

7/2/13

Week 27

James: Well, it is a pleasure to welcome not only you to *LIFE Today*, (I'm James Robison, this is Betty) but also to welcome Samuel Rodriguez. Sammy Rodriguez in my opinion is one of the greatest preachers, communicators that I know. I love him and respect him as much as anyone I've ever had the blessed privilege of knowing. And I love what he talks about; and there is now a book on the subject. He delivered this message in a conference that I hosted a year ago that was mightily blessed of God.

And I think his message, which basically is like a viral message on YouTube, is titled, *The Lamb's Agenda: Why Jesus is calling you to a life of righteousness and justice*. And the only hope for America, the only hope for the free world, the only hope for a world in bondage is the agenda of the lamb. Would you welcome Sammy Rodriguez to *LIFE Today*? Sammy, I love you, buddy. You're my brother.

Sammy: Thank you! Thank you, Betty. Thank you.

James: I want to talk about *The Lamb's Agenda*. I want to talk about the book. But I want to know something; you and I are friends. There wasn't any question I bore witness with you the moment I met you. I said, you're Hispanic, I'm whatever -- I've got some Indian -- I've got Irish -- I don't know. I don't even have a dad. I'm a product of a forced relationship so I don't know a whole lot about my background, but you and I are family. But I don't know a whole lot about how you came to Christ. I just knew the minute I met you, you had met the lamb and he had transformed your life. But tell me and our viewers a little bit about your journey and how you came to Christ because I really want to know.

Sammy: Well, love you both. You know you're one of my heroes. Growing up in a Hispanic church... growing up in a Hispanic church, not necessarily having a personal encounter with Jesus yet -- Bethlehem, Pennsylvania -- oh, little town of Bethlehem. So I grew up in Little Town of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. No messianic complex in the --. But growing up in a town, my dad was a Mac truck worker, U.A.W. guy, instilled in me a Calvinistic work ethic.

I still remember today my dad looked at me and his hands were so large and full of calluses. He looked at me and said, "A powerful man is a man that can be found on his

knees, and also found with his hands lifted up," and with those powerful calluses demonstrating love to his children. It moved me. Still, growing up, I had an academic cognitive mind inclined toward mathematics. Math is the language of God: Two plus two will always equal four. So I grew up as a little math nerd -- I really did -- glasses and all! It was pretty amazing. Went to church, saw some of the stuff in church and I saw there's a difference between the prophetic and the pathetic.

James: Oh, yeah. That's one of the chapters in the book, by the way: Prophetic and the Pathetic.

Sammy: And I saw both elements and I doubted many of the things I saw in sort of the church motif presentation. I was 14 years old and I have this epiphany, this road to Damascus moment, this encounter with God that transformed my life. I saw a program on Billy Graham, and a still small voice confirmed in my spirit man, "I'm going to make you --" My parents aren't preachers now. "I'm going to make you a voice. You will preach the gospel outlining literally the rest of my..." and I wrote it down on the inside cover of my Bible.

James: How old were you?

Sammy: Fourteen! One hour later P.B.S. 11 p.m. -- maybe the only kid 14 years of age watching P.B.S. -- there was a documentary on Dr. King. And the same still small voice, "I'm going to make you a voice for your people." I wrote it down. That right there launched my journey. If I can tell you stories of God's speaking to me via a different conduit, different voices, different people who would approach me, not knowing who I am, just adhering to that voice, having a personal encounter with Jesus, going beyond religion, going beyond the church environment, hearing God, praying, getting on my knees with a zeal for righteousness, with a zeal for purity, with a zeal for integrity.

I can tell you on so many occasions, I'm a Hispanic American and I grew up in a time where the proliferation of gangs was just so rampant. Drug abuse in my community is so rampant, even in my extended family but I never touched those things. Not because Sam was greater -- there was a protective hedge around me; it stemmed out of Christ, and the Lord telling me, "I'm protecting you because I'm going to do a great thing with you. Here's what you have to do, live righteously, live above reproach. Love me, seek me with your heart, your mind, your understanding, and love those around you."

I was moved. I was moved when I saw the homeless man in the street. I was moved to tears at the age of 15 years of age. When other kids were doing other things, I was

around delivering little brownie bags of food to people that were homeless in the downtown of Allentown, of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. I would mobilize young people to try to help out those that were less fortunate. Why?

Now I understand why. That drove me -- it drove me -- it drove me. Then I went back to Penn State University, studying at Penn State -- again my optics are, I'll do ministry on the side, but I'm going to get my computer engineering degree and I'm going to work for I.B.M. That was it -- that was my optic. I want to be an engineer for I.B.M. And I had this moment in my 1978 Camaro Z-28, tinted windows, hydraulic shocks, eagle G.T. tires.

