

7/29/13
Week 31

James: Hey! Thank all of you! Thank you so much. Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm James Robison.

Betty and I have an evangelist with us. I think most of you know James Robison is an evangelist.

I remember, Betty, I used to just think how can somebody named James Robison be an evangelist? I didn't even have a catchy name. It wasn't Billy Graham! Billy Sunday! -- something like that. I just thought... and they didn't even spell my name right because everybody was going to call me Robinson -- Robinson.

Betty: Or Robertson.

James: They call you Robinson. Don't they go looking for you on the computer when they need to find you and they put in Robinson?

Betty: I even spell it for them. They think I can't spell.

[Laughter]

James: Our children went through all of it. And I've got an evangelist, and he has a pretty neat sounding name. His name is Jay -- Jay Lowder. That sounds like a preacher! -- Lowder! That will work for an evangelist. And he really is blessed.

As a matter of fact, some of my own former advance people who set up crusades all over the country began telling me years ago, "He can preach! He can preach like you! He can preach better than you. He's really good!" And they sent me tapes and I listened to him and I think, well, yep. He's probably better than me. I'm not going to listen to that anymore. He really is good.

I want you to welcome Jay Lowder who has been with us before but welcome him back to *LIFE Today*, Jay Lowder.

Jay, good to see you. And you are preaching in stadiums and coliseums, and you just came back from Canada. You've been all over the east coast where sometimes a lot of evangelists don't go to the east coast but you're being received everywhere you go.

Jay: Well, we've been blessed. We really have. It's been fortunate. We want to not just be confined to one area of the country or one specific place but we want to take the message across all boundaries; go everywhere we can.

James: Well, God's blessed you and you really do have a great gift. I just want to say to all of you who are watching, you want someone to come into the church or your community or your area and help you win people to Christ, Jay has a gift, a touch, an anointing of God. If these viewers say, "Well, maybe we just want to check him out; we want to know where to go to find out how could we talk to people who have had Jay. How can we invite him?" Where would they go they went to a web site?

Jay: JayLowder.com.

James: Would they find that somebody else said something nice about you on your web site?

Jay: Well, I hope so. I hope so -- yes!

James: And if you're not putting those nice things on there, let another evangelist tell you it would be good to do that. But they can communicate with your office and find out about your schedule and if they can get you to come.

Jay: Absolutely. We use all social media and there's plenty of references and videos and things where people can get connected and see what we do and where we've been, and where we're going.

James: And you enjoy being in the schools, speaking to teenagers?

Jay: I still do that, yes, I do. I love being connected to the student culture and having a pulse on what's going on in the community. Yeah.

James: How do those students receive you when you go in and how do you work around the situation of say you don't talk about religion in school. What do you do?

Jay: Well, it is social and moral issues so we deal with suicide, violence, S.T.D.'s, abuse, addiction -- those things. We don't go in and talk about God, or talk about Jesus

or any type of religious platform. We just go in and talk about the issue students are facing.

James: And it is only because you're limited in that. You'd like to go.

Jay: Oh, sure! Yeah, I'd love to.

James: You're respecting the wishes of the schools and there you're understanding the parameters they have. You understand the difficulty of their situation, which is really in many instances I think quite tragic.

Now you've got a book that has an interesting title, *Midnight in Aisle Seven*. Now I think this may be your story but in the book you tell numerous stories of people. Will you give me just a little insight into why you wrote the book and then maybe tell us about what you mean by *Midnight in Aisle Seven*?

Jay: Sure I wrote the book because in years of traveling we meet so many people who have so many different issues, and we want those people to realize that there are other people who have gone through what they've gone through and have found a way of escape. The book is filled with people that have been through everything from addiction to abuse to abandonment to divorce, to attempted suicide. The whole gauntlet is there.

But I've just realized over the years that you're typically only as sick as your secrets. And we have a tendency to conceal those areas of weakness and struggle in our life. If people can find a pivot point of somebody that they connect with who has walked down that same valley, who has been in that same ditch, then it can be a way of healing, a way of restoration and a way of escape.

So the book really is just a myriad of different stories of people from different ages from different walks of life who have all found that pathway of hope.

Betty: I think that's really good because a lot of people think, the enemy comes and he really pounds on you, you think, "I'm the only person that's struggling and going through what I'm going through." So it is good -- it should be encouraging to people to read the different testimonies and stories that you have in the book to really -- probably everybody can relate to one of the stories.

