

3/25/13
Week 13

James: Always so glad to have you here and to join with you. Thank you. I'm James Robison. My wife Betty and I welcome you to *LIFE Today*.

The guest that we have actually has been journeying with us for a long time. He was the chairman of a crusade back when I did between 500-600 city-wide crusades; he was the chairman of one of them in Jasper, Alabama. He happened to bring along a picture taken, somebody with some official was giving me some kind of what... key to the city or certificate; I don't know what it was. But you can see I had black hair and I was young. This was back in the early '70s, Betty. Do you remember back --

Betty: You were really cute then!

James: Yeah, you thought I looked all right back then. I don't know what happened! Pray!

Tommy Briggs has been a very close friend. He really began a new journey, kind of beginning around that crusade, and things began to change. And actually, he and I went through a transformation in our lives as ministers, and a great freedom and deliverance. He is now an associate pastor at Gateway Church where Betty and I are members. You may be familiar with Robert Morris who is our pastor. You've seen him many times on *LIFE Today*.

Well, Tommy has written a book that is just wonderful. It is called, *I Wish I Had Known*. These are things that he wished he had known all of his life. It's what he wished he had known as a minister and as a Christian. And he is a counselor that is gifted to help.

As a matter of fact, he counsels and tries to help me -- I'm a challenge. But he also does know that he is involved in helping me walk out my journey, Betty and to carry the load or face the challenges that come that we sometimes find ourselves struggling with.

I want you to welcome Tommy Briggs to *LIFE Today*. Would you do that?

Tommy, it's good to have you buddy!

Tommy: Thank you! I appreciate being here.

James: You have been on this journey with us... I referenced how you've been not only a part of our ministry because you've worked in our prayer center for a long time. You were a counselor here at *LIFE Outreach*. But you also, when we first began the talk format, and we told people that we believe in the God of the Bible, the Jesus of the New Testament, the New Testament church, we believe in everything God says he wants to do, it didn't go away; like when the apostolic or the church age of the New Testament went away, we believe we're in it. And we believe God still heals. And you brought your little grandson here, Adam, and we walked out that journey fighting for Adam's life with all the people in the studio, all the people in our church, and all the people all over the world. And after an extended period of time we lost Adam. So the family went through that.

What we told our viewers is, we want to show you all of life, we want to show you the God of life, and how we walk through these things. You've been through... and that was one of them, you've been through some pretty heavy challenges. You lost your precious wife, Nancy a couple of years ago after several years of battling cancer.

You know we've lost our youngest daughter, Robin and you and the elders of Gateway were there in Oklahoma at the celebration of her entrance into heaven.

Tell our viewers those things you wish you had known when you go through those heavy times. Tommy, what have you learned? What do you wish you had known? And what have you found out that you share in this incredible book?

Tommy: Well, the first thing is, the Lord says that he is our comforter. And what I've discovered is that he really does come to comfort. He is a companion. He teaches you the things that you can't learn without the experience that you're going through; there is no way you can know those things. So He's present, He comforts, and He guides.

As I shared in the book, the thing that made Nancy's death easier, I think, is the conversations we had. She called me in a couple weeks before she passed away and said, "I don't believe I'm going to get well on earth. I think the Lord has revealed that. I want us to talk about it." So we talked about her death, her belief in the Lord, and her commitment in the place she was going. We talked about how beautiful the Word of God says that place is. And since that time, the Lord has taught me, he's actually said to me, "Son, you haven't believed anything. It is better than you ever dreamed it could be." I really believe that. I believe the voice of the Lord was there in teaching me that.

With Nancy, we talked about the things she wanted me to do. She gave me permission to remarry if that was my desire; told our kids that she told me that. So she prepared our family for her own death and planned her funeral and requested that I preside at her funeral; and my son and I did, as she requested. We carried out her wishes in that regard. So what I've learned is that God really is who he says he is when you have to go through the hard times. He will guide you just as he guided my children through the death of Adam, and has comforted them and guided them and shown them truths about life. He's showing me my purpose without my wife.

James: When we know these things, we want other people to know and not miss it. We don't want them to miss the comfort God offers. We want them to know the truth. And what you talk about in here is when you are talking about things like forgiveness and confession, that you really don't realize just what it means. Touch on one of those about forgiveness.

Tommy: One of the chapters is I Wish I Had Known when I confess my sins they're really forgiven. I've spent a lot of time at the altar, particularly in my early life before I really came to know the Lord, and even after I came to know the Lord, in confessing sin, the same sin over and over just to be sure that I was doing everything that I felt like God required to discover that the Word of God says. If we confess our sin, God is faithful to forgive our sin. See, it isn't about us. It is if we agree with God, which is what confession means, then our sins are forgiven, they're wiped away.

