

Week 22

5/31/13

James: It is such a privilege to welcome you to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison. Betty and I are thrilled to be able to introduce to you, some of you for the first time, many of you have known them, basically I guess, from the time we met them. And I'm talking about Peter Pretorius and his wife Ann, who oversee all the mission work that we are involved with on the continent of Africa; many nations, millions of people's lives saved. And I get a big grin because I'm telling you, you talk about taking people right out of the pit of despair and hopelessness and death, I mean right out of the grave.

But not only that because of the love that was manifested through those expressions of love -- like I've said to you many times, it's one thing for a missionary to care enough to go and plant their life in the midst of pain and misery, with love flowing freely and yet be empty-handed and all they have is a broken heart.

But when you put in the hands of caring people something that really makes a difference and saves their lives, you talk about not only a happy missionary, but you talk about impacting lives forever and ever. And then because that love is so genuine and because they're able to share the effect and expression of that love, really extend the hands of mercy and helpful hands, they open the hearts of those people to receive the reason for the love, and that is the love of God that is expressed in Christ. So they've won millions and millions of people to Christ.

And this week, Peter and Ann, we're so glad to have you. I need to let our viewers know how it is that when there is so much going on in Africa you happen to be here right now. So let me just tell you this. I went over and spoke at our church at Gateway. We feel like -- I'm one of the elders in the church, Robert Morris is pastor, we have great staff, but we feel like we are here not only as a church in a community but to bless, impart blessings, and encourage the whole church all over the world. So our church hosted a conference of the largest churches in the world and weren't you

amazed at the spirit, Ann and Peter, of these pastors and their love just for people all over the world?

Ann: Oh, just incredible! The humility of these people that God has chosen to use -- we were so honored that we were part of that group. And to feel the way they even acknowledge us for what we've done, and it looks so small compared to what they've done. Beautiful people, wonderful people with a great heart; it is no wonder God is using them.

Peter: And they're all pastors in churches. Our role is to present missions on a global scale. That really has been a privilege.

James: What I saw and I heard from them over and over, and I feel like you probably hear it, there was a real gratitude from these pastors who come, even though they have larger churches than we have here in the United States and they're winning literally thousands and thousands of people to Christ every year, and they're sending missionaries all over the world, including here, but you know what I noticed? They have a real appreciation for the fact that the American Christians, as well as Christians all over in the advanced countries, have a burden for mission work. And that here in America, they're praying that we will not lose our freedom or our ability to continue to be a blessing to other nations. Didn't you sense that gratitude on their part?

Peter: Absolutely, James. From our perspective, we have such gratitude towards this country, and especially towards you and Betty, because if it wasn't for you, our work would not have developed like it's developed in Africa. The consequence of that would have been millions of children who have lost their lives.

And for us, that is not just a statistic. We actually work with those children; we witness what they go through. When we were with your team just a little while ago in Angola, two of the children that we documented that week died before the week was over and that's the reality. Providing nutrition for kids is still the biggest lifesaving thing in Africa because still the biggest killer of children in Africa is malnutrition. So it's wonderful what we've been able to do together.

As I said, our gratitude is just... it's so great to have been partners with you -- partners and friends too. It's been absolutely amazing.

Betty: What I think is so beautiful is that God meshes ministries together to do certain things that he has. And I feel like it was in God's beautiful plan when he put it on our heart to reach out in missions. That he had planted you there to partner together so we could express more of our love and God's love to people, to be more effective. I think God intends it to be that way.

Ann: And I hope that you guys hear, as often as we do, how it has amazed the body of Christ that we have worked together for 25 years. We don't have arguments, we haven't had fall-outs, we've got a common mission, we've got a need that needs to be met and we all are doing everything that we can possibly do to transform the lives.

I think one of the things that really blessed me about this conference is to see how these mega churches and these mighty men of God are not focused on themselves but they're seeing that missions is a part of the demonstration of the gospel that we preach. Something that we've longed that the body of Christ would see for years and years, to understand that the demonstration of that gospel is as important as what comes out of our mouths.

James: Well, there is no question that God used both of you and your mission efforts to change our lives. When I say that, I know how to define exactly what I mean. I always had a burden for people, that's why I'm talking to you. See we're here for you. We want to feed hungry children, we want to give water to the thirsty but we want to touch hungry hearts and people who have a thirsting for God's righteousness, truth, the love, or the help that he offers. So we care about you -- that's always been there.

But what happened in our relationship, Peter, not only did I see specific needs and not only did I see clearly how far a little love could go when it's expressed freely. To think that you can feed three children for several months for \$30, or five for \$50, or 10 for \$100 -- that's amazing because we can spend that much in a matter of days or a few meals that people eat over here and on very frivolous things. You can spend that much on a few cups of coffee in a lot of places. I said, "Look what this can do!" When we

showed it -- I didn't know if the viewers would listen -- but when I showed them what a little love could do, how far it would go in changing lives, and where the truly poor live who are desperate for the little things in life, just to have a chance at life itself.