[Laughter]

That's my dad's graduation gift. I love my dad! And I'm in that car, Penn State University, sophomore year and I'm listening to a radio ministry of another one of my heroes, actually Pastor Jack Hayford. And I'm hearing Pastor Jack and all of the sudden the Spirit of God filled that car. My life changed. I can't explain it; all I can tell you is the car was filled with so much glory and God spoke to my heart and said, "Son, you're not going to be an engineer for I.B.M. I'm shifting your plans for my plans. Are you willing to sacrifice your plans for what I want to do in your life?"

And I lifted my hands and I said, "Let your will be done." And years later, I find myself speaking to presidents, praying over presidents, leading a wonderful movement and organization, serving the best pastors and leaders in the world.

James: 41,000 churches in the organization that Sammy is an overseer in -- 41,000 Hispanic churches, evangelical churches.

Sammy: And all by the grace and the favor of God. Here I am today, committed to reconciling what I saw when I was 14 years old, Billy Graham's message with Dr. King's march. Why does it have to be either/or and why can't it be both/and? Why can't it be both righteousness and justice?

James: And it must be! And when you talk about it and the thing you point out in The Lamb's Agenda, which I think really is an expansion of the concept that you just referenced, the vertical and the horizontal, vertical with God. And I really believe this; I believe it more firmly than I've ever, ever come to grasp.

It's the greatest commandments, and when you look at that second one, even Paul said it sums up the whole of the law: Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and

strength. Love God with everything that is within you. This doesn't mean like be associated with some religious group or even be a member of a church. It's talking about a relationship with the living God who wants to be so close to you. He's your father. So you love this father with your all your heart. You live in the shelter and shadow, and you walk with the watch care of the shepherd.

So there's that relationship that's vertical with God. No substitute for that. Any attempt to substitute that with anything else will always diffuse any positive attempts no matter what they are, no matter how meaningful or beneficial they may appear to be they will always fail. But then if you have that relationship and you just stop there and you don't have that other aspect of "love your neighbor as yourself," and you won't love yourself right if you don't love God, you begin to love others. So you saw those two together and that is The Lamb's Agenda.

Sammy: Life is both vertical and horizontal -- the cross is vertical and horizontal -- but life is both vertical and horizontal. Vertically we're connected to God, His kingdom, divine principles, his glory, divine truth. But horizontally, to our left and to our right, we exist, revealed and connected through community/family relationships, society and culture. Life is both vertical and horizontal. It is both redemption and relationship. It is both sanctification and service -- covenant and community. It's both orthodoxy and orthopraxy. It is both John 3:16 and Matthew 25. It's both righteousness and justice, the imago dei and the habits of Christ. It is both the New Jerusalem and Dallas, Texas. It is not either/or, it is both/and! It is lifting up our hands in worship by stretching out our hands across in compassion. That's Christianity! But it begins with the vertical. It begins with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

People try to do good without their relationship with Jesus. They try to do the horizontal without the vertical. And the problem with the horizontal without the vertical is it is just another piece of wood on the floor. It will fall. It can't sustain itself. It all emerges and stems out of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

I don't think the church is multi-personality disorder. And I don't think the church suffers from some sort of dual personality. We have churches that are completely vertical -- and of course, the message of salvation through Christ is primary. It is salvation through Christ but that's it. Forget about the homeless and the suffering and those that are impoverished and those that are in need around the world.

What you do here; not only do you preach the gospel but you address the needs of those around the world that are suffering, that lack water, that lack the right

nourishment physically. So it's reconciling conviction with compassion. It can't be either/or.

Growing up I saw a world that was divided, even in the Christian church. And with great due deference, I just saw the followers of Billy Graham over here and the followers of Dr. King over here. Why? Why can't we reconcile the message with the march? Why can't we reconcile "There is Room at the Cross" with "We Shall Overcome"?

And that's my life mission, is to reconcile the vertical and the horizontal, and to advance. The reason why we titled The Lamb's Agenda is because the only agenda that can possibly save America is not the agenda of the donkey or the elephant -- it is the agenda of the lamb. It is The Lamb's Agenda that can change this nation and turn us around. It is an agenda of righteousness and justice in the name of Jesus.

By the way, I believe God is not done with us. I believe God is not done with America and America is not done with God. I believe we stand at the precipice of a new awakening and the greatest move of God this nation has ever experienced.

James: You know that's what we're calling our -- I agree. That is precisely what we're calling our 50th anniversary conference, Awaken Now, which is a command.