James: Gone -- they're gone!

Tommy: They're gone! As far as the east is from the west, try finding --

James: Like it never happened. It's clean!

Tommy: It's clean! It's a clean slate. And I discovered that truth and it gave such freedom to my soul. I realized I didn't have to go back over and over again to beg God, to keep begging God to do something that he had completely settled at the cross with his son the Lord Jesus Christ. So the freedom that came out of me discovering that truth later in my life changed me completely; changed the way I teach, it changes the way I preach because I have the confidence in my soul that I am forgiven -- and I am a sinner but I am a forgiven sinner. And God remembers my transgressions no more.

James: Give us another, I Wish I Had Known.

Tommy: I Wish I Had Known that the Holy Spirit was a gift, not a doctrine. We have allowed our differences about the interpretation of what the Word of God says about the Holy Spirit to divide the body of Christ.

God said in his Word, "I'm going to leave you a gift and He'll never leave you, He will never forsake you, and He will be with you always." And in the book I talk about the fact that if I'd known that earlier, I believe I could have walked in more power. And I mean by that, been more effective in my teaching and the things that I have done; that the Holy Spirit is sent here to guide us and to lead us. It is a gift from God the Father, and we cannot -- we just cannot in the body of Christ allow differences of interpretation about what the word says about the gifts and all the things about the Holy Spirit.

Here's my bottom line. I do not believe it is possible to please God in the way that you serve him and the things that you do for the kingdom of God apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. And I just believe we as ministers and believers need to just receive that gift and let whatever manifestation wants to come, let it be because God is such a gentleman. He knows more about manners than we ever dreamed. And so we don't have to worry about...

When I first came into this walk along with you, one day I was talking to the Lord and I said, "Lord, what about my reputation?"

The first thing he says is, "What reputation is that, son? You don't have one without me."

[Laughter]

The next thing he said, "If you don't mind repenting, you don't ever have to worry about any manifestation that comes to you about the Holy Spirit." So I've spent some floor time letting the Lord just really deal with some issues. But I've never been embarrassed, ever in my walk in following and being led by the Holy Spirit of God.

James: You and I come from what would be called a mainline, very large denomination, both of us Baptist; both of us were both mainline Southern Baptist. I was known as one of those who really held the Bible up and kind of beat people up with it sometimes, which I apologize for. The love of the Holy Spirit wasn't coming through sometimes when I would bludgeon you with the word; just beat the hell out of you and make sure you didn't want to go to hell, because I would scare the hell out

of you the way I could come after you. I don't apologize for being bold or forceful. I can't help it, I always will be. But the fact is that we watch this because we watched the Holy Spirit begin to be poured out in various ways in different groups. It wouldn't be necessarily your group or our group. But Jesus was there and it was just wonderful, but people would just start beating them up and start putting them down and calling them names.

That's not what the Holy Spirit does. The Holy Spirit doesn't cause you to become the accuser of the brethren, that's the devil -- that's the spirit of the enemy. And we begin to do this in the church. It's been that way throughout history and it is not Holy Spirit life. And then the people who would experience something of the Holy Spirit would then begin to measure others by a particular manifestation and they began to judge them or they would wear it like a merit badge and try to impose that on you, whatever they had to do to get you to do, whatever they said you needed to do to really prove you've got the Holy Spirit. And we watched all this tension and really, it gives you the creeps but it made God nauseous -- I promise you it did. It just made him sick because this is not why he sent the Holy Spirit.

So this is a gift. And love and joy and peace and patience and kindness -- how about that? And gentleness, and meekness -- teachable; where is all that? And that's what you're saying. This gift of the Holy Spirit is another like Jesus that lives in us that will make us more like Jesus and will guide us to all truth and give us discernment of truth and discernment of spirits whether they're true or not and you're able to tell these things. We don't have to fight.

And we're watching a miracle -- you would agree with this, we're seeing mainline churches, groups welcome the fullness of the Holy Spirit, not trying to have something somebody else says, "This is what you have to have" -- they're just welcoming the Holy Spirit. And the people who kind of put too much emphasis on one aspect of the Holy Spirit's work, they're beginning to realize, wait a minute, we don't need to camp around this particular outpouring of the spirit or this expression of the spirit, we just need to let the Holy Spirit work and orchestrate this family of God into a holy spiritual symphony, but above all into a healthy body where all the members come together submitted to the one head, not to a bunch of different heads and different groups but to Christ. We're watching that happen. Would you agree?

Tommy: Absolutely. And see, the thing I think that is still spreading is this comfortable dependence upon the Holy Spirit to accomplish his work; is what I want to get across in the book and I try to do that.