But more than that, Peter, here's what I saw. This is the most powerful thing that I happened in the relationship that I have with you, God spoke to me and he told me that although I was preaching to huge crowds and we were having hundreds of thousands of people saved, that I would be far more effective as a servant. And of course, I saw that verse that says: Greatest in the kingdom is servant.

Here's what I saw. I began to serve missionaries, primarily what you were doing in Africa, on the largest continent, with a huge population desperate for help in need of love and assistance. When I became a servant here, I then began to find ways to serve others. And our outreach, we went from 200,000 people accepting Christ a year to over two million a year! It actually reached points that in some years over five million people came to Christ. Was I an evangelist? Was I preaching? Sure! But I was more effective serving, assisting, undergirding, and helping others reach people.

Now here's the next beautiful step. This is so important for our viewers. What happened to our viewers, you delivered a message to me because my heart was so moved, Peter and I even said to Betty when she came and we saw the need, "Should we just stay here and help you? We'll just stay here."

You basically said, "Please don't." It wasn't that you didn't like us. It wasn't even that you didn't think maybe I could do some good. You said, "Go back and tell them and ask them to help us so we can stay here and not be empty-handed. So we can stay here and do something that changes lives."

Now, okay, I learned something about being a servant. I pass that on to you. And all over the world, I don't care whether it's in Europe or Canada or the U.S. or South America or Australia, you realize that you can be a servant too and have the greatest effect in the kingdom. And that's what we've been doing together to save millions of lives -- literally -- we haven't been able to give them all a big house or air-conditioning or a car, but we've given them a chance at life.

And I want to tell you something, they have more fun without a lot of the stuff we look for for fun. They get joy in life because we give them life and we show them love and it changes their life forever.

So, Peter, you not only impacted my life and all those people you are helping, but impacted people all over the world who now have had the joy of being a servant in helping you share life. That's the beauty of it. You've got to be excited about what you've seen!

Peter: We are! After having spent that ten days in Bimbe, where more than 300 people starved to death; what I realized then, James was we had to do something but we needed friends. We needed people who could come alongside us, otherwise we would be so distracted we wouldn't even be able to do the work.

So it's absolutely true that me asking, "Brother, go back. You go speak to the people in America because that's what we need. We need their help."

You know this thing is so simple, James. We can actually alleviate poverty in Africa if we just have enough people saying, "I can help one child" or "I can help two or five." That's all we need. It's simple, it's easy to do but we have to have the people come on board that can help.

James: We can stop the death cycle and we can give them hope. All they need is a little hope and a little opportunity.

Right now you're facing something. You're going to want to address this. You're facing a great killer in Africa. There have been enough wars. There have been enough damage. There have been all kinds of natural disasters. Right now there is a natural disaster that happens too frequently. There is a terrible, terrible drought right now in Africa and it is occurring in Angola and other places. I want you to just look at this glimpse. And know this, because of what you're about to see, the mission workers, Peter Pretorius and his team, have found it is absolutely essential that we move now and add another 25,000 desperate children to the mission feeding outreach.

There are 400,000 in the feeding centers now that we're raising the funds in support to keep feeding because we will stabilize their situation. We're already located and set up. We must because of love add another 25,000.

Let me tell you one more thing before you look at the situation, and I know this is an answer to prayer. Friends have stepped up and said, "We know it is absolutely essential. We will match \$500,000 of gifts right now. We're going to double it." And there is a \$500,000 matching gift, which means if you say, "Look, I want to help five or ten children," it will immediately be doubled to 10 or 20. Watch closely.

On the mission field:

Announcer: After months of an exceptionally long dry season, a severe drought is threatening Angola's already modest food production. Rainfall has been so scarce that African officials are calling it the worst drought in years with nearly two million people affected by this natural disaster. These freshly dug graves are a grim reminder that children suffer the most when land that once produced food crops has turned barren.

Families struggle to grow food in their villages but sadly, it is a losing battle because the parched land cannot yield enough crops. Mothers will feed their children roots and leaves in a desperate attempt to keep them from starving to death. Over 500,000 children in the hardest hit areas are suffering from malnutrition with the situation growing worse by the day. As the drought lingers on rural clinics are filled with grieving mothers helplessly watching their children suffer and the reality is that while waiting for the rain to return, thousands of children may die.

The solution is simple, a daily bowl of food. Mission feeding is their only hope.