When you hear the zeal in Sammy, and Betty, you know him. And we have lived out the relationship with God emphasis, and then reaching out. And our viewers, they have been captured by the heart of God and expressing the heart of God. And you listen to the zeal here, it's got to be an inspiration to you.

Betty: It is! It puts an excitement within my heart as I listen to your story because you start out -- it starts, as you said, with that encounter with God. You talked about, as a teenager, a young teenager, having that first real encounter with God -- just you and him, and the different times. I look at my life and I think, the most memorable and the most -- the greatest things that have happened in changing my life was that encounter with God. Sometimes it would be in church but most of the time it was just me and God alone, those moments where I really felt like God was teaching me and growing me.

As you said, it starts there with that encounter but we have to have the compassion to go out. And I think in those moments I've had with God, he also puts in me a charge to go out and a compassion like you said, to go out and not just keep it all inside of here because if we don't let it out, we're going to smother it -- what God has done in us.

Sammy: And it is not coincidental at all. Years later, I found myself invited to meet Billy Graham. Now you know Billy Graham very well but here -- this Hispanic American kid from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania just wow! Just wow! And it's not coincidental but by divine providence, the very same year that I met Dr. Graham, the King family invited me to speak at the anniversary of Dr. Martin King's Junior's birth and to be the first Latino keynote speaker. And I interacted with a wonderful woman of God named Bernice King, Dr. King's daughter. She is wonderful! And here I am --

James: She sat in that same chair you're sitting in and I got to be daddy to her. And her mother told me before she passed that Bernice calls me "daddy" now. So it is cool. She is precious.

Sammy: Isn't she amazing? But here I am, 14 years old, Billy Graham, Dr. King, and here I am years later in the same year interacting with both. And that's the wound that facilitated, hey, if you're an atheist or agnostic, the probability of this happening is one in two and a half billion! So do the math. It is amazing! And hence the womb of the lamb's agenda. But I am completely convinced that what we need now is a movement. We need a movement. There's a fine line between the prophetic and the pathetic and we live in some serious pathetic, quote "times." Times --

James: We have some pathetic preaching, I'm sorry to say. But listen, it is not just in Protestant churches, we have some pathetic priests. And here's the thing about The Lamb's Agenda. The Lamb's Agenda is for everybody that names the name of God the Father and that claims Christ as a church. And a lot of the people in the church, I don't care if it is Protestant, I don't care if you're evangelical -- Betty was a Baptist Sunday school teacher and I was christened and I didn't know the Lord. We met the Lord.

There are a lot of people sitting in Protestant churches and Catholic churches, they never met this lamb. And it is real hard to get on the lamb's agenda if you don't know the lamb. We've got a lot of church people that have allowed a little bit or a whole bunch of religion to keep them from God and that relationship. It breaks my heart.

Sammy: It's all about the lamb. It is about Jesus. Not to be confrontational or controversial but you're right, we have watered down the gospel for the spiritually impaired. We have sacrificed truth on the altar of political expediency and we've taken away the centrality of Christ as Lord. There's one way -- Jesus Christ: The way, the truth and the life. And that message right there is the most powerful message we can convey in the 21st century.

James: The Lamb's Agenda and we're going to talk to Sam -- by the way, do you like this guy? Do you like the zeal and the fire and the love? We're going to talk about The Lamb's Agenda very, very specifically because we're going to have another whole program. We're just going to discuss some of the things he sees.

Here's the thing I think is very critical for everybody to hear. I don't care whether you name the name of Jesus, whether you're Catholic or Protestant, or you just care, you say, "I'm a caring person. I'm trying to learn about God." Here's the thing you must understand, we need to choose wise leaders and we must choose them wisely. We must have understanding of the times to choose them.

But the thing you must understand, and God knows we need to correct a perilous national course, but it is not about winning elections. It is about winning hearts and minds. It's about winning hearts to God, to the Father, through Christ, and the renewing of the mind so that we are transformed by that process. This has got to happen. This is what The Lamb's Agenda is about, and we're going to talk about it with Sammy in another program. I'm excited to get on with that; aren't you? Because I want us to really touch on where people understand, "Okay, how do I pray?" "What do I do?" "What are some positive steps?" Because we want to help you with that but let's really understand the real battle, let's fight the right fight, the right way, in the right place with the right armor and the right intention so we win the victory.

Sammy, you were referencing the things that we do here as a ministry; not just the relationship with God but because of it we reach out. There's not a single thing we do - you know Jesus said, "If you give just a cup of water, in my name, you won't lose your reward." Don't even start trying to guess what that reward might be. You don't need to start trying to help God out, knowing how to best bless. He says, "You give a cup of water in my name, you're going to be blessed."