Jay: Absolutely. It's kind of a buffet approach. It is true life people that I've met. Of course, my story is in there as well. But it really just is kind of a roundtable where

regardless of where you've been, you're going to find within the book a way of hope; that's really the purpose. That's really why I wrote the book. After being on the road for years and meeting thousands and thousands of people, there is one common denominator and it is: People are hurting. The common equation for this is taking the light into darkness. It's being able to overcome difficulty. So that's really why I wrote the book. It's taking that light into the dark places.

James: All right, the title, *Midnight in Aisle Seven*. You said you tell your story. Is that what *Midnight in Aisle Seven* references?

Jay: Yes, it is a portion of my story. There was a time in my life when I was very bitter at God. I walked away from God like a lot of people who are probably watching the program today. Maybe they had a bad experience at church or they feel like God has forsaken them and he's no longer there. Well, that's really where I was.

So in this limbo time, me and Missy, my wife walked into Wal-Mart just to do some shopping. We're kind of night owl people anyway. And I was walking down an aisle and it sounds rather strange but it is what it is. I walked past a guy I'd never seen, I'd never met but I sensed something about him. And because of already having become a Christian years earlier, I just walked past him and said, "Sir, excuse me. There's two things I'd like to ask you. I know we've never met. Number one: are you a Christian? Number two: are you in ministry?"

And he about passed out. He said, "Actually, I'm both. How did you know?"

And I said, "I don't know. I just walked past you and there is something about you, there is something that emanates from you."

He actually was a youth minister and I had been out of ministry for quite some time. I swore I would never do ministry again. I was bitter at God. I was angry at God. God had failed me. I felt as though, quite honestly, God had stabbed me in the back. So through all this, he invited me to come speak to his church.

I had been out of ministry for years. And the long and short of it, it was the first time that I operated in my gift, used the gift, the calling that God had given me. But I had walked away from it. I was working a secular job for a Fortune 500 Company and I went to this little small town in Texas, spoke to his youth group, thought no one would show up. And there were 66 students that night that said, I want to know Christ, and received Jesus as their savior. And it was my launch back into where I

never should have left in the first place -- the place God that God had called me to be. I was back home.

James: You were turned around and you stepped into your new journey and that was to operate as you said in your gift, in your anointing to preach. And my friends who have heard you and I've heard you preach, you have a wonderful gift to communicate, you have a wonderful gift to invite people to come and commit their life to Christ -- not to religion.

As a matter of fact, you make it very clear that being associated or affiliated with some kind of religious group does not make you a part of the family of God, and we need to have a relationship with Christ, and you make that so clear people see it and they come and they respond. I think that will continue because people are hurting and Christ is the answer. You can present that.

Now, you point out different situations. Give us some examples in the book.

Jay: Well, we have everything -- I guess the story that would stand out the most for me is an incredible story of forgiveness because I believe at the end of day, really, that's what everybody is looking for. It is forgiveness. Some people don't even know that. But it was one encounter that I had with an individual who his wife had been unfaithful to him. She had run off with another man; got pregnant with another man's child, and yet he took her back in. She left again with another man, and he waited faithfully on her for several years until finally she actually came back home. He adopted the child that was not his and made that kid as his own.

It is one of the most incredible stories of forgiveness I've ever seen or experienced. When I initially met the man I thought that maybe there was something mentally wrong with him. How could someone give that level of forgiveness? But truly, it is a great representation of what God offers through the people who are even watching television. In many ways we are that woman. We have been unfaithful to God. We have cheated on God. We have substituted God for other things. But yet in spite of that, like this man continued to wait for his wife, God has been waiting for people that are watching today, waiting for them to take a step to come back home. And so I think again, there is a lot of different stories but if I had to pinpoint one, it would be that.

James: Have you had trouble forgiving and dealing with people in your own life or your own family that make it difficult for you to forgive and deal with maybe their choices and practices, something you've had to learn?

Jay: Absolutely. I think at some level we all struggle with forgiveness of others. But I also think that part of the reason for that is because the root issue is we struggle with forgiving ourselves. I think the difficulty in forgiving others is really just a mirror of what's already going on. It is difficult, I think for many people to believe that God really forgives. We say that, God forgives and washes away sin but do we really believe that? I think many people struggle that God could actually accept them.

I was in -- speaking on death row just a few months ago with some of the criminals who have committed some of the most -- excuse me, committed some of the most horrendous crimes fathomable. But yet I could honestly look those men in the face and say, "Regardless of what you've done, even though you may have committed this gross crime or murder," I could look at them and honestly say, "God really will accept you just the way you are. He will truly not just forgive you and give you a pass to eternity but he will heal you here and now."

It's not something, again, that's said, it's something that I've personally experienced and I've seen. And to see men who have nothing left to do but wait on death, and to see them ingest the forgiveness of God, there's no substitute.