Betty: And I think that's the difference in our striving or whether we're resting in that because the Holy Spirit is that connection with God. It's where we just be and let God be in us. There's a rest there and there is a grace that comes with God's love. It is not something we have to work up. It just becomes... we're the vessel, and God fills us with his spirit.

Tommy: And you're just filled with peace, and "rest" is a great word to use. That's exactly right -- just resting in the Lord and letting him do his work through you making your life available to him.

James: You know we've been able to do that. Betty made the tragic mistake of just really getting with the Lord alone. And lo and behold, while she's all by herself, just this sweet little Baptist Sunday School teacher, and little evangelist wife, she starts speaking this heavenly language. She found later she was actually speaking Hebrew, which she had never heard any Hebrew, but she found something incredible was happening and it was so wonderful.

I came home and she wasn't like that on some doctrinal kick to straighten me out. She just had this glow. And I said, "Tell me what's going on?" So one night I made her. I said, "I want you to do this for me."

She said, "Well, I don't just play with this. I don't just turn --."

I said, "I want you to do it for me. Will you do it for me right now? Show me what you've got. Just show me. I want to hear and I want to know. Show me!" And I'm driving the car. "Just show me! Go on and do it! Focus, do whatever you've got to do."

She got real still, real quiet and all of the sudden the car was just filled with this like angelic chorus; it was like some heavenly language. I've got to be honest with you, I'm pretty -- I guess I was kind of stiff-necked like Stephen was preaching. But wait a minute, I didn't tremble. I got weak and then the hairs stood up on my arm and on the back of my neck and I couldn't drive. I had to pull the car over. I felt like I was just ushered into the presence of God.

I said, "Honey, I'm really sorry. I just -- I'm really sorry. Please forgive me. I saw Jesus."

And God began to do such great work in her heart. By the way, please, it breaks my heart, Tommy that some people will sell out to maybe saying some kind of word or saying some other language and think that's -- and they never walk in the fullness of

the spirit. It's just like people get a glimpse of glory but they never let glory fill the house. It's so much more, like you say in your book, *I Wish I'd Known*. It's so much more than a doctrine. It's so much more than a particular gift even of the spirit; it's the gift of the Holy Spirit. Not gifts of the spirit that we focus and major on or even an expression, a single expression. It would be like somebody prays for the sick, and they get well so we go out and get us a tent and set up a healing ministry because we prayed and they got well and so now we think we're a healer. Well, no, he's the healer. We don't need a tent to pray for the sick. And we can all do that.

Before Oral Roberts died he said to me, "James, I prayed for so long." He said, "I think you're actually -- you're really helping." He said, "I've always want everybody to pray for the sick. I didn't want us to have long lines. I wanted everybody to pray for the sick."

I said, "Oh, Oral, that's what God wants." That is what he wants.

I think that's what you're just trying to touch on these different things you've learned in your journey and you want to share them. This is tremendous! And we'll gladly just send it to you, a pastor's journey, a wonderful counselor, a wonderful friend in what he's experienced.

Would you like to say thanks to Tommy Briggs for just sharing with us on *LIFE Today*? -- A wonderful associate at Gateway. We love you! We love our Gateway family. But we love the family of God wherever you are.

You know what? As the family of God, Betty, this is one of the most exciting things that the Lord has made clear to me. If we really come together as believers, we can put God's arms of love around a broken world and pull them right up to his heart. That's what we're trying to do as a family of faith. That's what we're encouraging you to do to join with us with wonderful mission outreaches and rescue right now many children, many girls and yes, boys who are being trafficked through sexual predation and we can change it. I want you to watch closely. You are going to want to be the miracle that makes the difference for these people.

On the mission field:

>> These are young girls that have been sold?

>> She has been sold; she is five years old. That is one --

>> Five years old?

>> Yes. She is now big. They put her in the cage. I think if you come to Cambodia a few years ago, you read the newspaper. They put hot water and a nail in her head.

>> Can I see those other girls please? And these girls were also trafficked? So how old is this girl?

>> Three years, she's been raped.

>> Three years old and had been raped. Oh, my gosh!

>> So my friend, because she didn't want to have sex with a client; she didn't want to have sex with the clients. And she had been killed in front of me --.

>> She was killed because she did not want to service.

>> Because it's not that she don't want -- because she can't. -- Because she was sick. Because she had been sold. Because she had like 20 client a day -- because she can't. Her body is now -- she cannot -- her body is dead. So they kill us.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: God, I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry that sin has such a grip on anyone, any of us at any time.

God, deliver us from evil -- from the evil one. We are the hope. Yes, we are -- for those thousands. It took the wisdom of God and yielded missionaries to show us the way.