End of clip

In the studio

James: And you, with no exaggeration, are the only hope for mission feeding to be in place. You are the ones that made it possible. Like Peter Pretorius said when we opened this program, the coming together of these two couples along with the missionaries, but primarily those of you who pray, care, and share, you're the ones that make it possible for us to give the missionaries something to give those children.

You're the ones, and I reach down here and I pick up this little orange bowl and it has *LIFE Outreach*, Jesus Alive, Joint Aid Assistance, all of those organizations that work together to save lives, you're the ones that said, "Give them the bowls." They'll bring a tin can, and they did, they'll bring a plastic bag, and they did, which we saw the hot soup burn through. You said, "We can't put money in a bowl when children are starving." Our viewers said -- do you remember, Peter? "We'll do both" -- because they love the children and they wanted to help.

Now we've got a desperate situation in Angola right now. That ground, that's reality. But if we'll feed -- you've already been able to isolate where you can get to 25,000, if we have the resources, that's what it is going to take to save their lives. And the fact is, it will work; won't it?

Peter: It will work. As I said earlier, James, it is simple. It is a simple equation. If we can purchase the food and we manufacture the food ourselves in the factory but we have to purchase the inputs. That food will then be shipped to Angola and we can meet the needs of those extra 25,000 children. We're already helping 226,000 children in Angola. But I mean when you add the additional 25,000, those are the children who are in the most desperate need right now.

And it breaks our hearts that we don't have the means to be able to reach out and help them and we can't leave the others behind that we are already helping, James, because they're only where they're at because we're helping them. If we stop, they'll go down in a hurry.

So it is a really difficult situation. And it would be just so tremendous if your viewers and your friends could just step in and just say, "You know what? It is simple. We can do this. We can do it now. And we can solve their problem." I can assure you that on our end, we will see that it happens very urgently.

James: Well, you can see the telephone number on the screen or you can see *LIFE Outreach* or LifeToday.org and you can go there. Many of our viewers are going online and saying, "I want to give a gift. Here it is. I'm giving a \$100" -- it will be doubled --

"I'm giving a \$1,000." By the way, I want to show you this beautiful little bronze; this is "Brotherly Love."

Peter, you and Ann watch this so often where an older child oftentimes carries the little brother or sister to the feeding area and the older child oftentimes is so weak they can hardly stand but they're not coming without their little brother or their little sister. And here's a brother feeding and got one the bowls over here and feeding with a leaf, that's folded like a spoon. But this "Brotherly Love" we're giving as a commemorative bronze, which is our 50th anniversary ministry and marriage to people who give \$1,000 to feed 100 children, but now it will be 200.

Ann, a moment ago you heard Peter reference that you produce the food in the food factories. It is real important to know, all the viewers, they build the food factories, they're the ones that paid for them. Viewers of *LIFE Today* all over the world made it possible to have that to be able to produce what goes in the bowls or the containers. That's what love does.

Ann: And the investment has been so long term. I was thinking while you were talking now about the number of years we've been working together, 25 years -- do you know the passion that we talk of in wanting to be able to help more is being carried in the hearts of so many of our workers in Angola, many of whom were children in the lines 20 years ago. And they now have a career path; they're being employed by us, working in these programs, helping to feed. But the burden that's on their heart when they see these children in line who so desperately need the food, and they're a survivor, they want these children to survive.

James: Yeah, it is real important you understand many of the children who were dying are now missionaries themselves. They're either involved -- some of them have a job. They went to school. They got an education where school feeding, that you supported was put in place. They have a career but then they also serve as mission volunteers, but some of them like you said, full-time staff. Betty, it's pretty exciting to see what's happening.

Betty: Oh, it is. When we watched that just a few minutes ago, we saw two scenes

there. One where they were digging the graves and we've been there and watched them do that and it is so sad, we didn't get there in time to help the children.

But the other thing we saw were the lines. That's what I like to see because I know, if you've helped at all, that's what you want to see. The lines -- where they're lined up there, and there's a big container, barrel with the food in it. That's what we want to show you.

Let's not have to show the grave after grave after grave. Let's show that we're reaching out and we're helping them. I know that's what you want to do and that's what blesses all of us.

James: Okay, people say seeing is believing. The Bible says believing is seeing. But the fact is we like to see a miracle. You want to see a miracle? You want to see an undeniable miracle of love and how it works? You want to see firsthand what the love of God does through someone like you in mission feeding? Behold a miracle!

On the mission field:

Announcer: When we met Jacob and his grandmother a year and a half ago, our hearts sank. What his frail body would have to overcome seemed almost insurmountable. His story represented the plight of so many here in Africa.

When we shared it, you responded. We knew your response had saved thousands of lives. But when our team returned to find Jacob, we still couldn't help but fear the worst. We drove anxiously through the village in search of him and what we found blew us away. Were it not for recognizing his grandmother Marie, we wouldn't have believed it was him -- a little boy running, playing, laughing. Your response had miraculously delivered Jacob this new chance at life. Even Marie had long forgotten how truly close Jacob was to death until we showed her his story.