James: It's really important if they don't look at it as a pass out of prison, they're going to their debt, but if they see that I can be freed from my past and my failures and they can be, and I can have life now here where I am, I can be a free person even while I'm incarcerated or I'm being held for a crime I committed. They do have that peace that passes understanding.

Betty: Also, I think it's not only a blessing to the person or someone that has maybe wronged you and you forgive them, but what about what it does to you on the inside? There comes a healing too because we can stop dead in our tracks if we have unforgiveness in our heart. It can just almost paralyze our walk with the Lord.

Jay: Right. And that's such a great point because I think many people, that is the biggest barrier between them and God. They understand the concept of Jesus coming and dying for their sins. They understand even biblical truth but yet there is a wall between them and God and they don't understand why that wall is there but it's because of unforgiveness. It is a key issue. It literally effects emotions, it's spirituality, every aspect of life -- mental health.

James: You faced a crisis, weather phenomenon that was very destructive in Wichita Falls years ago that required a decision. Tell us about it.

Jay: Yes, I was 13 years old and one of the worst tornados in the history of the United States came rolling through our city. It became known as Terrible Tuesday. Many, many lives were lost.

The tornado was on the ground, went through Texas and Oklahoma, demolishing lives, pasts, presents, futures. We did what you're not supposed to do. Technically you're supposed to stay in your home. But my father decided that we would try to outrun the tornado. Even though that is not conventional wisdom, it is a good thing that my father decided that. I think God actually led him to do it because our home was destroyed. And the room that we were supposed to get in, that centrally located room was annihilated.

But when we left the home engulfed in this major F4, F5 tornado we came to a place in the road, a T in the road where you had to go right or left. But when you're in the midst of a tornado, it is almost like being engulfed in smoke and there was really no way to know which way to go. But the decision that my father would make at that moment whether to turn right or left would literally determine whether his family and he lived. Again, they couldn't have known that in that split second moment but that's how crucial that decision was, which direction that they were going to go.

My father made the decision to take a left. Of course, turning right would have literally taken us right into the heart of the storm. There's no way we could have survived had we turned right. But we turned left and that one decision saved my father, my mother, me and my two sisters.

The power of one decision: to save or destroy a life. It's amazing.

James: I thank God! Don't you thank God that his dad made the right decision? That God led them to safety.

I think it is really, though, the real importance of this story is that throughout our lives we face those critical moments of decision and we're going to choose many times whether we live or die. Now that may not mean literally, physically, at the moment but whether or not we really live or whether we merely exist; whether we make a decision that leads to life now with meaning, with someone to walk through the storms with you, through the valleys, even of the shadow of death or whether you'll walk it alone, and then spend eternity separated from the life and the love that God freely offers if you'll make the right decision; that is to decide to follow Jesus, to give him your life.

He gave his life for you to give you forgiveness that Jay has talked about, to give you a new beginning -- all things new -- the past blotted out. Things that you may be able to remember God says, "I remember them no more. They're covered by the death and sacrifice of my son." Would you make that decision today?

Let me tell you something, it not only changes eternity, and it does, but it changes right now and everything that happens in this life. Would you just ask Jesus right now? And bow your head.

Jesus, come into my life. I give you my life, however broken, however needy, however desperate. I give you me. And I receive you. I receive you, forgiveness and life; in Jesus' name.

If you made that decision, I'd love to send you a book titled, *Knowing God as Father*. I'd like to tell you how I came to know him and give you some simple Bible studies. You call the number and say, "I just prayed with James." Or you may want to call and say, "Would you pray with me? I want to know Jesus. I want to make the right decision."

Jay, I really thank you for your testimony. And the book *Midnight in Aisle Seven*, can they get that on your web site too or in the bookstores either way?

Jay: They can get it in bookstores, they can get it on my web site, it's available online. Most any major retailer has it.

James: I hope you'll get it and see those stories. Jay, we're doing something I know you like. We're helping people that feel like nobody ever noticed. I want you to just stop and think, what if this were me? Would you want something to happen to change your circumstances? I want to show you truth and I want to show you what love can do. Watch closely.

On the mission field

Announcer: Imagine, if you will, that you're living somewhere in the world and you have no clean water sources available to you or your family. You would not be alone. The reality is that there are nearly 850 million people who do not have access to water that is safe to drink.

Statistics tell one story, the suffering and heartache of seeing a child die because of a waterborne illness tells another.

>> I've seen diseases. I've seen children with sores and malnourishment. I've sat with a mother while she wept over her children that she lost and she lost them because of this right here -- contaminated water.