What they are able to do is go to the families where they have children in these terrible poverty-stricken areas where the predators come and tell the family, whether it is a single mother or a couple, that they will take their children, their little girl and oftentimes boys, into the city and train them and teach them and they will make good money, and they will have good future and they can bring it back to the family. And these precious people, ignorant people, but they love their children, they want something better than they had and they sell them or they just let them take them -- and then you see what happens.

Now the woman you were listening to, she was trafficked and she got saved and freed and now she is trying to rescue and teach others, and let you know what's happening - - telling us the truth as one who knows.

All those little girls standing there gripping that wire, would you rescue one of them? Here's what the mission workers have proven to us. It takes \$128, invested to be able to rescue a child. We ask people, is there any way you can help us rescue ten? Nearly 3,000 taken every day and the next day; would you help us rescue ten? That doesn't sound like many. That sounds like a lot -- just one person's child or two children and you help us. \$128, we can rescue one before they get them, get them out and take care of them and retrain them -- actually train them for a future, give them a craft, a job. That's what we do together.

When I say "we," it is you the viewers and our mission workers, with a touch and an anointing of God; the divine enabling of God and the compassion of God and his love is on those missionaries. But they are empty-handed; they are so limited unless we give them the wherewithal to fulfill the mission God has sent them on.

If you'll dial the number, which is there always as a prayer line for you. If you have a prayer need and even today when I'm talking about helping others, 80% of the calls will be people saying, "Pray for me, my heart is broken." And you believe we will because we love you. We're here for you. But if you can possibly dial the number and say, "I want to rescue a child, here's my gift. I want to rescue ten."

And we had a *LIFE* Center fire in the Ukraine that destroyed a great part of a building. We need to rebuild it and expand it because the need is so great; that's a \$275,000 additional challenge. Would you help us? I'm praying there will be people who will give an extra \$1,000 toward the building. Betty and I are doing that.

And we always -- always seek to rescue 10 or 20 or 30. We ask God and we've been asking him every time, "God, enable us to do it." And everybody steps up. Don't think that \$128 or even a part of that isn't important. It is!

Father, help everyone right now to do what they can, in Jesus' name. We want to send you, to bless you, Betty's story, *Free to Be Me*. I referenced a little bit about what's going on in her life. She tells you a whole lot about it and how she finds freedom. You'll want that. *Life Application Study Bible*, what a help it will be. The beautiful commemorative bronze to say thank you.

We want to bless you but we're asking you to make that call or go online LifeToday.org and make the gift God put on your heart. Please do it! I thank you for it.

Begin video clip:

Announcer: Human trafficking... it's hard to believe it's happening but at this very moment innocent boys and girls, many very young are being forced into sexual slavery and exploited in every way imaginable and someone must save them.

Through *Mission: Rescue Life* you can help reach, rescue, and restore thousands of children from the horrors of the sex trade in Thailand, Cambodia, India, Ukraine, and many other nations. Your gift today of only \$128 will help rescue a child and change their life forever. And with gifts of \$64 or \$32 we will combine your gifts with others to help reach, rescue, and restore one more child from the horrors of their kidnappers.

With your gift of any amount, we'll send you *Free to Be Me*, Betty Robison's updated account of how she moved from fear and insecurity to true freedom. You'll also receive the companion journal for your quiet time and daily reflections.

With your gift of \$128 or more to help rescue a child, be sure to request your copy of the *Life Application Study Bible*.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help rebuild the *LIFE* Center in Ukraine destroyed by fire or \$1280 to help rescue 10 children, and you may request the limited edition bronze sculpture titled Christian.

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

End of clip

In the studio:

James: Betty and I want to say thank you for your help. You talk about rescuing the perishing and caring for the dying, that's what we're doing.

If you'd like to have Tommy Briggs's book, *I Wish I'd Known* -- this is my friend. This is my co-laborer and co-worker. I know this man! He's blessed my life. This book blesses

us all. Glad to send it to you if you'd just help us rescue some of these precious girls, these precious children and women.

Would you join Betty and me telling Tommy Briggs how much we appreciate him? Tommy, thank you buddy! I love you. Thanks for working alongside of us.

Tommy: Thank you so much!

James: Thank all of you for watching *LIFE Today* -- and as I say so often, especially for sharing *LIFE Today*. Thank you for doing it!

Begin video clip

Announcer: Join James and Betty Robison July 18th through the 20th for the Awaken Now Conference at Gateway Church in Southlake, Texas featuring inspiring speakers such as governor Mike Huckabee, international author and speaker Christine Caine, Reverend Samuel Rodriguez, speaker and best-selling author Lisa Bevere, and many more including musical guests such as Phillips, Craig, and Dean!

Register today for this once in a lifetime event celebrating 50 years of ministry with James and Betty Robison! Go to lifetoday.org.