I'm going to just be honest with you, I don't need a greater blessing than blessing someone else in need because that blesses me beyond my ability to accurately and fully portray it and then explain it. I want you to look in on a real need. I want you to see something that love through you can do something about and it won't fail. Please watch prayerfully.

On the mission field

Announcer: When you're poverty stricken and don't have access to clean water, each day that passes takes a toll on you and your children because of having to drink

contaminated water. Death is no stranger to this village. As several families have lost children to waterborne illnesses, people like Fernando, Filana, and Flores, they have all suffered the heartache of losing loved ones simply because they had no other choice but to drink contaminated water.

Janine, a mother of three, takes this journey each day to collect water from one of the very same sources that have taken the lives of people in her village. Janine lives in fear that one of her children may become the next victim of a waterborne disease.

If we act now, we can change that reality for Janine and her children and thousands of other mothers by providing them with clean water.

End of clip

In the studio

James: I'm believing that we're going to be an answer to her need and her family and that village. Betty, we have set the largest -- the largest goal we've ever set to drill water wells of 500 wells this year. Some people could say when economic times are hard and people are hard-pressed, how could you reach out even more? Because I think sometimes our most challenging times that's when we can step up with the strength and enabling of the Lord, and really pour out the greatest expression of God's love possible.

We know the areas that the missionaries have identified. I think it is very important for you to understand that these areas have been pointed out to us by missionaries who were sent by God to the people in these areas to deliver the message of God's love. They know as we do, that it is so much more important to deliver it and demonstrate it, not just in word but in deed, in action -- to really reach out. These people need water. Would you help us drill 500 wells?

Betty and I committed a long time ago to drill a well every time our ministry says, "Now's the time; we need to do it." We asked God to enable us to and it was a stretch. And then the cost of wells increased and we continued to trust God and he's enabled us to do it. And I believe he enables us to do it because we wanted to do it. And God said, "If you give a cup of water." What about a well of water? We can tell you beyond reservation he has blessed us and he will bless every person who blesses others.

Would you reach out today and touch someone with love? Will you dial that number? It's a lifeline. Would you dial that number and say, "I want to help you drill a well."

They cost \$4800. Betty and I have been able to drill a well every time we've had that opportunity.

We have many people who say, "I'm going to do it." And then we have others who say, "Oh, I wish I could. I'm going to pray I can." I'm asking all our viewers to pray you can drill a well before the year's out. But some people say, "Well, I can drill part of one." \$1200, pray three others join you. \$2400, pray another person joins you.

But here's the thing I want you to keep in mind because Betty, this is really the key, this is what makes it work. \$48, ten people water the rest of their life. You talk about, don't you wish you could have a water bill like that? Don't you wish that you could find something that worked like that? Well, hey! It might not work for you but it will work in those impoverished villages and areas of the world. A billion people don't have access to clean water. We start ten people at a time. \$144 gift: 30 people Water for Life.

Would you simply reach out and touch someone with love? We've got some beautiful gifts we want to send you: *Majesty*, The names of God revealed in scripture and what they mean. You'll be blessed -- you will be greatly blessed! The beautiful *Names of God* pens, the *Fruit of the Spirit* pens, they will be a blessing.

We give you these gifts to say thank you but also to bless you. They become witnessing opportunities as well as growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. Would you make that call? Use your bankcard like a check or go online LifeToday.org and make the gift God put on your heart. Please do it. You're going to make all the difference in someone's 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 *Majesty*, an inspirational new, fully illustrated book that will help you discover the promises behind the many names of God.

With your gift of \$100 or more, be sure to also request "The Names of God" pen set custom crafted with the various names of God and the gifts of the spirit.

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*."

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

End of clip

In the studio

James: Betty and I want to say thank you so much for your gift. I also want to mention that if you'd like to have -- and it would be wonderful to get it and read it -- because this is the agenda that really matters -- not the agenda of the donkey or the elephant or anybody else's agenda, it is *The Lamb's Agenda*, it is the kingdom agenda. We'll gladly send you Sammy Rodriguez's book if you'd like to have it if you just make a gift to help us give people Water for Life.

Would you join Betty and me in saying thanks to Sammy?

Sammy, God bless you buddy. I look forward to talking to you in another program more in-depth about the message in the book.

Thank all of you so much for watching *LIFE Today*. Please, please, encourage your friends to watch. Thanks so much for being a part!

Announcer: Join James and Betty Robison July 18 through the 20th for the Awaken Now Conference at Gateway Church in Southlake, Texas! Featuring inspiring speakers such as Governor Mike Huckabee, Pastor Tony Evans, International Bible teacher and author Beth Moore, New York Times best-selling author and speaker Andy Andrews and many more, including musical guest such as Big Daddy Weave.

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