Open captions: I am very happy. I am not sad anymore. I was sad when Jacob was sick. My heart is full of happiness because of Jacob.

Announcer: Jacob is the proof that mission feeding truly can take a child who looks like this and turn him into this. Your response was the difference.

Now, if Jacob was the only one, we could say our work here is done but you and I both know it is not. Like Jacob, these children need your help. Let's give these children the same chance at life you gave Jacob.

End of video clip

In the studio

James: I want to do something right now I wish I could do with all of you. I want to thank you for going with me to the mission field because it was scary, wasn't it?

Betty: Absolutely!

James: And I want to thank you, honey, for joining me so faithfully in not only going to the field but in giving ourselves and spending time with me right here to talk about giving little children like Jacob, and all those little children. I wish I could hug everybody.

Betty: It was worth it all. If for one little boy -- but there are so many more -- so many more little Jacobs out there that we can reach in time, that we can truly watch a miracle take place if we will continually give and help these children.

James: I wish I could reach out to you right now. I wish I could just take your hands and just kind of pull you up here right close to me. And maybe I could put my hands up on your face and I could say, "Hey, you don't even understand how important you are to God, how much he loves you. And you need to understand not only how much he loves you, but how anxious he is to pour his love out on you but also to release it through you to someone who never believed they would notice."

That little boy, Jacob, who represents so many in great need, it looked like he would die. You saw him kicking that ball. Our missionaries are ready to give out all the love that you enable them to release because their hearts are full of the love of God. But like I've said so many times, their hands are empty unless we provide the ability to take care of those children that God is so anxious to love.

Don't you realize that he really does want to put his arms around the world? He's got the whole world in his hands -- he wants his arms around the whole world. But we, as his body, as people who claim faith in him, we are his body. We're the ones that put his arms around people. We're the ones that extend his hands and show people what's really in his heart. Would you do that?

For these wonderful missionaries here who are representing literally the thousands of mission workers all over Africa that you make possible for them to have something to share in the name of love -- God's love.

Would you dial that number please? Take your bankcard, I want you to make the largest gift you've ever made -- give \$1,000 -- give \$10,000 if you can. You may be able to -- do it! It will be doubled. Won't that be great? \$100 or \$50 or \$30 will immediately be doubled. Not just to care for three or five or ten for the next months but for six, for 10, for 20 -- would you do that? Please make that call.

You can go online LifeToday.org and make the gift God put on your heart. We have some special gifts to give you, not to get a gift, but because we like to give you something that will bless you. The daily devotional book will bless that. It is beautiful. A Good Word -- God's Word, inspiration -- For a Great Day. The Life Family Application Study Bible, the beautiful commemorative bronze to say thank you for your gift. But remember this, you're giving the greatest gift, God's love and life.

Begin video clip:

Announcer: At this very moment children are drawing what could be their last breath, struggling to stay alive due to severe hunger. You can help stop the cycle of death. You can help save a child's life. In addition to the 400,000 children already in our feeding program throughout Africa, we must immediately provide for an additional 25,000 children in the hardest hit areas of drought.

As an answer to prayer, a group of *LIFE's* friends have set a \$500,000 matching challenge for Mission Feeding. This means your gift today can have a double impact. \$30 to help feed three children can be doubled to impact six children! \$50 to help feed five children can be doubled to help save 10 children! And \$100 for 10 children can be doubled to help feed and introduce Jesus to 20 children!

As a thank you, we would like to send you *A Good Word for a Great Day*, a 365-day devotional providing a word of inspiration and promise for each new day.

With your double impact gift of \$100 to help save the lives of 20 children, you may request *The Family Reading Bible* to help engage your children and grandchildren in God's Word.

Finally, please consider a double impact gift of \$1,000 to help save the lives of 200 children, and you may also request the 50th anniversary commemorative bronze, "Brotherly Love."

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: Betty and I want to thank you so much for helping. Please, don't let anything stop you from releasing God's love today and helping us with mission feeding. Your gift will be doubled.

Look, don't let a busy signal stop you from getting through to say, "I'm going to touch some lives." Or go online and make that gift. If you write a check, make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us what you're sending.

Peter Pretorius, Ann Pretorius, thank you for being here. Thank you for what you're doing!

Ann: Thank you, thank you, thank you! Very big thank you on behalf of every one of those precious people in Africa.

Peter: We want you to know that what has been so deep in our hearts because we see what the children go through and yet you've helped not even having been there but believing what we've represented to you. I just want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. What a wonderful thing you've done in giving life to those children. Thank you so much!

James: God bless all of you. We love you. Thanks for helping us share God's love.