Announcer: Now imagine if you could help put an end to the misery and suffering that these precious families live with simply because they don't have access to clean water. Imagine drilling a water well that provides fresh drinking water for their entire village. Then imagine the lives of precious children that can be saved if a water well becomes a reality.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Boy, that touches my heart. I like watching those children play in the water. You may wonder, do they waste the water like that? Betty, they are telling me, the missionaries wherever we go, that they only let them come and splash around and play in the water like that when the people who gave them the water well come to let everybody see how happy they are. But that is the life -- that's the reason they are able to play because the water gave them life.

Betty: Absolutely James! And you think, oh, children, they need toys, they need this, they need that. The best gift we can give them is the fresh water to save their lives. It is a simple solution but it's going to take all of us to make it happen. I hope you will help us in that.

James: I was just looking at those little children, almost looked like a little schoolyard of little kindergarten age and elementary age kids. Chances are, that might have been most of the children that age in that particular village.

Many times a village of 1,000 people have never in their lives had any clean water and they've been burying their children and their grandchildren; many of them dying when they're two, three, and up to five years of age -- that's when most of them die from infant mortality and it's contaminated water and diseases that come from it.

Well, we're able to change that. You know you are -- I don't get to look you right in the eyes. You look at me and you look at Betty and I know she is easier to look at than me. She always is but I wish I could look in your eyes. You think, no, you don't want to see me. I tell you, I would too. I would like to because if you watch *LIFE Today* I think you watch it for the primary reason of seeing life, hearing about life, and giving life. I believe that our viewers love to share life. I believe you like to put a smile on

someone's face. I believe you like to give a mother hope for her child, grandparents hope for their grandchildren. You want to light up people's lives with the love of God.

Now think about this. When we give people water we're giving them Water for Life but it is because of the water of life, and we tell them about that water and they want to know because they've already seen up close and personal the love of God expressed through not only the missionaries but expressed through people like you who say, "We'll help the missionaries. We'll help those children."

Here's our goal this year: 500 water wells. For a ministry, a single ministry, that's a lot -- 500 water wells; \$4800 a piece. Could you drill one? We have people who say every year, "We drill one." Some have said, "I've been asking God to let me. Now I can." I've asked all our viewers to pray that God would let every one of you drill a water well because then we expand the goal way beyond anything we've imagined; need's there, we just need the resources. You may not be able to drill a well. If you can, I believe you will.

Dial the number, take your bankcard or write a check. Let us know, "I'm giving a well" or "I'm giving a portion of the well, \$1200, three people join me," "\$2400, somebody join me." At some level you can give but remember this, this is where most of the support comes. \$48 -- yes, a gift of \$48, ten people water the rest of their life. \$144 -- 30 people! There's a level at which you can help.

We have some beautiful gifts that we want to send you. I call them the witness pens: The names of God, the fruit of the spirit. The names of God Bible study, Majesty -- tremendous! We have the commemorative bronze, "Living Water." We want to send these to you to say thanks. But I can promise you, the villages, the children, their families, they're going to say an eternal thank you because they're going to see the love of God, they're going to hear about it and I believe they're going to experience it.

Please dial that number or go online LifeToday.org and make the gift God put on your heart. Please do it now. And I 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 *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

On the mission field

Tammy: I've loved traveling all around the world with *LIFE Outreach*, being able to tell the stories of so many people. In many of the places I've gone into, many children that I have heard stories about have died because of the water that they're drinking. And it really breaks your heart when you go into these places and you hear such stories and you think, "What can I do?"

This is my heart's cry to you to say we need you. We need to continue to drill more and more and more wells so it will give Water for Life to thousands more people just like this all over the world. Please won't you help us? Go to the phone, go online and help us bring life through water to these people.

End of clip

In the studio

James: You're going to love these, as I call them "witness pens." This is the one with the fruit of the spirit. It is more of a pewter.

This is the one, Betty, that is bright -- very bright, and these are the names of God. They are wonderful pens -- be very effective. And we want to just say thank you.

I want to mention again Jay Lowder and *Midnight in Aisle Seven*. This is not only his story but the story of many people perhaps like you and how they found the answer.

There's Jay's web site if you'd like to access material there from him or perhaps invite him to come to your community and preach. I can promise you, he'll deliver Jesus in the word and in the power of the spirit. You'll be blessed.

Would you say thanks to Jay Lowder for being here?

Jay, bless you man! Do a good work! Do the work of an evangelist, and we're going to keep doing it too.

Thank all of you so much for your encouragement and your support! And thanks for helping us share water.