that sets us free, and the God that loves us is so great and merciful that he would have reached down that night and said, "Joe Bailey Robison, I write your name in my book tonight." I could see my daddy in heaven. I'm praying that you will win your daddy and you'll get to see your daddy have heaven in him right here on this earth. That's my prayer.

[Applause]

End of clip

James: Oh, boy! That's kind of a tough, precious memory because so many people called right after that and gave their lives to Jesus, so their family would be able to see them in heaven. If you've never invited Jesus to come into your heart, he's just knocking at the door of your heart gently. He doesn't tear his way in. He's not an intruder. You invite him in. But you can.

God, be my father and my God. Forgive me. I receive Jesus as my savior and my Lord, because you love me so much that you gave your son. You do love me that much!

He really does! He loves you that much. If you've given your life to Christ, you've prayed that prayer, call that number. Let me send you the book that I wrote as a Bible study. It shares my story and now I've found Christ. We'll send you Knowing God as Father. You just call and say, "I prayed and asked Jesus to come into my heart." They will pray with you and send you the book. It's a Bible study as well as a testimony that will really inspire you.

And then, I want to remind you, as we praise God for fifty years of ministry that we're – I feel like my ministry just begun! We're not shutting down, we're reaching out. We want to put God's arms of love around a broken world. We want to rescue people and our Water for Life program saves millions of lives. It gives people a future. And we give them water for life, and then you can tell them about the water of life. I want you to watch this closely! Then I want you to join in showing people how great our God is and how much he loves others, through you! You are the expression of his heart, the extension of his hands of love. Watch this very closely.

On the mission field:

>> There are times in life when we make sacrifices. Out of love for another we give something up. Maybe it's a dream laid down. Flores has a dream. For most of her eighteen years she's watched those in her village fight this enemy of contaminated water and she's longed to see a change. But then it became personal.

This wasn't part of the plan. Flores was a dedicated student with a plan to make a difference.

There was something in her eyes behind the hurt, the resolve.

While for now, life has forced Flores to lay some things down. Her dream isn't dead. Flores is a fighter for the life of her sister, and all those in her village.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: I can feel – and I really believe God lets me, somehow, identify with what people feel, that's compassion you suffer with. She has lost a lot. You've lost, we have. And then you've got someone precious and you want to keep them, but you can't if you can't give them a cure. They need clean water. That's the hope for that little sister.

Betty: It is, James. And as I watch those two I think there's that big sister that stepped into the place of being a mom to her little sister. And she's doing all she can do but she doesn't have anything but the diseased water to give her and they have to have water to even last a few days. So, she's asking in her heart for somebody to come. I believe that, to help them be able to both grow up and to be strong and to have a life that's without pain and loss like they've already experienced.

James: You know, many people today have called to say, "I want to drink freely of the water of life. I want to know Jesus." What we do when we show you a need like you just saw, we want those people to have water for life, so they can live in health. They're never going to have a lot of nice things necessarily, but life is the most precious thing. It's like you would give up everything you can see just to have life and for her to have a little sister that's healthy and to have a future. We can give them that.

We can give them water for life but we are with the missionaries, with the wonderful support of our viewers, the missionaries around the world, we're going to tell them about the water of life, we're going to tell them about Jesus.

This is the last week now in our Water for Life emphasis, now. We've got a goal of 500 wells, God knows I wish we could do twice that because God loves all the people we're trying to touch with his love. It's one thing to talk about love; it's another thing to demonstrate it. Nothing demonstrates it any more clearly than water for life.

Would you dial the number? Take your bankcard, use it like a check, go online to lifetoday.org and make the best gift you can. If you write a check make it to Life, but call the number and tell us you're mailing it in. We have to know so we can tell them to start the drilling in the various areas. Tell the missionaries it's coming and we need to hear from you today.

So whatever you can do, if you can drill a well, \$4800 or give a part of that well, \$1200 or \$2400, pray for someone to join with you. Or \$48, \$144, surely you could do that, couldn't you? Give somebody water the rest of their life. \$48, ten people water the rest of their life. \$144, thirty people water the rest of their life. Would you do it? I pray with all my heart you will during this last week. If you get a busy you be persistent, you press on.

A lot of people are calling to give their life to Christ! So you be persistent and say, "They're calling to get life! I'm calling to give life, and I'm going to be determined to do it." And we thank you for it.

Begin video clip:

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

The good news is 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.

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

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Well, Betty and I want to say thank you. We are anxious to send *Blessed Mornings and Restful Nights; Devotions* by Beth Moore. What a blessing she is. Remember, if you gave your life to Christ, *Knowing God as Father*, so glad to send it to you.

Then I really hope as many of you as possible, will really step up and I know it may be a big sacrifice, but we'd love you to have the limited edition celebrating fifty years Living Water Bronze, Robert Summers, the world's greatest sculptor!

Thank you, Robert. You've helped us win millions of people to Christ and save lives all over the world. Thank you, Robert.

Get the bronze! Help us give water to those people and drill those wells. And we want to thank you for celebrating fifty years of ministry and we're celebrating fifty years of marriage and thank you for investing prayers in our life and the lives of people around the world.

Thank you for your gift. Remember, this is the last week! Be persistent, get through and let's share life. Thank you for helping!